



Cerebral Palsy Care

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What is Conductive Education?

Conductive Education is a holistic approach to learning, educating the child as a whole rather than treating the disability in isolation. The holistic approach develops the whole personality of the child through active learning, also enabling the child to become more independent and confident. The system of learning is rich in opportunities for realising the child's full potential.

Conductive Education does not profess to be a cure but can greatly improve the child's self-esteem and the quality of life for the whole family.

The Conductor

This is a highly skilled professional who delivers Conductive Education. Conductors are trained in their workplace where practical and theoretical training happen simultaneously. The system of training, in Hungary and the U.K. has built up a wealth of experience over decades and this experience is there for the trainee and newly qualified conductor to use and benefit from. The training lasts 3-4 years to gain Qualified Conductor Status. This status is gained after a three or four year degree course either in Hungary or U.K.

The History of Conductive Education

The originator of Conductive Education, Andras Peto, was born in Hungary. Later he moved to Austria to practise as a doctor of medicine. This was between the two world wars, when Vienna was the European centre for intellectuals. It was in this artistic atmosphere that Peto was stimulated to formulate a new holistic system of learning.

When returning to Budapest during the war, Peto was hidden in a basement of a house owned by a gentile friend. Here he spent most of his time working and playing with the daughter of his hostess who had cerebral palsy. He was very successful with the child and immediately after the war he concentrated on training staff to work with children with cerebral palsy in his new institute, which he called "The Institute for the Motor Impaired". This was in 1951. In 1984 the new Institute, now very famous in Budapest, was opened in the Buda Hills.

Peto died in 1967 and the important work was continued by his students and colleagues. Most well known is Maria Hari, whose inspired work saw the Institute through the exciting, but often

difficult times in the 70s and 80s, when work expanded throughout the world at an amazing speed.

Peto was not a fundamentalist. "Take it and use it". "The children will tell you how", he added, suggesting the solution lies in knowledge gained by thorough observation.

The aims of Conductive Education

The aim is to bring out the full potential of each child, however great or small that potential may be, by helping them become active participants in a broad and balanced pre-school education in the context of a stimulating and attractive environment.

One of the important aims of Conductive Education is to promote self-awareness and to this end each parent introduces their child to the programme of activities, within a group of other parents and children, which involves the child in active learning using toys, games and songs, while at the same time guiding their child with the help of the conductors, to learn mobility, change position, use of hands to manipulate and explore and to communicate. The children learn to do things that most babies and young children learn to do naturally- holding up their heads, looking and listening, holding on to things, sitting, standing, walking and to concentrate and anticipate. Each time the child attends the centre a new theme is used to maintain interest and motivation although a similar routine is used. With the guidance of the team, parents learn with their child and are able to help their child transfer the skills learnt during the session into everyday life at home- eating, drinking, nappy changing, getting in and out of bed, etc., as well as how their child can actively play and have fun, all become a way of life.