

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy is the most common motor disability in childhood in the United States, yet no two cases are the same. With such a wide range, when it comes to creating an inclusive children's or youth ministry, it's important to understand **what to know and what to ask.**

What to Know

Cerebral Palsy is a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture. It is caused by a brain injury that usually occurs before or during birth. Cerebral Palsy can affect motor issues on one side of the body only, both legs only, or it can affect both legs and arms, as well as the trunk, face and mouth.

There are four different types. Spastic CP is the most common type, which makes a person's muscles feel stiff and tight, affecting movement. Other types may cause involuntary movement, shaky movements, or a mix of motor issues.

What to Ask Parents

1. Would you please tell us about your child?
2. Does your child require any special assistance with activities or positioning?
3. Does your child use any assistive technology? If so, how can we best support him in it?
4. Does your child have any dietary restrictions?
5. Does your child require any assistance in the restroom?
6. Does your child have any other co-occurring conditions?
7. Does your child have seizures? If so, what should we do?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?

What to Ask Yourself

1. Is there anything that you should change in your class to be more inclusive?

Look around your classroom. Are the aisles wide enough for a wheelchair? Can you add adaptive items, such as easy grip crayons or accessible toys? What about large group games? Could your student participate? If not, what could you play instead?