

ABOUT CEREBRAL PALSY



Cerebral palsy is a broad term that refers to a group of disabilities or disorders affecting a person's movement, coordination, muscle control and tone, reflexes, posture and balance.

It is one of the most common physical disabilities in Australia.

Each learner with cerebral palsy is a unique individual. Educators and leaders who support learners with cerebral palsy should make sure adjustments to their learning and environment are tailored to their needs. When you understand the impact of cerebral palsy on the individual learner, you'll be better able to adjust to those needs.

See the online practice guides to find out more:

[https://www.sa.gov.au/education/cerebral-palsy](#)

Understanding cerebral palsy

Cerebral palsy results from damage or injury during pregnancy, birth or shortly after birth. Impaired movement can affect the arms or legs, with some forms also affecting the trunk, face and mouth. The most common form in South Australia is more pronounced on one side of the body (hemiplegia), and the next most common form affects the legs more than the arms (diplegia). More rarely, it may affect both sides of the body (quadriplegia).

It is not degenerative; this means cerebral palsy does not increase in severity over time. However, some common symptoms might, while others might improve.

Conditions commonly identified or diagnosed in children who have cerebral palsy

There are many conditions commonly identified or diagnosed in children who have cerebral palsy. They may also require adjustments to ensure learners access and participate on the same or equal basis as their peers.

In South Australia, the most common disorders and disabilities diagnosed in children with cerebral palsy include:

- mild-severe intellectual disability
- vision impairment
- epilepsy
- speech impairment, including complex communication needs.

Learning environment considerations

In a learning environment, learners can experience:

- difficulty moving around the class or between classrooms and learning environments
- difficulty grasping, holding, gripping tools or implements with precision
- weariness from maintaining posture
- difficulties or an inability to speak with their teachers, support people, and peers - causing isolation and frustration and potential behavioural issues.

Strengths and characteristics of learners with cerebral palsy

Include:

- expressive abilities and enthusiasm when engaged in preferred activities
- resilience and self-advocacy
- perseverance, resilience, a sense of humour, cheekiness, and desire to have fun with their peers.

CEREBRAL PALSY ADJUSTMENTS

EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS

Support a child's activities

- Learn each learner's profile and introduce adjustments for any co-existing