

# 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.

## M

**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 p. 283).

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

## N

**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).

## O

**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.

## P

**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.

## Q

**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.

## R

**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.

## S

**Sensory nerves** Nerves that bring messages from parts of the body to the brain about what the body sees, hears, smells, and feels.

**Social** Having to do with the actions, values, decisions, and relationships within groups of people.

**Spasticity** Uncontrolled tightening or pulling of muscles that make it difficult for a person to control her movements. Spasticity often occurs with brain injury, cerebral palsy, and spinal cord injury.

**Spinal** Having to do with the spine or backbone.

**Spinal cord** The main “trunk line” of nerves running down the backbone. It provides communication (for movement and feeling) between the brain and all parts of the body (see p. 35).

**Spine** Backbone; spinal column; the chain of bones, called vertebrae, that runs down the back.

**Stimulation** Sounds, sights, activities, toys, smells, touch, and anything else that makes a child take interest in things and develop the use of his body and senses. “Early stimulation” refers to activities that help a baby develop his first responses and skills (see p. 301).

**Stool** Shit; body waste that is usually solid; also known as bowel movement or feces.

## T

**Tendon** A strong rope-like structure in the body that connects muscles to bones. In this book we mostly call tendons “cords.”

**Tetraplegia** (see quadriplegia).

**Therapy** Treatment; planned exercise and activity for a person’s rehabilitation. See “physical therapy” and “occupational therapy.”

**Toxic** Poisonous.

**Transfer** Moving from (or to) a wheelchair to a bed, chair, cot, car seat, toilet, or floor.

**Trunk** The body, not including the head, neck, arms, and legs.

## U

**Urine** Liquid body waste, also known as “pee” or “piss.”

## V

**Vaccination** Immunization; to give certain medicines (vaccines) by injection or mouth to protect against infectious diseases such as polio and measles.

**Velcro** A strong, fuzzy plastic tape that sticks to itself. (The surface of one piece of the tape has little plastic hooks that catch onto the curly hairs on the other piece of the tape.) Useful to use instead of buttons, buckles, or laces on clothes, braces and shoes—especially for children who have difficulty with hand control (see p. 335).

**Virus** Germs smaller than bacteria, that cause some infectious (easily spread) diseases. Most viruses are not killed by antibiotics.

## W

**Weight-bearing** Supporting the weight of the body on a particular joint or limb. For example, weight-bearing on the knee is possible if the thigh muscle is strong, but not if it is weak.