

**THE SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH MOTOR IMPAIRMENTS  
CRAIGHALBERT CENTRE  
Handbook for Parents**

**SECTION TWO : CURRICULUM**

**The Framework**

A Process of Adaptation

The Children's Day and the Curriculum

**Key Aspects**

## **Craighalbert Curriculum : A Process of Adaptation**

The Craighalbert Curriculum is the total of all learning experiences the children have within the school. The curriculum is designed to meet the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of young children and exists within a supportive social setting, in relationships which are warm and stimulating. The curriculum encourages independent activity in the handling of real objects and materials in situations which make sense to the children. An integral part of the Craighalbert Centre's philosophy is that the children are active learners who learn best through direct experiences within a meaningful context. The intention is therefore to create an educational environment in which children's learning is driven by self motivation and by the high expectations of staff, parents and children alike. The programme is based on the normal activities of the day, including communications, feeding, dressing, playing, moving and socialising. The curriculum is a model for change, and a strong belief in the adaptability of the children is implicit. In their learning the children will experience many problems which they will be helped to solve themselves. They will be encouraged by the experience of success and by their developing ability to make choices. The children become active problem solvers because they want to achieve goals which must be exciting and worth striving to achieve. This motivation to reach the goals is the most important means of learning.

Conductive education is a system of holistic education and prepares children with motor impairments for school and life, developing the children's personality, cognition, language, communication and hand function, thus enabling the children to participate more fully in age appropriate activities. The Craighalbert curriculum is based upon conductive education within the context of national advice on the curriculum in Scotland.

### The Individual



The Craighalbert curriculum is child-centred, the starting point being the needs of the children as observed throughout the day. The staff are aware of and act upon, the needs, interest and concerns of the children. It is important that the children's various learning styles are recognised, and the methods and approaches are carefully selected according to these learning styles and the planned outcome. of great importance for teaching and learning is the emotional well-being of the children and the families, and the Craighalbert Centre seeks to provide a total environment for learning, based upon respect and value of the individual and aim to ensure all children achieve fully in every aspect of the curriculum. Learning how to learn is a most important feature of early education and it is essential the children are helped to develop self esteem and self confidence. Parents play a central role offering unique knowledge of their children. Each family has different needs, expectations and standards and every parent is interested in the education of their children and can contribute to a curriculum.

The Craighalbert curriculum, informed by an important tenet of conductive education is concerned with the learning of functional tasks which ultimately lead to a greater degree of independence. Learning tasks are carried out when a particular functional skill is required, so making the task meaningful to the child. Time is organised in such a manner that emerging skills can be reinforced and generalised in appropriate and meaningful situations and so the context is of relevance to the child.

The children will bring to the Centre, a unique blend of experiences from their home and community environments, and so the curriculum, in recognising all children as individuals, must be relevant to personal needs and reflect interests.

## The Group



The children are social learners and the group enhances motivation within each child. They learn from one another's example and come to develop relationships with their peers. As the children play and learn together they will watch each other and may come to understand how success is achieved and will be motivated to try themselves. Each child has a particular strength for the others to admire. The adults in the group are important mediators of learning and lead the children through a series of active problem-solving activities. A most important point is that voluntary activity is self-initiated rather than a response to adults or the environment. Child-initiated activities are more likely to engage and maintain the children's attention and involvement. Their achievements are reinforced by bringing them to the attention of the group, through praise. Motivation is created through success, laying the foundation for the next achievement.

## The Learning Environment

The quality of the learning environment for children in the early years is crucial. Well-organised and stimulating, it offers opportunities for the development of self-reliance and independence, for children to be responsible for their own activities, to access materials, resources and space, and for learning based through experience. Use of equipment is planned for the whole day. Equipment is placed strategically, in order that children can move around as independently as possible. The room is organised, creating order, and the children learn to organise themselves in the environment.

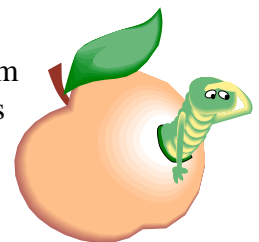
## The Aims



Given the effect the pervasive nature of cerebral palsy has on children's development, it is essential to meet the children's needs in an holistic way. All areas of development impinge upon each other, can work against each other and can be used to reinforce each other. The Craighalbert curriculum is integrated in approach, seeks to offer a model of change, and is transformative in nature. The children need to develop competencies in functional movement, independence and personal skills and the Craighalbert Centre sees these areas as areas of priority.

