

Fact Sheet Series

Accommodating Students with Cerebral Palsy

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JAN'S ACCOMMODATION FACT SHEET SERIES

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a disorder caused by damage to the brain during or shortly after birth, especially affecting the ability to control movement and posture. CP is not a disease so it is not progressive, communicable, inherited, or a primary cause of death.

The United Cerebral Palsy Association estimates that approximately 3,000 infants are born with CP each year. In the United States, 500,000 adults and children have one or more of the symptoms associated with CP. Symptoms may include muscular weakness and floppiness (hypotonia); abnormal, awkward positions; a tendency to favor one side of the body over the other; poor muscle control and lack of coordination; muscle spasms or seizures; problems with sucking, chewing, or swallowing; inability to control bladder and bowels (incontinence); and difficulty speaking, concentrating, and interpreting sense perceptions, such as touch.

The following is a quick overview of some of the accommodations that might be useful for students with CP. For a discussion regarding how to accommodate people with CP in the workplace, access our publication titled "Accommodating People with Cerebral Palsy" at http://askjan.org/media/CP.html.

Performing Activities of Daily Living:

- Provide an accessible restroom
- Assign classrooms close to an accessible restroom
- Allow the use of personal care attendants
- Allow the use of a service animal
- Schedule classes to allow extra time for activities of daily living (ADL)

Accessing Classrooms:

- Provide accessible parking, an accessible route of travel, and accessible entrances/exits
- Install lightweight doors or automatic door openers
- Maintain unobstructed hallways, aisles, and means of egress
- Provide an accessible classroom desk or portable wheelchair desk

Taking Notes:

- Use a laptop computer with alternative computer input device/software
- Use writing and grip aids
- Provide a note taker
- Provide a copy of the instructor's notes or outline

Studying and Test Taking:

- Use a computer software program for self-editing, word prediction, and grammar/spell check
- Use an electronic organizer, post notes/reminders
- Allow extra time to complete homework assignments
- Provide a scribe

Communicating with Others:

- Use a communication aid with speech output
- Add communication software/speech synthesizer to a laptop
- Use a speech clarification device

Resources Specifically for Students with Cerebral Palsy

Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)

Univ. of Mass. Boston 100 Morrissey Blvd. Boston, MA 02125-3393 617-287-3880 (V) 617-287-3882 (TTY) http://ahead.org

HEATH Resource Center

The George Washington University 2121 K Street, NW Suite 220 Washington, DC 20037 202-973-0904/800-544-3284 http://www.heath.gwu.edu

National Disability Sports Alliance (NDSA)

Formerly the United States Cerebral Palsy Athletic Association 25 West Independence Way Kingston, RI 02881 401-792-7130 http://www.ndsaonline.org/main.htm

United Cerebral Palsy Association

7 Penn Plaza, Suite 804 New York, NY 10001 800-USA-1UCP http://www.ucpa.org

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