

Cerebral Palsy

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Cerebral Palsy and its diagnosis.

There are 4 main types of Cerebral Palsy: Spastic cerebral palsy – this is where the muscles can be stiff or tight (particularly when trying to move them too quickly), which then makes it hard to move and reduces the range of movement that's possible. dyskinetic cerebral palsy – this is where the muscles switch between stiffness and floppiness, causing random, uncontrolled body movements or spasms. ataxic cerebral palsy – this is when a person has balance and co-ordination issues, resulting in shaky or clumsy movements. mixed cerebral palsy – when a person has symptoms of more than one type of cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy is normally formed by an injury to the brain before, during, or shortly after birth, such as a lack of oxygen or illness. NHS (2020) believe that the initial problem with the brain does not get worse throughout time, but the condition can put a lot of strain on the individual's body and cause issues, such as very painful joints, throughout their later life. Mencap (No Date) have said that Cerebral Palsy is not classed as a learning disability, however those with Cerebral Palsy may actually have some form of other learning disability. As things stand, there is no cure for cerebral palsy, However an early diagnosis can assist with ensuring that anyone with learning difficulties or Speech and language issues can gain the correct support early within their development.

Statistics

Cerebralpalsy.org.uk (No Date) estimate that Roughly 1 in 400 babies born in the UK have a type of cerebral palsy. The Office for National Statistics show that with a birth rate within England and Wales of roughly 700,000 each year there is possibly as many as 1,700 new cases of cerebral palsy in children per year. Approximately 160,000 people have cerebral palsy in the UK (130,000 adults and 30,000 children) (CP Sport, 2021) 17 million people diagnosed with cerebral palsy around the world. (Activity alliance, 2021)

Conclusion

Being able to socialise and participate in any kind of sports within school and outside of school can assist with being in a better physical and mental place. Getting out of wheelchairs can have great benefits for physical shape from not being in one position all the time which could mean less surgeries and procedures. Participating in group sports will give social interaction which will improve mental health. It can then improve life skills to socialise and participate with others and build friendships and have a purpose in life. NHS (2020) state that the condition may limit a child's activities and independence, although most people go on to lead full, independent lives. Most people live into adult life, and some can live for many decades.

Barriers

Parents may feel that their role is undermined by working practitioners (Hodge, 2006)
Family and friends were not sympathetic, understanding or supportive (Green, 2003)
Friends and family really did not understand their child, or how to be around them (Holland et al, 2018)
Depression and/or anxiety (NHS, 2020)
Low self-esteem (Brown Trail Firm, N.D)
Needs became clearer and more obvious in a more formal school setting, there was also less flexibility with provision (Curran, 2020)
A negative effect could be had on the other children in the class, and lack of focused reaching and resources (UKEssays, 2018)
There is a lack of research (Leonard and Smyth, N.D)
Schools are currently understaffed and under trained.
A lack of access to specialist services. (Dauncey, 2016)
There is not enough access to larger financial support. (Learning Cubs, 2023 & Curran, 2020)
Accessibility within the learning environment (Brown Trail Firm, N.D)

Strategies

Flint Rehab (2021) discuss the reason why an exercise programme personalized for a child with Cerebral palsy is great for encouraging a child's motor functions. This is down to the large range of Neurological motor impairments at all different severities. Physical Therapy is useful as it encourages the brain's ability to make changes that adapt based on actions. They state that due to the brain never running out of neuroplasticity, Children can continue to stimulate their brains through repeating exercises. Thus, benefitting the students learning abilities. Mencap (No date) stress that physical activity can assist with improving posture and muscle control. Similarly, Cerebralpalsy.org.uk (No date) advise that Providing stimulating and challenging physical activities is extremely important for anyone's development. Not only does it assist in developing individual skills but can also encourage working with others and be a great way to make new friends. NHS (2020) believe that many treatments are available to assist those with the condition to be as active and independent as possible. Brown trail firm (No Date) say that with the correct mixture of medicine, surgery, therapy, equipment, and medical supervision will maximize the student's opportunities to learn and grow as best as he or she can. Treatment professionals can also help parents understand their child's capabilities, teach parents how to set realistic goals, how to deal with the challenges on the road that lies ahead, and offer encouragement during the difficult times. There is a wonderful local group called Surfability UK who work closely with children who have all different additional learning needs. . Surfability UK (2020) describe themselves as being at the forefront of worldwide adaptive surfing. Surfability UK are making it their mission to make surfing become accessible for all. It is a Community Interest Company that provides surfing lessons and experiences for young people with additional needs due to disability, illness, injury or learning difficulties. Their aim is to mix best practice from special education, health care, surfing and lifeguarding to make surfing as inclusive as possible.

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