## **The Children's Day and the Curriculum**

One of the key aims of the Craighalbert Centre is to provide a curriculum and a good daily experience for children with motor impairments which is based upon the principles of conductive education within the context of national advice on the curriculum; the approach takes account of the philosophy of conductive education at the Petö Institute and national advice on early education, special educational needs and the 5-14 curriculum.



The Centre must balance the principles and practices of conductive education with national advice on the curriculum. It recognises that it has a duty to act as a national centre for young children with motor impairments and as a Scottish educational establishment: it acknowledges its links with education authorities and health agencies; it relates to education authority schools, practice and expectations; it ensures that its children can transfer at the appropriate and agreed time to more local provision; it has high expectations of its staff and the children who attend the Centre.

### **Conductive Education: Key Aims**

The prime concern of conductive education is to prepare for school and life, facilitating full membership in an inclusive society.

The Centre accepts that view and that the related key aims of conductive education which are central to the planning of the children's day and the curriculum are to:



- bring dignity to each child
- support and enhance their self-esteem
- promote their self-motivation
- create a context for their academic, emotional, physical and social growth
- encourage their independence

More specifically, it means that there is an emphasis on:

- diagnosing and addressing their individual needs
- intervening as early as possible to meet these needs
- active physical programme, integral to school day
- transforming dysfunction into function using language for motor planning
- using an educational approach in all areas of development, including motor development.
- ensuring that their rights are met.

### **National Advice on the Curriculum: Key Aims**

The report “*Education for Children Under Five in Scotland*” [SOEID, 1994], [Under 5] stated that there was considerable agreement among staff in different settings about the aims of pre-school provision. They were to:

- provide a safe and stimulating environment, in which children could feel happy and secure
- encourage emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual development of children
- promote the welfare of children
- encourage positive attitudes to self and to others and develop confidence and self-esteem
- create opportunities for play
- encourage children to explore the world
- provide opportunities to stimulate interest and imagination
- extend the children’s abilities to communicate ideas and feelings in a variety of ways

The report “*Effective Provision for Special Educational Needs*” [SOEID, 1994] [EPSEN], describes an appropriate education for children and young people with special educational needs as one which assists them to make the fullest use of their potential for learning and which comprises three essential components:

- A well thought out curriculum for the class/school as a whole.
- Individualised educational programmes (IEPs).
- Integration of the IEPs with the curriculum for the class/school

The Centre endorses the report’s analysis of the ten distinctive features of effective provision for special educational needs:

- Understanding special educational needs.
- Effective identification and assessment procedures.
- An appropriate curriculum.
- Forms of provision suited to needs.
- Effective approaches to learning and teaching.
- Attainment of educational goals.

- Parental involvement.
- Inter-professional co-operation.
- Effective management of provision.
- Full involvement of the child or young person.

The Centre endorses the advice offered in these two reports and the aims specified for conductive education. It considers that these sources express the same sentiments and that there is no conflict of interest. The different sources of advice offer a coherent and workable basis to define a curriculum which can effectively meet the needs of the children in the Centre.

### **The Curriculum - for Preschool Children**

The Centre endorses the view that the curriculum is the framework which helps staff to cultivate children's natural learning processes by planning programmes, activities and experiences and using suitable accommodation and resources to promote children's development and learning in key areas. To reflect its emphasis on the principles and practice of conductive education within a context of national advice on the curriculum, the Centre accepts



the nationally defined key areas of the curriculum for under fives as the basis of its own curriculum and as a sound platform for catering for the needs of pre-school children with motor impairments. The five key areas are stated in 'A Curricular Framework for Children 3 to 5 provide the basis of the curriculum for the pre-school groups. The areas are:

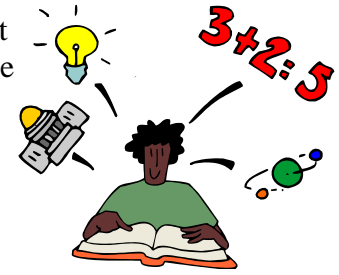
- Communication and Language
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Expressive and Aesthetic Development
- Physical Development and Movement
- Emotional, Personal and Social Development

Information and communication technology is used as appropriate across the curriculum.

## **The Curriculum - for school-aged children**

The centre recognises that when children enter primary school at around 5 years of age, they will already have significant knowledge and experience.

