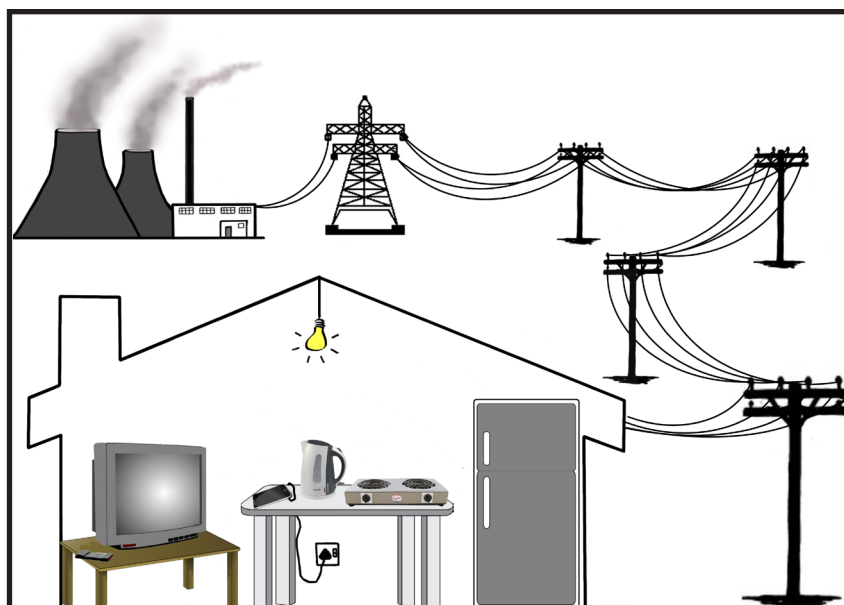


# Parent Handout

## CP = Cerebral Palsy

CP is short for cerebral palsy. The word 'cerebral' means having something to do with the brain. The word 'palsy' means a weakness or problem in the way a person moves or positions his or her body.

## The power station



### The different groups of CP:

Spastic

Choreoathetoid

Dystonic

Mixed

### The different levels of CP:

1

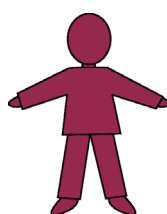
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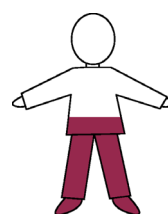
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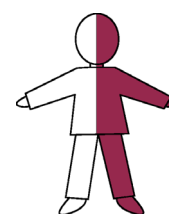
### The parts of the body involved:



Quad



Di



Hemi

# Parent Handout

Most of the time the cause of a child's CP is not known, because it is difficult to tell exactly when the damage to the brain happened.

## **Things that can happen to the mother that can cause CP:**

- Illness or infection
- Very high blood pressure
- Early labour
- Having twins
- Taking pills which could harm the baby
- Any situation where the baby cannot get out
- An accident that injures the baby's head

## **Things that can happen to the baby that can cause CP:**

- Born very early (*before 8 months*)
- Bleeding in the brain
- An infection in the brain (*meningitis or TB meningitis*)
- Fitting soon after birth

## **Things that do not cause CP:**

- Sex during pregnancy
- Emotional stress
- Angry ancestors
- Unfaithfulness in marriage
- Inherited from a family member
- Witchcraft
- Bad spirits
- Punishment from God

1. CP is lifelong. A child will always have CP and it will not go away.
2. All children with CP have problems with movement.
3. Although we cannot cure CP, all children have the potential to change.

Remember:  
**CP is not a parent's fault.**  
It is something that no parent can control.

# Parent Handout

## Caring for a child with CP is a way of life.

Children with CP will become adults with CP and as they grow, they will change. They can either change in a good way or a bad way, depending on how they spend their day.

We spend some of the day either moving, holding or carrying our children, but most of their day is spent in different positions. The way that children with CP are positioned is important, especially for level 4 and 5 children, because they cannot move on their own.

