The Child With Cerebral Palsy in the Regular Class.

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This handbook was developed to help the teacher deal successfully with physical problems involved in having a child with cerebral palsy mainstreamed into the regular classroom. Characteristics of cerebral palsy are described, and it is pointed out that most children with this affliction have average or above average intelligence. Classroom activities are described which will prepare nonhandicapped children mentally and emotionally for the arrival of their handicapped classmate, and which will demonstrate to them ways in which they can be helpful. Suggestions are made on obtaining resources from associations which offer services to the physically disabled. Possible modifications in classroom arrangement are discussed as well as ways in which instructional materials may be adapted for easier manipulation. A detailed description is presented of the functions and potentials of wheelchairs. A bibliography of books for children, parents, and teachers is included as is a list of organizations which provide additional resources for the physically handicapped. (JD)
The Child with Cerebral Palsy in the Regular Class

By Barbara Aiello
Creator
The Kids on the Block

AFT Teachers' Network for Education of the Handicapped

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
Educational Issues Department

The AFT Teachers' Network for Education of the Handicapped is intended to facilitate regular education teachers' ability to work effectively with handicapped children in their classrooms. The Network is involved in inservice training and preparation and dissemination of resources to teachers to help accomplish this goal.

In conjunction with its dissemination efforts, the Network is publishing a series of pamphlets on various disabilities for teachers who work with handicapped children. These pamphlets provide practical information for use in the regular classroom in relation to the following disabilities: dyslexia, mental retardation, learning disabilities and emotional handicaps; hearing, visual, and orthopedic impairments; and special health problems, such as asthma and diabetes.

Carolyn Trice
Project Director

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Introduction

What It’s Like to Have Cerebral Palsy

Adults, as well as children, are sometimes nervous or a little bit afraid when they see someone with cerebral palsy. Often they are curious about the person’s wheelchair or the unusual way the person walks. Or they may be uncomfortable about the person’s jerky movements or slow way of talking.

Although there is much technical information about cerebral palsy, there are several things that may be of help to teachers, especially if they are about to work with a CP child in their regular classrooms.

Cerebral palsy is not a disease, it is not contagious and it is not fatal. In recent years children with CP have become increasingly responsive to physical therapy and they are now doing things that years ago few people, even professionals, ever expected them to accomplish.

Most children with cerebral palsy are not retarded. In fact, over 80 percent have average intelligence or above (William M. Cruickshank, Cerebral Palsy: A Developmental Disability, Syracuse University Press, 1976).

Since cerebral palsy means that there has been damage to the brain and nervous system, messages from the brain to a child’s legs, arms, or mouth are not complete. As Cathy, a child with severe cerebral palsy describes it, “It’s sort of like a short circuit. A message from my brain that says ‘legs, move!’ never reaches my legs. Or a message from my brain that says ‘talk loud and clear!’ never gets through.”

Cerebral palsy takes several forms and a child in your class who is described as having “spastic” cerebral palsy would have arms and/or legs that don’t move in harmony and don’t work together. Over half of the persons with cerebral palsy have the spastic type.

Some children with CP have the “athetoid” variety. This means that their arms and/or legs move uncontrolled, jerky and irregular movements. And a child whose cerebral palsy is termed either “spastic” or “athetoid” would probably have only one half or one side of the body involved. This involvement is termed “hemiplegic”.

Not all persons with cerebral palsy use wheelchairs. Some people walk well and with no difficulty while others use braces or crutches, and some need either a manual or battery powered wheelchair all of the time. Sometimes a person’s speech and mouth muscles are affected so that the words sound garbled and the person drools when speaking.

Finally, teachers should be aware that any educational report on a CP child (especially one about to be mainstreamed) which only reads “cerebral palsy, spastic, right hemiplegia,” is not especially helpful. Since medical information does not define a child’s educational needs, it is very important that the regular class teacher and the child’s special teacher and/or therapist discuss the child’s learning style, independent behavior, materials needed, and physical adaptation in
Preparing Your Children for a Handicapped Classmate

