

**URBAN
SAINTS**

RESOURCE

Cerebral Palsy

Effective support for
young people with
additional needs



Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a group of conditions affecting movement and posture due to abnormal development or damage to the part of the brain which controls movement. Areas of the brain that define a person's intelligence are not affected by CP.

Individuals with Cerebral Palsy can have learning difficulties, but sometimes it is the sheer magnitude of problems caused by the underlying brain abnormality or injury that prevents the individual from expressing what cognitive abilities they do possess.

Symptoms may appear, change, or become more severe as a young person gets older. Secondary conditions can include seizures, epilepsy, speech or communication disorders, eating problems, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, and/or behavioural disorders.

The disability can be anything from a fairly minor condition to a major one, affecting the young person's life and that of the people around them. Talk to the young person and their family about their condition and about what you could put in place to help them feel more comfortable in engaging in your group. Some people with cerebral palsy may need assistance with activities such as going to the toilet or getting changed. Discuss these needs in advance and make sure you are aware of what assistance might be needed. Staff/Volunteers should only assist young people with personal care if they have an enhanced DBS check with barred list and your organisations safeguarding procedures should always be followed.



Key issues

- Perceptual difficulties (vision, hearing)
- Communication (hearing, speaking)
- Physical movement and control difficulties
- Behavioural/social problems

Support strategies for your group

- **Adapting teaching materials**
(e.g. enlarging worksheets)
- **Using equipment and resources**
(e.g. magnifying equipment)
- **Using textured strips** on corridors / walls to guide the young person in the right direction
- **Hands-on experiences**
(e.g. activities that focus on improving fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and sensory processing. Effective activities include using therapy putty, building blocks, arts and crafts, and using musical instruments)
- **Sign language**
- **Keeping eye contact**
- **Teaching lip reading**
- **Visual aids**
- **Using gestures/facial expressions**
- **Hearing aids**
- **Identifying ways** in which the young person can communicate (e.g. eye pointing)
- **Using computer-aided and touch-sensitive technologies**
- **Physical therapy** (set of exercises designed by a physiotherapist)
- **Walking aids** (e.g. walking frame or splints)
- Making sure that the young person's **environment is free of obstacles**
- **Rewards scheme**
- **Praise** (catch them being good)
- **Explaining the condition** to other young people and encouraging them to be more accepting



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Further Information: Mencap UK [mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/learning-disability-and-conditions/cerebral-palsy](https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/learning-disability-and-conditions/cerebral-palsy)

Research shows that young people with additional needs are more likely to be abused than their peers (NSPCC) This increased vulnerability is due to a number of factors including communication differences, increased dependence on caregivers, social isolation and a higher likelihood that warning signs would be missed or misinterpreted. As a youth leader it's therefore important to be especially alert to changes in behaviour and wellbeing and discuss any concerns with a safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity.



This resource is just one of the many ways we're here to walk with you!

Discover more free tools, training and resources to equip you in disciplining young people.

urbansaints.org

This resource has been adapted from our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit.



If you're interested in helping your team become more aware and welcoming of young people with additional needs, you can explore our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit at urbansaints.org/resources

The original content of this resource was created in partnership with **Youthscape** as part of the Invited to Belong resource.