

Interventions to improve function in cerebral palsy

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Information for young people and families

The following recommendations have been developed by an international panel of clinicians to highlight best practice principles for children or young people with cerebral palsy who have functional goals. This information sheet aims to provide you with ideas based on current research. These ideas can be discussed with the clinicians who are supporting yourself or your child to achieve your goals.



SETTING GOALS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU

Intervention should always begin with clinicians asking children, young people and families what is most important to them, and setting therapy goals based around these priorities.

Functional goals are related to real-life tasks and activities (such as getting dressed and riding a bike), rather than focussing on underlying movements or impairments (such as increasing elbow range of motion).

Small, achievable goals should be set and all members of the team should have a copy of the goals so that everyone is working towards common goals.

A maximum of three goals is recommended at any one time, so that practice is achievable and children and families are not overwhelmed by trying to work on everything at one time.

PRACTICING THE WHOLE GOAL WITHIN REAL LIFE

When a child or young person has a functional goal, research tells us that the most effective way to achieve that goal is to practice the whole goal, rather than working on underlying movements or skills. For long term goals, this may mean setting smaller, achievable goals that work towards the long term goal.

Practicing goals within real life contexts, such as at home or school, and practicing with the equipment or objects that the child uses everyday leads to greater success

Practice outside of therapy is hard work for families, but in order for goals to be achieved, practice needs to occur more regularly than just during therapy sessions.

Talk to your team about how much practice is likely to be needed. Together, come up with a plan for when and where this practice can realistically happen for your family. Consider supports that may be able to help with this plan, such as friends, siblings, school or extended family members.



WORKING TOGETHER AS PART OF A TEAM

Clinicians should share their knowledge about evidence-based intervention options that are appropriate for you/your child based on their abilities and goals. This will enable you to make informed decisions about which intervention suits you best. Some interventions may not be appropriate for you/your child at that time, and clinicians can help you understand why that is.

Families should be given choices and flexibility around services.

Clinicians working with you/your child should collaborate as a team, with your family included as an integral part of the team.

Clinicians communicating effectively around current priorities and intervention plans can ensure everyone is working towards common goals and reduce the burden on families around coordinating services.