Thus it endorses the aims of education, stated in 'The structure and balance of the curriculum 5-14' that:



- Their curriculum should provide them with appropriate opportunities for further intellectual, aesthetic, physical, personal, social, moral and spiritual growth.
- The task of education is to satisfy the needs of the individual and society and to promote the development of knowledge and understanding, practical skills, attitudes and values.
- School will seek to provide for their pupils a rich and stimulating environment.

In the School Group, particular attention is paid to the following aspects of learning:

- Acquisition of knowledge and understanding
- Development of learning skills
- Personal and social development
- Equality of opportunity for all pupils

Its curriculum is planned to provide breadth, balance, coherence, continuity and progression through the key areas of:

- Communication and Language
- Maths
- Environmental Studies
- Personal and Social Development
- Physical Development and Movement
- Expressive Arts
- Religious and Moral Education

The curriculum regards Information and Communication Technology as a core skill permeating and used across the curricular areas.

## **Planning**

Within the national advice on curriculum planning, the Centre accepts the principles given in the two reports referred to above. In particular, it accepts the need to take a holistic view of children's learning while reinforcing different aspects of children's development. The proportions of time allocated to each of the key areas is to help the Centre as a whole and the staff responsible for particular children or groups to plan and to ensure that due attention is given to each one in the course of a day, week, term or year, or agreed forward planning period, as an essential contribution to the children's overall education.

The Centre therefore endorses the view that effective planning establishes clear targets which can match children's needs. Whether the planning is short or long term, staff are likely to be clearer, more confident and prepared for what they are trying to achieve. It also allows staff to be flexible when the need arises and to move from the overall plan in response to a particular set of circumstances. It also goes a long way to ensure that children have effective individual educational programmes [see below].

### **Assessment**

The Centre endorses the national advice, set out in the 5 - 14 Curriculum, that assessment is a pre-requisite to successful differentiation in order to meet the individual needs of children. It endorses the advice on the steps in identifying and assessing a child's special educational needs in the pre-school period given in the EPSSEN Report. It also places considerable importance on the contribution which parents can make assessing their children's needs. Assessment involves a cycle of planning, teaching, recording, reporting and evaluating. Of perhaps greatest importance is the assessment information derived from the continuous process of daily interaction with pupils and the consideration of their achievements and needs. It will also be necessary, from time to time, to set particular tasks related to individual needs to gauge, for example, the extent of the learning that has taken place following a particular activity. The essential principle is that the assessment system should be designed to provide for pupils' needs by encouraging progression, within a balanced curriculum that at the same time offers breadth, continuity and coherence.

### **Individual Educational Programmes**

The Centre endorses the advice given in EPSSEN Report on individualised educational programmes (IEP). These programmes will be based on a thorough initial assessment of a child's needs on entry and will include clear, realistic, long and short-term targets in each area of the curriculum. The staff will monitor these targets regularly to ensure that they are being met by the child. The targets and the progress the child is making will be shared with parents, the associated education authority and/or health agency and staff at the school to which the child is likely to transfer.

### **Learning and Teaching**

The Craighalbert Centre has a national role in responding to the needs of children with motor impairments. Within that role, it aims to be a centre of excellence in its work. It expects high standards from its staff on the quality of their teaching and, consequently, high expectations from the children in the way in which they learn.

The quality of what it does is therefore central to its day-to-day activities which focus principally on what takes place in its classrooms: the quality of the children's experience and their standards of learning and attainment; the related quality of teaching by the staff and their interaction with the children.

**Key Aspects**

**Craighalbert Curriculum**

**Curriculum Framework 3 - 5**

**5 - 14 Curriculum**

Communication & Language

Communication & Language

Knowledge and Understanding  
of the world

Environmental Studies

Mathematics

Expressive & Aesthetic  
Development

Expressive Arts

Physical Development &  
Movement

Physical Development &  
Movement

Emotional, Personal &  
Social Development

Personal & Social Development

Religious & Moral Education

## **Key Aspects**

### **Communication and Language**

Communication and Language is at the heart of children's learning. It is central to the development of the whole child and allows each individual to participate in his social environment. In conductive education, language is an integral part of the curriculum and is used in its regulative form to enable children to find solutions to their motor problems.

