



CEREBRAL PALSY

The Finnish CP Association



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We thank kindly the British Women’s Association, Helsinki.
Without You we would have been lost in translation.

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FOREWORD

This guide offers basic information about cerebral palsy. It also includes that kind of help that the Finnish Cerebral Palsy Association (Suomen CP-liitto ry) offers children with cerebral palsy and their families.

The Finnish CP Association was founded in 1965. We are a national disability organisation and sports organisation for people with disabilities.

We monitor the rights of people with cerebral palsy (CP), spina bifida, hydrocephalus, normal pressure hydrocephalus and other childhood-onset physical disabilities of neurologic origin. We also support the families of people with such disabilities. We aim to build a society where everyone has equal opportunities to participate and lead a full life.

The Finnish CP Association organizes activities, courses, educational lectures and individual support online and face-to-face. Our 19 local member associations around the country also offer peer support, activities and guidance.

Peer support and friends for life

Equality and peer support are very important in our association. Being with people who are going through the same as you, immediately brings a sense of belonging. Peers can offer you support, understanding and knowledge. Together you can find ways to move forward in your day-to-day life.

Peers can give you handy tips and offer new perspectives on how to manage different situations in life. You, your child and any siblings they may have will find new friends among peers and will build lifelong friendships.

You can meet peers by coming to our activities and meetings. Most of our activities are free of charge. You don't have to be a member of our association to participate.



A PEER is a person who has had similar experiences or has a similar background to you.



We organise summer courses for children and youth with cerebral palsy and their families during the summer.

Adaptation training

You can find new friends and ways to cope with everyday life during our adaptation training courses (*sosiaalinen valmennus* in Finnish, *cp-liitto.fi/sova*). We organise adaptation training courses for children and youth with cerebral palsy and their families during the summer.

Adaptation training is a form of habilitation that aims to improve how participants interact with the society around them. In addition to professional support, a crucial element in the adaptation training courses is peer support, especially the possibility to share experiences.

Personal guidance

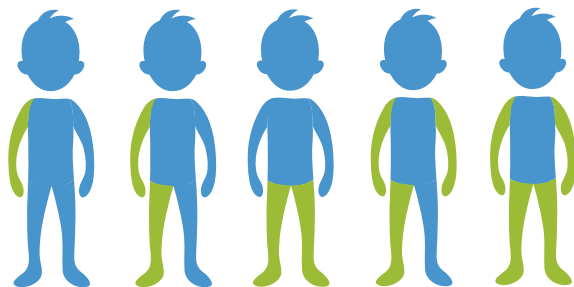
We also offer guidance on applying for services, support and rehabilitation (read more on page 8). Feel free to contact us about any help you need. We are here for you. You can find all of our contact details on our website: *cp-liitto.fi/yhteystiedot*.

CEREBRAL PALSY

Cerebral Palsy is not everything a person is. Each of us have our own paths to follow, our own stories to tell, our own valuable and unique lives. We are all equal members of society. We all have the right to participate, to live our lives as we want.

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a neurological condition caused by injury to the brain either during pregnancy, labor or in the first years of a child's life. CP is the most common motor and mobility disability diagnosed in childhood. There are approximately 6 000–7 000 people in Finland who have cerebral palsy. One in 500 newborn babies is diagnosed with cerebral palsy every year.

The disability is permanent, but through rehabilitation, assistive devices and sufficient support in daily life, people with cerebral palsy can live a full and meaningful life, no matter how severe the effects are.



Monoplegia: one limb is affected. This is the least common type of cerebral palsy.

Hemiplegia: the paralysis is on one vertical half of the body. May also be referred to as unilateral cerebral palsy. Often, the arm is more affected than the leg.

Diplegia: two limbs are affected. Although diplegia typically refers to someone whose legs are most involved, the arms may also be affected, but to a lesser degree.

Triplegia: three limbs are affected. Usually both legs and one arm are affected.

Quadriplegia: all four limbs are affected.

The effects of cerebral palsy vary from person to person. With some individuals, you won't even notice that they have a disability. Others will need help in all of their daily activities throughout their lives.



Several different types of therapies are available for children and babies with cerebral palsy. Therapy can improve physical, mental, social and learning impairments. People with cerebral palsy will need therapy and rehabilitation throughout their lives.

In Finland, children with cerebral palsy attend day care with proper assistance, attend schools that meet the level of support and assistance they need, have their own hobbies and interests, study for careers and become either working professionals or attend day activity services tailored to their needs. As adults, they move into their own homes or assisted living facilities and live full, independent lives.

Some of the potential issues a child with cerebral palsy may face

- Motor and mobility disabilities
- Speech difficulties
- Learning disabilities
- Cognitive impairments
- Epilepsy
- Spasticity
- Hearing or visual impairments



SERVICES, SUPPORT AND REHABILITATION

Finnish society supports disabled people and their families through different services. The goal is to make sure that everyone has equal possibilities to live active, independent and healthy lives.

All disabled people are unique, and their life situations differ. The specific services provided and how they are arranged depend on each person's individual needs and life situation. It is very important that the disabled person and their family are listened to and can participate in planning the support services they need.

