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Cerebral Palsy program



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Children's Hospital Boston's Cerebral Palsy Program

provides interdisciplinary, state-of-the-art evaluation and treatment of children with cerebral palsy and a variety of neuromuscular disabilities.

Goals of the Program

Our goal is to provide services in an atmosphere of family centered care, with a strong focus on maximizing a child's function, strength and quality of life. We offer complete management of neuromuscular problems.

Conditions Treated

The Cerebral Palsy Program treats more than 1,800 patients each year with a wide range of conditions, including:

- cerebral palsy
- progressive neuromuscular conditions (primary neurologic, myopathic abnormalities)
- congenital malformations
- muscle tendon contractures
- congenital and acquired deformities of the spine, hip, knee, ankle, foot and upper extremity

Assessment and Treatment

The goal of assessment is to evaluate fully the child's medical, developmental, and therapeutic needs in the context of their daily activities. In doing so, we can determine the best course of treatment to improve function and quality of life for both the child and care givers. A plan of care will address the factors that limit the child's ability to participate fully in daily life.

Medical

The goal of the medical assessment is to provide a comprehensive multisystem evaluation of the associated medical conditions that impact the child's health and well being. Care is offered in a collaborative and coordinated model involving the range of a child's providers. Recommendations are targeted to optimize medical stability and developmental potential. They may include:

- referral to subspecialty providers and therapists
- studies to further define a medical concern
- suggestions regarding medication management

Functional

The goal of functional assessment is to maximize communication, self-care and mobility. It may include referrals to:

- Motion Analysis Laboratory to evaluate gait at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
- Adaptive Equipment Clinic to recommend equipment for mobility or activities of daily living
- Augmentative Communication Program to identify strategies for optimal communication
- Brace Shop to determine the best orthoses to enhance functional mobility

Musculoskeletal

The goal of treatment is to prevent bone and joint deformity by balancing muscle forces about the joint. Treatment for managing altered muscle tone or muscle contractures is broken down into several components:

- physical therapy to develop exercise programs to improve motor function and mobility
- occupational therapy to improve function, independence and self care

- braces, hand splints and orthotic devices to control joint deformities, stretch contracted muscles, support weak muscles and encourage better movement patterns
- surgical lengthening when contractures are severe and cause problems with movement, balance and coordination
- management of spasticity, dystonia and other movement disorders

Meet the Team

After careful examination and review of each child's developmental progress, the team outlines a course of treatment on an individual basis. Referrals to all sub-specialties can be made by our team depending on the individual needs of the child.

Team members include:

- neurologists
- occupational therapists
- orthopaedic surgeons
- orthotists
- physiatrists
- physical therapists
- physicians from Complex Care Services
- registered nurses and nurse practitioners
- social workers
- speech language pathologists

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