

## **What is Conductive Education?**

Conductive Education is a system of habilitation and rehabilitation which teaches people with motor disorders the skills they need to overcome their physical disabilities. They learn to manage their condition in such a way that their confidence increases, they feel more positive about the future and they are able to lead more independent and fulfilled lives.

## **Who can benefit?**

Conductive Education has been developed specifically to meet the needs of people with motor disorders, that is, problems of neurological origin which cause difficulties in controlling movement. They include:

- cerebral palsy
- dyspraxia
- multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's
- Strokes
- head injuries
- dystonia
- progressive supranuclear palsy

(see Appendix for statistics on these conditions)

## **How does Conductive Education actually work?**

Conductive Education is taught by specially trained Conductors who work with the individual to achieve goals that are important to them.

For example, with children they begin by breaking down each movement into small achievable steps and work on creating the intention within the child to do the movement, often using song or other verbal techniques. These movements can then be practised until they become automatic. For babies this can mean learning to control their head and eye movements so they can bond with their parents, for toddlers it can be learning to look after their self-care needs such as eating and dressing, and for older children it can mean mastering the grip of a pencil needed to write their names.

Conductors work with adults to help them manage their condition and increase their level of ability. Conductors are trained in neurology, disability, physiology, psychology, rehabilitation and motor learning and they work together with the participant to build on their skills and help them develop ways of controlling the effects of the condition. The aim is to help them live more independently, so they may be taught everyday skills such as walking, or how to get in and out of a car.

Underlying the teaching is the philosophy that all children and adults, no matter how brain-damaged, can learn. Conductive Education teaches people with motor disorders to know that their co-ordination is much more under their control than they and their families may have thought, and that there are ways in which they can achieve much more.

## History and Origins:

### Conductive Education

- Conductive Education was developed in Budapest, Hungary, by physician András Pető in the years following World War II.
- A Birmingham group was already investigating CE in the early 80s when a BBC documentary called **Standing Up for Joe** followed a British family who took their son to the Pető Institute in Hungary. The programme generated a huge response: the question was raised, *why wasn't Conductive Education available in the UK?*
- Over 11,000 enquiries and a national parental campaign alongside the Birmingham Research group led to the creation of a national charity the Foundation for Conductive Education to establish Conductive Education in the UK. Today Conductive Education is a world-wide movement, with over 25 organisations offering CE in the UK and over 150 centres abroad.

### The Foundation for Conductive Education

- The Foundation for Conductive Education was founded in 1986 to develop and advance the science and skill of Conductive Education, especially through teaching. The Foundation is dedicated to making Conductive Education more widely available to all those who could benefit by a programme of services, training, research and awareness-raising.
- The Foundation is leading the way in the development of Conductive Education across the Western world, working with countries such as Canada and Norway, to create services and training.
- The Foundation piloted the UK's first CE services for children in 1988. Services for adults followed in 1990.

- The Foundation funded the first group of British trainees who travelled to Hungary for a four-year training course to become qualified conductors – the specialist teachers who deliver CE. Two of those original trainees Dr Melanie Brown (Senior Conductor and Director of Rehabilitation and Training) and Mrs Wendy Baker (senior Conductor and Director of Children’s Services) head up services for CE.
- The **BA (Hons) Conductive Education** was developed by the Foundation in 1997 to provide the Qualified Conductors necessary to ensure the availability of CE worldwide. The course is run jointly between FCE and the University of Wolverhampton and is the only CE course available outside Hungary. Successful completion leads to qualified Conductor Status. Graduates have taken up employment in the UK and abroad.
- The Foundation has developed Conductive Education to benefit other conditions such as dystonia, dyspraxia and progressive supranuclear palsy.

### **The National Institute of Conductive Education**

- National Institute of Conductive Education (NICE) was established by the Foundation and as an exemplar of CE practice is the leading centre in the UK for the provision of services and training. NICE, in Moseley, Birmingham, was opened in 1995 by Diana, Princess of Wales. It helps around 450 adults and children a year.

### **Services provided by NICE**

#### **For children**

- Parent & Child Service for children aged 0 to 3 years (also provided outside Birmingham in Gloucester)
- Early Intervention Service: Short-term and continuous attendance (3-7 years)
- Primary school - Ofsted approved (5 to 11 years)
- Sessional services for children and adolescents (3 to 17 years) with cerebral palsy
- Sessional services for children with dyspraxia

#### **For adults**

- Sessional Services for adults with Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis, strokes, head injuries, cerebral palsies and other motor disorders

- Carers' courses for those caring for adults with stroke, Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis

### **Information Services**

- Outreach services and consultancy work in other organisations (UK and abroad)
- A library, web-site and information service created by the Foundation provide a unique up-to-date resource on CE developments around the world.

### **Training**

- NICE runs the BA (Hons) Conductive Education in conjunction with the University of Wolverhampton. The centre is developing a post-graduate module for 2006.
- NICE also runs workshops and training courses for professionals working with children and adults with movement disabilities. More than 500 people benefited from CE training in 2005.

### **Some facts about funding**

- Some children are statemented by their local authority to attend our Early Intervention and School groups.
- The parent and child service for under threes is currently free thanks to a sponsorship project from insurance company Zurich.
- Adults services are funded and subsidized through a variety of means including NHS grants, local authorities grants and individual means.
- The charity still has to rely heavily on voluntary funding, and must raise 550K each year to continue to provide a full range of services.

### **Fundraising and events**

- The Foundation runs a calendar of events and fundraising activities every year. This year events include an Arctic Dog Sled Challenge, a garden party, corporate lunches, a family fun day, wine tasting and much more.

- In Spring 2006 the first ever Conductive Education Awareness Week will take place from 11-19 March 2006.

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## Appendix: Statistics

- There has been a slight increase in the proportion of children who have cerebral palsy in recent years. One in every 400 children is affected by cerebral palsy.  
(Source: *Scope summer 2005*)
- Up to 10 per cent of the population may show symptoms of dyspraxia; and 2 per cent are severely affected by the condition. Of those diagnosed, 80 per cent are male.  
(Source: *The Dyspraxia Foundation Summer 2005*)
- Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is the most common disabling neurological condition affecting young adults. Around 85,000 people in the UK have MS. MS is most often diagnosed in people between the ages of 20 and 40, and women are almost twice as likely to develop it as men.  
(Source: *MS Society Summer 2005*)
- In the UK, one in 500 people, around 120,000 individuals have Parkinson's. Usually symptoms appear after the age of 50 and the risk of getting Parkinson's increases with age. Statistically, men are slightly more likely to develop Parkinson's than women. However, in some cases it starts before the age of 40. (This is known as young-onset Parkinson's). About 10,000 people in the UK are diagnosed each year and 1 in 20 of these will be aged under 40 years.  
(Source: *Parkinson's Disease Society Summer 2005*)