*Children can change in a good way over time.*

*This change is small in children who are level 4 or 5, but we can prevent them from becoming worse.*

*This change is easier to see in children who are level 1-3, but this change cannot happen if we do not care for the child in a way that is helpful during the day.*

## Positioning a child with CP:



*When we leave a child in a position, we need to make sure that the knees are facing the same way as the body.*

*If we do not position them well, their hips will dislocate over time.*

*If they are lying on their side, we need to support the top leg.*

*This is important for all positions, not only when the child is lying down.*

# Parent Handout

## Caring for a child with CP:

Here are some helpful points to remember when caring for a child with CP:

- Move the child slowly and give them time.
- Do not force the child's body to move.
- Tell the child what you are doing.

### A child that is stiff:

If a child is stiff, we need to loosen their body.



Moving and Twisting

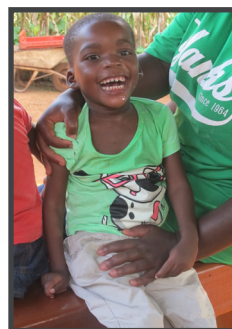


Massaging and Stretching

### A child that pushes back:

If a child pushes back or moves too much, we need to calm the body and help the child to become soft and there are some helpful ways to do this.

1. Do not fight the child.



2. We need to support their body to help them feel safe.

### Dressing and undressing



# Parent Handout



## Eating & Drinking:

### A good position:

- The child must be sitting upright.
- Their chin must be close to their chest.
- Their arms and shoulders should be forward.
- Their hips should be bent.
- Their feet should be supported.
- They should feel comfortable.

***A good position is important for a child with CP to be able to eat and drink safely and comfortably.***

***A child cannot eat and drink safely if their head is tilted back.***

***It is important that you are also comfortable when feeding your child.***

***Bring the food from below the child's eyes and in front of the child so that their head does not tilt back.***

***Make sure that the child stays in an upright position for at least 30 minutes after meals.***

***Children with CP need to be fed slowly.***

***Use a shallow spoon that fits the child's mouth.***

***Feed small amounts at a time.***

## Feeding with a spoon:

Before you begin, the child must be in a good position for feeding. Support the child's jaw lightly. Then gently press the spoon down on the tongue wait for the child to try and use their lips to take the food off the spoon.



It is very important that we give the child the opportunity to use their lips to take the food off the spoon.

If the child does not respond, you can help bring the lip down gently.

# Parent Handout

## Helping a child to chew:



- *It is important for a child to learn how to chew.*
- *When teaching the child to chew, always use soft foods that can dissolve easily if a piece breaks off, so that the child does not choke.*
- *We support the jaw to stop the mouth from opening too wide, we do not open and close the child's mouth.*
- *Be patient and give the child time to chew.*
- *Give the child something to try to chew at every meal.*
- *Ask your therapist to help you practise.*

## Drinking from a cup:



- *Using thicker liquids can make it easier and safer for a child to drink.*
- *A cut out cup helps a child to drink without tilting their head back.*
- *It is important to wait for a child to use their lips.*
- *Allow the child to drink small amounts at a time.*

## Healthy eating:

- *Firstly, children should be fed small meals 5-6 times a day, not 3 large meals.*
- *For children with CP to be healthy we need to make every meal count and we can do this by making sure that we give them at least one food from each food group every day.*
- *It is also important that children with CP drink enough water during the day.*
- *The next helpful idea is that junk foods should only be given on special occasions or as treats every now and then because they are not important for the child's health.*

### The three food groups:

#### Energy Foods:



#### Body-building Foods:



#### Protective Foods:



Malamulele Onward C2CTP ©

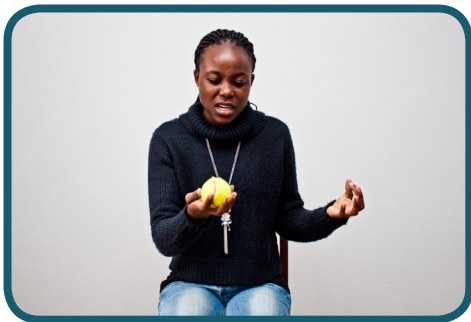
Workshop 3 - Eating and Drinking

# Parent Handout

## Communication

Communication is what we use to get messages to each other and there are two parts to communication: talking and understanding.