"STANDING VS SITTING"
Objective:
To allow the children to experience the isolation felt by people in a wheelchair
Materials
- Large classroom area with chairs arranged in a circle
- Conversation starters written on index cards:
  1. My favorite television program...
  2. My favorite food...
  3. The scariest thing that ever happened to me...
  4. The best place I ever visited...
  5. The best kind of animal to have for a pet...
- A timer
Procedure:
1. Arrange the children into small groups of four or five members each.
2. Allow one member to reach into a bag and select a conversation starter.
3. Place a chair in the middle of the circle. Tell the children that this chair will serve as a wheelchair and that one of them will get the chance to experiment with it.
4. Tell the children that they will experiment with the isolation that disabled people sometimes feel when in a group of people all of whom are standing up.
5. Gather the children into the center of the circle and set the timer for three minutes. Have them talk about the selected topic—and all must participate.
6. When the timer sounds, allow another group to enter the circle and participate in the same manner.
Discussion:
When each group has participated, ask the children the following questions:
1. Did you remember to include the person who was seated in the conversation?
2. What did you do to include that person?
3. Did you ever forget the person?
4. How did it feel to be the person seated?
5. What did you do to include yourself in the conversation?
6. Did you ever feel uncomfortable? Why or why not.
Many people in wheelchairs complain that questions and comments are often addressed to friends and family who are pushing the wheelchair, rather than to them. One disabled woman said, "I was in a restaurant and the waiter came up to us as we were leaving. He asked my husband how I liked the meal!" Talk with the children about why this woman was offended and relate this incident to their experiment. Ask the children to make a list of things they could do if a child with CP were to come to class. How would they include that person in conversation and activities?

In Your Classroom:
A Place to Begin

GETTING READY
When you know that a child with cerebral palsy or any child in a wheelchair will join your class, gather information regarding the child's current special education setting. Be sure to inquire about the methods used to teach the child basic skills such as reading and math and ask about the manner in which this child communicates. Since some CP children have great difficulty speaking, it is wise to inquire about the child's communication skills. You might ask, "Does she use a communication board?" (An electronic or manual device complete with words, letters, and phrases that a child points to in order to speak, write, and compute.) "Will he be attending speech therapy and how often?" "Does she currently use any reading or writing aides (from page turners to thick handled pencils) and will these be available for me in my room?" In addition, ask for the special education teacher, who has had the most consistent contact with your new student, to suggest adaptations of classroom games and activities and, if you choose, to have those activities demonstrated for you in your classroom with your larger group of children.

If your disabled student uses walking aides, invite a physical therapist, a special education teacher, or a parent of a disabled child to demonstrate the use of braces and crutches to the class. You can explain how braces work by asking the children if they have ever seen tomato plants with stakes attached to them. Braces assist in...
Since it is both the right and the responsibility of the regular class teacher to participate in the planning for mainstreaming of the handicapped child into the class, you should be given ample time to prepare for the arrival of your new student.

much the same way in that they give support to the child's legs. Under the supervision of your invited guest, allow the children to walk down the hall, out into the playground or to lunch using braces and crutches. Organize a classroom game and have some of the children participate using these appliances. Encourage the children to draw or write their feelings using braces during these activities and ask them to discuss adaptations to favorite games so that their new disabled classmate will be able to participate with them.

In addition, you can borrow several wheelchairs and plan to use them in the classroom for a week or more. Ask your district's special education department for wheelchairs or for names of local hospitals or rental establishments that will loan them to you free of charge. Ask your guest to teach the children how to move forward and backward, turn around, negotiate tight curves, and maneuver between chairs. Since there are many excellent wheelchair athletes who are especially good at basketball, you might allow the children to dribble and shoot from wheelchairs. Select children to participate in daily classroom activities from the wheelchair and you yourself might teach a lesson or two from one. With the children, share your feelings in the following areas via group discussion, creative writing, or drawing:

1. What's it like to be in a wheelchair?
2. How would it feel to be in a wheelchair all the time?
3. Is operating a wheelchair harder or easier than you expected?
4. How easy would it be to play basketball, bowl, or other sports from a wheelchair?
5. Draw a day in a wheelchair.

Since it is both the right and the responsibility of the regular class teacher to participate in the planning process for the mainstreaming of any handicapped child into the regular class, you should be given ample time to prepare for the arrival of your new student. When you have received the child's name, take time to contact the child's special education teacher, physical therapist and/or resource teacher. If possible, arrange to observe the child in the special setting and be sure to participate in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. This meeting is titled differently in many states and school districts.

