



Explain Put up the diagram above and discuss. Explain that cerebral palsy is damage to the brain causing problems with movement and posture, and often communication, feeding/eating, seizures, learning, and behaviour.

Go through each picture in the diagram above and give an explanation for each. Below are some explanatory notes to aid discussion. Additional background references for the facilitator are suggested in the Resource section of Module 10. Encourage discussion and ask the caregivers for each if their own child shows these symptoms.

Feeding problems: A child may have difficulties with sucking, swallowing and chewing. She may choke or gag often. Even as the child gets bigger, these and other feeding problems may continue.

Communication difficulties: The baby may not respond or react as other babies do. This may partly be due to floppiness, stiffness, or lack of arm gestures, or control of face muscles. Also, the child may be slow in beginning to speak. Later, some children develop unclear speech or other speaking difficulties. Although caregivers find it hard to know exactly what the child wants, they gradually find ways of understanding many of the child's needs. At first the child cries a lot to show what they want. Later they may point with an arm, foot or using their eyes.

Intelligence: Some children with cerebral palsy do have intellectual difficulties. Some children may seem dull or lacking intelligence, because they are limp or move slowly. Others move so much and so awkwardly that they may also appear to lack intelligence. Sometimes their faces twist, or they may drool because of weak face muscles or difficulty swallowing. This again can make an intelligent child appear mentally slow.

Seizures (epilepsy, fits, and convulsions) occur in some children with cerebral palsy.

A child disability study in Bangladesh showed that 14% of children with cerebral palsy also had epilepsy [1].

Behaviour: Sudden changes of mood from laughing to crying, becoming frightened fits of anger, and other difficult behaviour may be present. This may partly be due to the child's frustration at not being able to do what he wants with his body. If there is too much noise and activity the child can become frightened or upset. The brain damage may also affect behaviour. These children need a lot of help and patience to overcome their fears and other unusual behaviour.

POSTURE AND MOVEMENT



Materials

Display photos 1.03a-c

Muscle stiffness: Some children have **muscle stiffness**, or 'muscle tension' (this can be called Hypertonia). This causes part of her body to be rigid, or stiff. Movements are slow and awkward. Often the position of the head triggers strange positions of the whole body. The stiffness increases when the child is upset or excited, or when her body is in certain positions. **The pattern of stiffness varies greatly from child to child and she has no control over these movements.** Muscle stiffness is the most common way that individuals are affected by cerebral palsy.