In Finland a person with disability has subjective right to some particular services if the person meets the criteria for granting the services. Some services are bound to appropriations allocated to them by a municipality. This means that if the disabled person meets the conditions to be granted the services, they will get them if the municipality has enough funding.

The Finnish Constitution guarantees equal treatment for persons with disabilities. Discrimination on the grounds of disability is prohibited in the Finnish national legislation, in the European Union legislation and in international human rights' treaties.

Finland has also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the international commitment to equality and empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Services in early childhood

DOCTOR/HEALTH CARE

Your child's doctor will determine which therapies would be beneficial for your child and will write up a rehabilitation plan. With this statement, you can apply for rehabilitation from Kela (kansaneläkelaitos). Kela covers the costs of rehabilitation therapy. The child's therapist must be a specialist approved by Kela. If your child needs assistive devices or mobility aids, such as a wheelchair, your child's doctor and health care specialists will assist you.

SOCIAL WORKER/MUNICIPALITY

Shortly after a child is diagnosed with cerebral palsy, the family will usually meet with an assigned social worker. The social worker will inform them about the different services available and can help in applying for disability allowances from Kela.

When the child is a little bit older, the family and the social worker will start to discuss if one of the parents should become an informal caregiver for their disabled child. The family can also apply for transportation services through the social worker if the child has a motor disability. This means that the disabled child will have the right to use a taxi for a certain amount of times per month to go to their hobbies, visit friends or relatives, etc. Later in childhood, applying for personal assistance will help the disabled child to become more independent and prepare them for adulthood.



Municipal services are based on a personal service plan and cover:

- Informal care support
- Short-term care
- Personal assistance
- Transportation services
- Home alterations and equipment and devices

The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) is responsible for:

- Disability allowance for persons under/over 16 years
- Care allowance for pensioners
- Rehabilitation allowance
- Rehabilitation allowance for young persons
- Pensions
- Housing benefits
- Reimbursement for medicine expenses
- Reimbursement for travel costs in connection with health care and rehabilitation
- Social assistance (if income and assets do not cover essential daily expenses)
- Rehabilitation (ask for a rehabilitation plan from your hospital first)
- Disability Card (optional, may be asked for in some places as proof that a person is disabled)

Specialised health care is responsible for:

- Childrens' assistive devices
- Electrical assistive devices
- Rehabilitation plan

Municipal health care is responsible for:

- Assistive devices for persons aged 16 and older
- Rehabilitation planning for persons aged 16 and older

More information

**Handbook on disability services by
the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare:**
thl.fi/en/web/handbook-on-disability-services

The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela):
kela.fi
kela.fi/web/en/disability

Information about the Finnish health care system:
eu-healthcare.fi

Services for people with a speech impairment:
kela.fi/interpreter-service-for-the-disabled-learn-more

**The Finnish CP Association's services and translators
for people with speech impairments:**
cp-liitto.fi/puhetupa
(The site is in Finnish, but feel free to contact us
for more information)

The Finnish CP Association in English:
cp-liitto.fi/in-english

**Hilma – The Support Centre for
Immigrant Persons with Disabilities and long-term illnesses:**
tukikeskushilma.fi

Help with covering the costs of an assistant

You can apply to the Finnish CP Association to cover the costs of short-term assistance for a disabled person. One person can apply for a maximum of 70 hours per year. You must find the assistant yourself. The assistant can not live in the same household as the person who is being assisted and can assist 10 hours a day at most.

If you and the assistant meet our criteria, you can apply to The Finnish CP Association to pay the assistant at 10,75 euros per hour. We do not cover other costs, such as travel expenses. The assistant will be paid after the work is done, and withholding tax will be deducted from the salary. You must make the application before the assistant starts work and for a selected period of time.

Read more and apply: cp-liitto.fi/avustajapalvelu.

If you need help in applying, contact us: cp-liitto.fi/yhteystiedot.



Professions of people with cerebral palsy

Translator

Special education teacher

Bus driver

Pastor

Physical education teacher

Nanny

Librarian

Doctor

Gardener

Assistive device technician

IT -professional

Journalist

Writer

Car mechanic

Youth counsellor

Bio analyst



Help with covering the costs of an assistant for a day or weekend

If you take care of your child or a family member with cerebral palsy, spina bifida or hydrocephalus and are not an informal care giver (being an informal caregiver means that you have an agreement with the municipality for care giving), you can apply to the Finnish CP Association to cover the costs of an assistant for a day or a weekend. You must find the assistant yourself. The assistant must be over 18 years of age and cannot live in the same household as the person who is being assisted. We do not cover other costs, such as travel expenses.

If you and the assistant meet our criteria, you can apply to The Finnish CP Association to pay the assistant at 170 euros per day. The assistant will be paid after the work is done, and withholding tax will be deducted from the salary. You must make the application before the assistant starts work and for a selected period of time.

Read more and apply: cp.liitto.fi/perhelomitustoiminta.

If you need help in applying, contact us: cp-liitto.fi/yhteystiedot.

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

The Finnish Cerebral Palsy Association organizes activities, meetings and shares information about cerebral palsy and the Finnish service system. You are more than welcome to join all our face-to-face activities and webinars. Read more: cp-liitto.fi/tapahtumat.







**ENNEN KAIKKEA
IHMINEN.**