During your observation in the child's special program, ask both the teacher and the student which materials would be most helpful to have in the regular class. If you find that a particular item (i.e., a communication board, a typewriter, and/or a standing table) is essential, make sure that item accompanies the child to the regular program. In addition, if scheduling permits, be sure to have the special education teacher observe your regular class setting. Ask the teacher to note how accessible the classroom is for a child in a wheelchair, in braces, or on crutches and together make the appropriate changes.

THE FIRST WEEK—OFF TO A GOOD START

Contact your special education department or local chapter of either the United Cerebral Palsy Association or The Easter Seal Society and ask that free materials and pamphlets be sent to your class. These materials will help your children understand a bit more about cerebral palsy and other conditions that might require that a person use a wheelchair or other appliance. Invite a person with cerebral palsy (or spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, or another orthopedic impairment) to join your class and describe all the things they do in an average day. Children are especially interested in the modified vans that many disabled people use; the hand controls on vans and cars that enable disabled persons to drive; ramps and lifts that enable them to get in and out of public buildings.

In addition, suggest that school personnel (bus drivers, custodians, office workers, playground supervisors, aids, other teachers, and administrators) learn some helpful things about cerebral palsy and wheelchairs. For example, many people are surprised to learn that words and phrases such as “cripple,” “victim,” “helpless,” “dreaded disease,” and “confined to a wheelchair,” although used often in the media, are especially offensive to disabled people since they convey to the general public that disabled people cannot do much for themselves. A library display of children's literature on cerebral palsy and related disabilities might be especially helpful in that these books will answer many of the questions that students have about handicaps.

CLASSROOM MODIFICATIONS—SOME BASICS

In The Source Book for the Disabled (Paddington Press Ltd., New York, 1979) Gloria Hale describes several “Hints for Helpers” that will aid you in your relationship with your new student.

No matter how independent your disabled student might be, there are times when teachers and other students may need to provide assistance. First ask, “Do you need some help?” then, “How can I help you?” Most likely, young children in wheelchairs will be able to tell you quite a bit about their wheelchair and how best to help. And, you may want to remember some of the following suggestions and use them as needed:

- Folding a wheelchair
  
  To fold most wheelchairs, first remove the seat cushion and then, standing next to the chair, pull upward on the seat fabric. This method is easy, requires no heavy lifting and most disabled persons, even children can fold their chairs themselves.

  Remember not to lift the chair and attempt to fold it by the armrests. This is awkward and the armrests may come off the chair.
### Opening a wheelchair

Keep your fingers turned toward the middle of the seat and press with the heels of the hand on the two sides of the seat.

Don't put your fingers between the chair frame and the seat since you might pinch your fingers. Ask your student to show you how to fold and open the chair and to explain the process to other members of the class, as well.

### Pushing the wheelchair down a curb

Place your foot on the tipping lever (the long pole at the back of the chair which easily accommodates the pusher's foot). Take a firm hold of the handgrips at the back of the chair, then tip the chair backward.

Gently lower the chair down the curb and have both rear wheels hit the ground at the same time. Or, turn the back of the chair toward the curb and lower the back wheels to ground level.

### Pushing the wheelchair up a curb

Place your foot on the tipping lever and lift the chair off its front wheels and onto the curb.

Your student can help by steadying the rear wheels.

Remember that wheelchairs are sturdy (some kids who own them call them “trucks” and...“Ask your student to show you and the class how to fold and open the wheel chair...”)

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-Axle, the shaft on which drive wheel revolves
-Handrim permits self-propelling without touching tire
-Caster swivels as chair is turned
-Crossbrace— the supporting underframe
-Handgrip of molded plastic or rubber
-Brake immobilizes chair by securing drive wheel
-Footrest consists of hanger bracket, heel loop and foot plate
-Carrier bracket attaches footplate to chair
-Armrest
-Arm
-Skirtguard protects clothing from contact with wheel
-Heel loop prevents foot from slipping backward
-Footplate
-Hanger bracket attaches footplate to chair
"...just as you don't want to devote an inordinate amount of time to one disabled student, your CP child wants to learn to become as independent as possible."