The children will:

- develop and enhance listening skills
- use communication and language skills, including alternative and augmentative systems, to promote effective communication
- use communication and language to express thoughts, feelings and needs with confidence and explore their surrounding environment within a social context
- use communication and language skills to enhance positive relationships between child/parent/siblings/care givers
- use language in its regulative form in order to practise and generalise skills, especially within motor development
- develop an interest in listening, reading, writing and communicating/talking within the context of National Guidelines

The focus throughout is on adults responding appropriately to the children's attempts to interact with all aspects of their environment and creating a social environment where communication is of prime importance. Staff recognise communication and language are skills that may not advance through normal processes of development and are therefore taught throughout the day.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

The environment offers a rich source of learning for all children. It provides an important context for them to learn about the world around them and to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary to interpret it. It also provides an exciting context for the teaching and learning of motor and language skills. Environmental studies, as an area of the curriculum, provides a basis for ensuring the children acquire that knowledge, understanding and skill.



### **Aims**

The aims of this policy are to allow the children to:

- Gain a knowledge and understanding of people and places.
- Develop skills which will enable the children to interact effectively with their surroundings.
- Make full use of their motor and language skills in context.
- Develop responsible and positive attitudes through an understanding of people in their environment.
- Provide them with opportunities to make choices and experience differences.

## **Expressive and Aesthetic Development**

The main principle of the Centre's approach to Expressive and Aesthetic Development is to value children as individuals. In doing so, we aim to provide opportunities for the discovery and the development of this individuality. Being creative is a uniquely human characteristic involving the expression of imagination in an individual approach to a situation. This is facilitated by providing a rich and motivating environment.



Children with motor impairments, such as cerebral palsy, have abnormal patterns of movement and posture. To enable them to express themselves fully, therefore, the adult role in the implementation is provided in a sensitive way. In developing expressive and aesthetic experiences, the emphasis is on the enjoyment, expression and learning which takes place during the experience rather than on finished products. It is important that work is initiated and completed allowing for the children's own creativity. Methods include small group work, class work and individual work. Resources will be provided to allow for the children's own creativity, in both structured and spontaneous lessons.

### **Aims**

The aims of this policy are to allow the children to:

- investigate and use a variety of media and techniques such as painting, drawing, printing and modelling with fabrics, clay and other materials;
- express thoughts and feelings in pictures, painting, models and actions;
- use role-play or puppets to recreate and invent situations;
- use verbal and non verbal language in role-play;
- listen and respond to sounds, rhythms, songs and a variety of music;
- make music by singing, clapping and playing percussion instruments;
- use instruments by themselves and in groups to invent music which expresses their thoughts and feelings;
- move rhythmically and expressively to music;
- participate in simple dances and singing games;
- participate in a range of physical activities, such as stretching, rolling, crawling, balancing, jumping and running;
- initiate own ideas through movement in response to a given physical task;
- participate in activities such as throwing, catching, kicking, aiming a ball;

## **Physical Development and Movement**

Children are placed at the Craighalbert Centre because they have special needs, often specified in a Record of Needs. The needs are commonly defined in terms of the development of gross and fine motor skills. Functional movement is a curricular area given high priority at the Craighalbert Centre and it is through developing functional movement children will be able to actively access other areas of the curriculum.

Conductive education describes progression along three independent lines of development towards upright posture, hand function and language, taking place within a total curriculum throughout the learning day. The Craighalbert curriculum integrates the essence of conductive education and Scottish practice with emphasis on play, exploration, expression and differentiation, in a relaxed purposeful atmosphere.

There are many methods and techniques available for the treatment of children with cerebral palsy. Children with cerebral palsy do not acquire skills through maturation in the same manner as other children.

Conductive education therefore does not follow normal child development, but sets out to teach children skills. Unlike maturation which takes place because the central nervous system is developing, skills can be analysed and taught using language in a planning role.

Before the children can accomplish any task there is the minimum requirement of the Basic Motor Pattern (BMP). Children with cerebral palsy have abnormal patterns of movement and posture and the Basic Motor Pattern is the pre-requisite pattern for function.

The learning day can be divided into three equally important parts; the teaching and learning of movement, practice in activities which follow and generalisation to normal daily events such as during feeding, play and all nursery and school activities. Generalisation takes place at the Centre, but also at home and in the wider community. It is vital to link learning, practice and generalisation, helping the children to understand the purpose of movement. To have a motive for movement is the only way the children will be active learners and show intent. Intention is the key to motor learning.

