LIST OF DIFFICULT WORDS

This is a list in alphabetical order of words used in this book that are not common, everyday words. If this list does not have a word you want explained, look in the INDEX. The word may be explained on a page that the INDEX refers you to. For example, “arthrogryposis” is explained on p. 122.

A

Acute Sudden and short-lived. An acute illness is one that starts suddenly and lasts a short time. It is the opposite of 'chronic'.

Adaptation Change or changes to better fit a specific child or local area. A seat may be adapted by the addition of straps and pads to better support the body.

Antibiotic A medicine that fights infections caused by bacteria. Penicillin and tetracycline are antibiotics. For discussion of antibiotics and their use, see Where There Is No Doctor, p. 55-58.

Arthritis Pain and inflammation in one or several joints of the body such as the knees, elbows, or hips.

Ataxia Difficulty with balance and with coordination (see p. 90).

Atrophy A progressive wasting or weakening of the muscles that comes from a condition in the nerves. (Compare with “dystrophy.”)

B

Behavior A person’s way of doing things; pattern of actions. The way a child acts, or relates to others (see Chapter 40).

Bladder A muscular bag in the belly in which urine collects before it leaves the body.

Bowel The part of the gut or intestine where solid waste (stool, shit) collects before it leaves the body.

Bowel movement Emptying of the bowel; shitting.

Butt Buttocks; backside; rear end; the part of the body on which a person sits.

C

Caliper British word for “brace.” An aid which gives support to a weak or injured leg (see Chapter 58).

Caster A wheel that is mounted so that it turns from side to side to go around corners. The small wheels of a wheelchair are usually made with casters.

Chronic Long-term or frequently returning. A chronic disease is one that lasts a long time. Compare with 'acute'.

Circulation The flow of blood through the blood vessels (veins and arteries). Good circulation is necessary for healthy body parts.

Clog A wooden sandal or shoe, often used with a brace.

Cognitive delay When a child takes longer to develop their mental skills compared to other children their age.

Contracture When a joint cannot move fully, because of changes to the muscles, skin, or other tissues nearby (see Chapter 8).

Cord A simple name for a tendon, a part of the body that connects muscle to bone. For example, the "heel cord" or Achilles Tendon joins the calf muscle to the heel. (Note: The spinal cord is not a tendon. It is made of nerves. See p. 35.)

D

Diaper (nappy) A cloth to soak up urine, usually worn by a child.

Diplegia Paraplegia in which the upper part of the body is also slightly affected (see p. 90).

E

Evaluation Observations and study to find out how well something is working and where the problems are.

F

Functional therapy Exercises that help children with disabilities to do everyday activities more safely and easily. This therapy includes common movements or activities children might do at home or while playing.

Flaccid Lacking firmness; soft; floppy.

G

Gene A hereditary unit; something that controls or acts in the passing down of features from parent to child.

H

Hemiplegia Paralysis or loss of movement in the muscles of the arm and leg on one side of the body only.

Hereditary Familial; a feature that passes from parent to child when the baby is first made (conceived). If a disease is hereditary, there is a factor or characteristic in the father and/or mother which is passed on to their children, and then to their children's children. Inherited.

Hygiene Actions or practices of personal cleanliness that protect health.

I

Infantile Of infants (babies) or young children.

Infection A sickness caused by germs (bacteria, virus, worms, or other small living things). Some infections affect part of the body only, others affect all of it.

Inherited (See Hereditary.)

J

Joint capsule The tough covering around a joint.

Juvenile Of children.

L

Ligament Tough strips or bands inside the body that hold joints and bones together. Ligaments join bones with other bones, while tendons or cords join bones with muscles.

Limb An arm or leg.
Mental Having to do with the mind or intelligence.

Motor nerves Nerves that carry messages from the brain to parts of the body, telling muscles to move.

Multiple disability Several disabilities, often both physical and mental, in the same child (see page 283).

Muscles Meaty parts of the body that pull or “contract” to make the body and limbs move.

Nappy (diaper) A cloth to soak up urine, worn by a child who does not have bladder control.

Nerve A thin line along which messages travel in the body. Some nerves let us feel things, and tell us when something hurts. Other nerves let us move parts of the body when we want to (see p. 35).

Occupational Having to do with work or function. An occupational therapist is a person who helps a person with disabilities adapt to their environment.

Orthopedic Aids, procedures, or surgery to help correct a physical deformity or disability.

Orthotist A brace maker.

Paralysis Muscle weakness; decrease or loss of ability to move part or all of the body.

Paraplegia Paralysis or loss of movement in the muscles of both legs (sometimes with slight involvement elsewhere) caused by disease or injury to the spinal cord.

Physical Having to do with the body and how it works, as distinct from ‘mental’, which has to do with the mind.

Physical therapist, physiotherapist A person who designs and teaches exercises and activities for people with physical disabilities.

Positioning Helping a person’s body stay in healthy or helpful positions—through special seating, padding, supports, or in other ways.

Procedure Some kind of medical, surgical, or technical action. For example, casting, strapping, and surgery are 3 procedures for correcting a club foot.

Progressive A progressive illness or disability is one that steadily gets worse and worse. For example, muscular dystrophy.

Prosthesis An artificial limb or other part of the body—for example, a wooden leg. Prosthetics is the art of making prostheses.

Quadriplegia (tetraplegia) Paralysis or loss of movement in the muscles of both arms and legs caused by disease or injury to the spinal cord, in the neck.

Rehabilitation The art of helping a person learn to live as best she can and do as much as possible for herself, given her limitations or disability.