Remember that even if your child cannot talk, they can still listen and understand. All children with CP can communicate and they all use different ways to do it, even if they cannot talk.



## How we can help children with CP to understand better:

*When we talk to a child during different activities, we want them to learn many new words. We do not want them to only talk about the names of things. We can also describe them and talk about the actions that we can do with them.*

- *We first want the child to know what the object is. So what is it called?*
- *Then we want to describe it. Let us start with what does it look like?*
- *What does the ball feel like?*
- *If we are talking about a food, we can also talk about what it tastes like and what it smells like.*
- *After we have described the object, we can talk about the actions. What actions can you do with a ball?*

Children are learning all the time from words that they hear, so it is important for us to talk to them.

Children learn to understand words before they learn to say them, so even if they cannot talk, we can still help them to understand words.

There are many things that we can talk about. We do not only have to talk about what things are called.

While playing with a ball, a child can learn many different words.

# Parent Handout

## How we can improve a child's talking:

- *Know your child well and look for how they are trying to communicate.*
- *Call their name.*
- *Ask them questions.*
- *Do not give them instructions when playing.*
- *Respond every time.*

## Giving children opportunities to choose:

- *For a child who can talk, it is easy. We just ask: "What would you like to eat?"*
- *For a child who cannot talk, we can give them the choice between two foods. If they can point, it is easy for us to see which one they want. If they cannot point, then we have to watch carefully to see if they either use their eyes to point or move their body towards the food they want.*
- *For a child who can show YES/NO, we can ask: "Do you want carrots? Do you want meat?" Then we have to watch carefully to see their answer. They can either nod/shake their head, move their body or show it on their face.*

*It is important to give a child the chance to say something, even if they cannot talk, because if we do not give them a chance to talk, they will stop trying to communicate.*

*Children use different ways to tell us what they want, but we need to watch carefully to see what they are trying to say.*

*Always get the child's attention before you ask them a question.*

*Remember that ALL children with CP can communicate, we just have to work out how they are trying to do it.*

*It is important to give children the opportunity to make choices.*

*We can help children with CP to communicate better through what we do during everyday activities.*

# Parent Handout

## CVI = Cerebral Visual Impairment

When the brain has been damaged, like in children with CP, the problem with seeing is because of the damage to the brain, not because the eyes are damaged. The eyes are working, but the brain cannot understand what the eyes are seeing. We call this Cerebral Visual Impairment and we say CVI for short.



There are many signs that can tell us that a child has CVI. Children with CVI are all different and so some of them can see more than others.

### Helping children who have a CVI:

When working with children with a CVI we must make sure that the child is positioned well and is supported as much as possible.

We must also make sure that the room is quiet, and that we are patient and give the child enough time to respond.

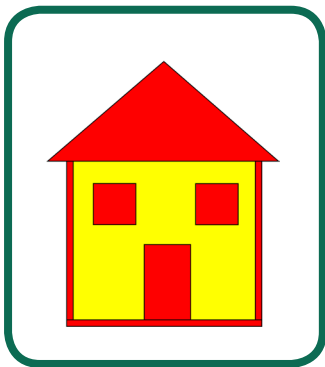
We must remember that it is tiring for the child when we are doing these activities to encourage him/her to look and so we must give the child breaks.

When we show an object to a child with CVI, it is important to remember that we need to hold it close enough for the child to see it, but we do not want to hold it right in front of their face. Often it is easier for a child to see objects when they are held to the side of the child's eyes.

# Parent Handout

We should try use the same objects so that the child gets to know them well and can see them more easily.

It is easier for children with a CVI to see bright colours, colours that are very different from each other, light and reflected light:



We can make it easier for the child with a CVI to see by making sure that there is a plain background.



We can make it easier for the child with a CVI to see an object if we move it.

When we are using light to help a child with a CVI to see, we should make sure that the lights are off and that the child is not facing a door or a window.