

# Talking About Disability in Your Centre

Discuss with the family of the child with cerebral palsy what information they would like shared about their child's disability with other children and families and staff. Some parents may prefer not to do anything special.

## Sharing with other families and staff:

- Discuss with the family what terminology centre staff may use with children and other adults - some families prefer general terms, e.g. additional needs rather than naming the disability.
- Have information on cerebral palsy available for families to read/borrow. Ensure they are aware of the benefits of inclusion for all children.
- A talk at a staff meeting or parents' group by the child's parents or educational/therapy staff may be useful.

Some families may be concerned that their child will miss out because too much time will be given to the child with additional needs - reassure them that this will not occur. There are benefits to all children in the centre, e.g. support staff/aide will assist the teacher and staff team, not just work with the child with the disability.



## Things to do with the children in the group:

### Talk about what different people:

- **Do well** e.g. painting, drawing, climbing
- **Find hard to do** e.g. whistle, tie shoe laces

### Talk about some people's **particular difficulties** and the things they **can** do.

This can apply to all children. What can help them to learn to do things as independently as possible?

- e.g. cannot see but **can**.....
- cannot walk but **learning to** ...
- cannot talk but is **signing** (talk with hands) or **using a communication device**

Show and explain the use of any specific equipment the child may use e.g. communication device, walking frame. The child may like to help demonstrate these. If the child and family are willing, other children may like to try out the equipment under adult supervision.

### Show pictures and read books about people with disability to the children

Particular ones that include cerebral palsy:

***Why do some people use wheelchairs?***

Atkinson, M., (1997)  
Dorling Kindersley, London  
ISBN 0 7513 - 5603 - 4

***We can do it***

(1997)  
Starbright Books, New York

***Nicholas Nigel Norris***

Publication of The Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia, ( 2000)  
A story book and accompanying "CP and Me' workbook  
- pages can be adapted for individual classes

## Ideas to consider when the child comes to your class

- Sometimes small groups can be set up by the adult e.g. turn taking games.
- Encourage peers to include the child in their play and talk... particularly in activities the child enjoys. Could start by handing a spade to the child... doing a puzzle together, taking turns.
- Encourage children to learn what the child can do and only help when really needed. Some children can be over helpful and do not allow time for the child to try to respond and learn to do as much as he/she can independently.
- If peers think the child needs help, encourage them to tell adults.
- If signs or pictures are being used with the child, encourage all children to use these while speaking to the child. Also use signs with some songs and games, children love them.
- Show any specific equipment the child may use... Allow other children to have a turn but be aware when the child with cerebral palsy needs it.

See also **Resources** fact sheet

**Each child with cerebral palsy has individual needs.  
In partnership with the child and their family,  
The Spastic Centre team can advise on their needs.**