The Basic Motor Pattern, upright posture, mobility and hand function are taught daily in task series. The task series teach movement and posture in a specific, carefully analysed way, and an important link between language and movement is formed. This will, later on, enable the children to make their own motor plans. Task series can take place on the floor or on the plinth in lying, sitting or standing and are connected to the activity which follows. The conductor system ensures all staff are aware of the children's abilities at all times, thus creating a total learning day.

Much use is made of group processes to develop children's' motivation. The children will encourage and help each other through difficult tasks and provide models for each other.

Life skills, such as dressing, feeding, washing hands and face are ideal activities for the practice of skills which are being learned by the children and give the children a motive for learning movement. Much of the practice and generalisation will take place at home and it is thus important to assist the parents in understanding how the motor skills can be used in the normal activities of the day.

Children with cerebral palsy may have an imbalance in the action of muscle groups, which can lead to loss of range of movement or contractures, impairing motor function. Those children particularly at risk may have daily passive stretching prior to the daily task series.

## Aims

The aims of this policy are to allow the children to:

- problem solving and motor planning skills using language in a regulative function
- confidence in physical activities
- the Basic Motor Pattern
- upright posture
- hand function
- awareness of physical limitations
- function through skill acquisition

## **Emotional, Personal and Social Development**

The Craighalbert Model seeks to develop an active learning child and offers an environment in which the children's learning is driven by self-motivation and by the high expectations of children, parents and staff.

In their learning the children will experience many problems which they will be helped to solve themselves. Dysfunction and function are seen as aspects of a developing attitude and personality rather than result of a disability.

### Development of Individual Personal and Social Skills

Dysfunction and function are first and foremost personality characteristics. The Craighalbert Centre aims to foster active learning children, interested in their environment and able to solve the problems caused by the cerebral palsy.

The group is a facilitator of this process giving the children models as well as opportunities to show help and care.

The Basic Motor Pattern provides a functional pattern and a basis for dressing/undressing, feeding/drinking and personal and oral hygiene. The children are in an upright, symmetrical position with feet flat on the floor for fixation, arms forward, holding on, if necessary, and responsible for their sitting, as well as participating in self-help skills. On occasions special arrangements for seating may be necessary, but such arrangements are usually short term, as a balance and interaction between areas of development is being sought.

## Aims

The aims of the policy on Emotional, Personal and Social Development are to allow the children to:-

- develop their active involvement in their learning
- develop confidence and esteem
- develop age appropriate behaviour
- develop skills of interaction, socialisation and play with peers
- develop maximum independence in life skills
- promote age appropriate behaviour in all settings.

## **Religious and Moral Development**

Religious education makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum in helping pupils towards a consistent set of beliefs, values and attitudes. The aims are to encourage pupils to become aware of a wide range of religious interpretations of personal experience and of their importance to believers. It also fosters attitudes of open enquiry and awareness of prejudice.

Religious education helps pupils to appreciate that religion offers distinctive interpretations of life. It encourages them to think honestly for themselves about religious beliefs and practices, and the implications of moral issues within religions.

### **Aims**

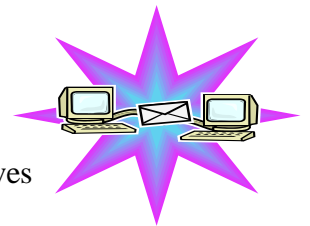
The aims of this policy are to allow the children to:

- develop a knowledge and understanding of Christian celebrations, festivals and customs
- develop a knowledge and understanding of Christian sacred writings, stories and key figures
- develop a knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs, sacred places, worship and religious symbols
- develop age appropriate moral values and attitudes
- develop a knowledge, understanding and respect of other world religions and their celebrations, festivals, customs, sacred writings, key figures and beliefs.

## **Use of Technology in the Classrooms**

### **Rationale**

The use of interactive and computer technology is an integral part of the Craighalbert curriculum. Information technology facilitates independent learning, extends both physical and cognitive skills and gives access to a variety of forms of communication.



### **Aims**

The aims of this policy are to allow children to:

- interact with technology
- develop and extend new forms of communication
- develop their hand-eye co-ordination
- develop their skills in the use of various access devices
- develop their understanding of cause and effect
- extend their cognitive development
- develop their independent learning
- explore the environment
- support and consolidate their other activities and experiences
- extend their knowledge, understanding of and skills in, other areas of the curriculum
- transfer more readily back into local provision.