**READING AND WRITING DEVICES**

There are a great many technical devices that will help your disabled student participate in the routine of the regular class. Bookstands and page turners (either manual or electronic ones) will help your student participate with the class in group lessons and allow him to work alone, as well. Talking books, cassette recordings, or textbooks, periodicals, and novels that were originally designed for blind persons are quite helpful if your student has difficulty turning pages or balancing a book.

Magnetic rulers, triangles, and math devices are useful if your student uses a writing table or tray attached to her wheelchair. Clip boards will keep the paper in place. Felt tip pens need less pressure than ball points or pencils, and giant pens and pencils are easier for CP children to grasp. Any pen or pencil can be made easier to grasp by increasing its diameter. This can be done by wrapping a piece of rubber or plastic foam around the shaft and securing it with tape. A larger handgrip can be made by inserting the pen or pencil through a foam rubber ball, a block of plastic foam, or a golf practice ball. Tape a small twist-type pencil sharpener (the kind most children have in their pencil boxes) to a table or shelf. In this way, your disabled student will be able to sharpen his pencil independently.

If writing is especially difficult for your student (especially if the cerebral palsy is severely involved), encourage her to use a tape recorder to record homework assignments, do creative writing, or other assignments.

Encourage your student to use a backpack attached to the back of the wheelchair to carry books, homework, and school supplies. Some backpacks are designed for side attachment to the wheelchair so that the student can use it more easily.

Remember that, just as you don't want to devote an inordinate amount of time to one disabled student, your CP child wants to learn to become as independent as possible. With the special education teacher, think of as many devices as you can, from velcro on paint smocks, to using a tennis racquet for a baseball bat, that will allow your student to participate in your classroom on an independent basis. And remember, too, that you will find that many of these suggestions will be of value to many other children in your classroom, the majority of whom are not disabled, but who need special help from time to time.

**Of Tensions and Telethons**

Carpenters, dentists, chefs, librarians, plumbers, lab technicians, teachers—for the most part we grew up in an environment which did not include disabled people. With the exception of those of us who had the good fortune to have a disabled sibling, parent, cousin, or niece, most of us have had few consistent encounters with disabled people.

As recently as ten years ago many disabled children went to separate schools, rode separate school buses, went to different camps. Public transportation was inaccessible to most disabled adults so many of them were not part of the work force or the social scene. As a result, many people, including teachers, felt a certain degree of discomfort or tension when the ice was finally broken and disabled people gradually became an obvious part of our lives.

As teachers, it is important to recognize these fears and to understand that our feelings are natural ones. And, the more we live alongside our disabled neighbors, work with our disabled colleagues, and teach our disabled students, the more comfortable we will become.

"It's the telethon mentality that gets in the way," says Annette Lauber, a regular class teacher in the Raleigh, North Carolina public schools. Annette has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair and often discusses the issue of mainstreaming with her colleagues in her school. "We've seen too much of charming disabled children, usually referred to as 'helpless cripples' and most often paraded across a stage while a weeping star begs the audience for money," says Lauber. "As a result, the general public thinks of disabled people in very dependent unrealistic terms."

Lauber contends that her ability to function as a wage earning, tax paying, competent adult has as much to do with her early mainstreaming experiences as with her own perseverance. "I went to regular public schools because my parents believed that I must learn to live in the non-disabled world," Lauber recalls. "Children stared, I invited their questions. Teachers modified materials for me and my fifth grade class was moved to the first floor of the school rather than up the flight of steps. But most importantly, non-disabled kids learned a valuable lesson by observing me. They learned that a person can do something in a different way and still do it just as well. When disabled children work and play alongside non-disabled kids, the benefit is great to both groups."
BOOKS FOR CHILDREN


Hodges, Walter C. The Nameake. Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, New York: 1964. (9-12 years)


Little, Jean. Take Wing. Little, Brown, and Co., Boston: 1968. (9-12 years)


Pursell, Margaret. A Look at Physical Handicaps. Lerner Publications, Minneapolis, Minnesota: 1969. (6-10 years)


Senedy, Kate. Tree for Peter. Viking Press, New York: 1941. (8-12 years)


SOUTHALL, Ivan. Let the Balloon Go. St. Martin's Press. New York: 1968. (9-12 years)


BOOKS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS


The following are available from The Exceptional Parent Bookstore, Room 700, Statler Office Building, Boston, MA 02116:


Cleary, Margaret, Please Know Me As I Am.

Finnie, Nancie, Handling the Cerebral Palsied Child at Home.


Kappelman, Murray, Between Parent and School.


______, Travel and Travel Training for People with Disabilities.

RESOURCES

The following organizations provide a number of free and inexpensive materials on cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities:

United Cerebral Palsy Association
66 East 34th Street
New York, NY 10016

—Life Can be Beautiful for People With Cerebral Palsy
—What Is Cerebral Palsy
—Cerebral Palsy—Facts and Figures
—How To’s on Dressing and Feeding
—What You Should Know About Cerebral Palsy
—What Everyone Should Know About Cerebral Palsy

National Easter Seal Society
2023 West Ogden Avenue
Chicago, IL 60612

A272—A Special Child’s Room
L103—from Problem to Solution: The New Focus in Fighting Environmental Barriers for the Handicapped
A283—An Introduction to Your Child Who Has C.P.
A204—Feeding the Cerebral Palsied Child—Poster
A253—Clothing: An Asset or a Liability?
E17—Why Did This Happen?

HEW-PHS-HSA
Bureau of Community & Health Services
Rockville, MD 20857

HSA 75-5609—Feeding the Child With a Handicap

Public Affairs Pamphlets
381 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

401—Cerebral Palsy—More Hope Than Ever

Consumer Information Center
Pueblo, CO 81001

—Access Travel: Airports

National Rehabilitation Association
1522 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Mainstream Inc.
1200 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005


National Multiple Sclerosis Society
205 E, 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc.
810 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019

National Paraplegia Foundation
333 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601

National Association of the Physically Handicapped
6473 Grandville Avenue
Detroit, MI 48228

National Congress of Organization for the Physically Handicapped
7611 Oakland Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55423

Accent on Living
P.O. Box 700
Gillum Road and High Drive
Bloomington, IL 61701

Disabled USA, President’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
1111 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Rehabilitation Gazette
4502 Maryland Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63108
The Whey/clan'' in thr_Kitettett A 32-page booklet describing suggested kitchen layouts and procedures to adapt kitchens for wheelchair use, approximately $2.50. Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc., 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20014

Adaptations and Techniques for the Disabled Homemaker, by Hodgeman & Warpeha. Simplifies housework and gives directions for accomplishing specific tasks. Special equipment and procedures are examined, approximately $3.55. Sister Kenney Institute, Chicago Avenue at 27th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55407

Clothing for the Handicapped, by Miriam Bowar, R.N., O.T., Sister Kenney Institute, Chicago Avenue at 27th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55407

Vans, Lifts and Hand Controls, Special Feature, by Joe Laurie, Editor, Rehabilitation Gazette, 4502 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63108

Driving. Quadruplegic Functional Skills. Film, showing various methods of unaided transfer into van or car; chair storage; use of hand controls. Film No. M-3062-X. Department of HEW, National Medical Audiovisual Center, Atlanta, GA 30333

National Wheelchair Athletic Association
40-24 82nd Street Woodside
New York, NY 11377

National Wheelchair Basketball Association
110 Seaton Building
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506

American Wheelchair Bowling Association
2635 N.E. 19th Street
Pompano Beach, FL 33062

Sports n' Spokes, The Magazine for Wheelchair Sports and Recreation, 6043 North Ninth Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85013. (published bi-monthly)

Scouting for the Physically Handicapped
No. 3039 Supply Division
Boy Scouts of America
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

THE KIDS ON THE BLOCK

The Kids on the Block are a troupe of disabled and non-disabled puppets designed to teach children in regular classes what it's like to be handicapped. The classroom teaching kit contains six child size puppets (Mandy is deaf, Renaldo is blind, Mark has cerebral palsy, Ellen Jane is retarded, and Brenda and Melody are non-disabled), scripts on tape cassettes, an extensive teacher's guide of classroom activities and other teaching materials. Developed by Barbara Aiello. For information write: The Kids on the Block 3509 M Street, NW Washington, DC 20007
For additional copies, write to:

THE AFT TEACHERS' NETWORK
FOR EDUCATION
OF THE HANDICAPPED

11 DUPONT CIRCLE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
Ask for item #444