

# GMFCS – Level 2

## What Movements to Expect in Your Child with Cerebral Palsy (CP) up to Age 18

There are 3 main ways to classify cerebral palsy (CP): by area of the body affected (topography), by atypical body movements and postures (movement disorder) and how they use their body to get around (gross motor function or functional mobility). This handout explains how CP is classified by gross motor function, which describes how people sit, stand, walk and do activities.

### What is GMFCS?

The Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS) is used to describe levels of functional mobility and gives children with CP a score or level to describe how they will get around as they grow up.

### What do the levels mean?

The difference between levels is based on your child's movement and motor ability, the need for devices like crutches, walkers or wheelchairs and the quality of movement. Level 1 means less help is needed and Level 5 means more help is needed. There is a range of ability within each level.

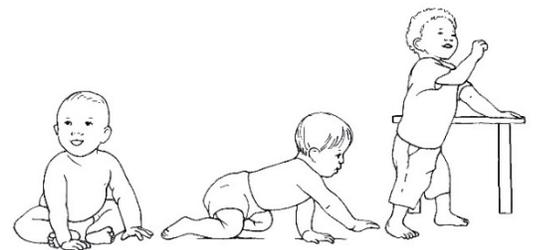
### What does Level 2 mean?

Children walk with limitations that may change with age. Children decide how to get around based on the environment and personal preference. Youth may use a wheelchair when traveling long distances. Your child's GMFCS level usually stays the same as they age. This tool may not be a predictor of your child's movements at all ages.

### What can I expect at different ages for my child at Level 2?

#### Before age 2

- Sit without help but may need hands for balance
- Army crawl on belly or crawl on hands and knees
- Pull to stand and take steps holding on to nearby objects



#### To Learn More

- Cerebral Palsy Program  
206-987-0199
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

#### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

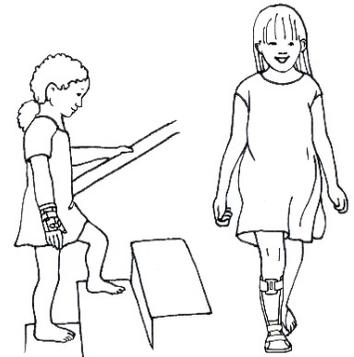
Age 2 to 4

- Sit on floor but may have difficulty with balance when hands are free
- Sit and stand with help at times
- Crawl on hands and knees
- Walk holding onto objects or using a walker (mobility device)



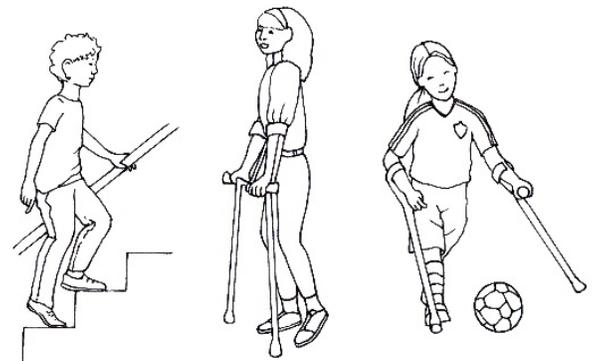
Age 4 to 6

- Sit in a chair with both hands free
- May need to use hands to stand up from the floor or sitting
- Walk without help indoors and for short distances on level surfaces outdoors
- Climb stairs holding onto a railing but are unable to run or jump



Age 6 to 12

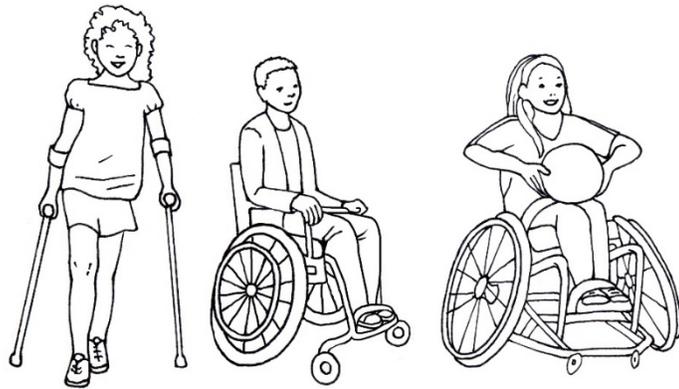
- Walk in most settings. It may be difficult to walk long distances. It may be difficult to balance on uneven terrain, hills, in crowded areas or when carrying objects.
- Walk up and down stairs using a railing or help from a caregiver if there is no railing
- May walk using a cane or crutches or use a wheelchair for long distances
- May not be able to run and jump
- May need adaptations and equipment to play physical games and sports



Age 12 to 18

- Walk in most settings. Things like hills, distance, time, friends and personal preference can influence this
- Walk using a cane or crutches at school or work
- Use a wheelchair when traveling long distances
- Walk up and down stairs holding a railing or with help from a caregiver if there is no railing

- May need adaptations and equipment to continue to play physical games and sports into adulthood



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### What can I do to help my child?

- In the early years help your child learn to sit, stand and walk (gross motor skills) by providing daily opportunities to practice.
- Build strength, balance and endurance by engaging in family activities that your child enjoys.
- In later years, provide adaptations to help them participate.
- Watch for and reduce feelings of failure due to need for adaptations (use of walker, crutches or wheelchair). Adaptations are common for a child at this level.

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### Where can I learn more?

You can read more about GMFCS at CanChild:  
[canchild.ca/en/resources/42-gross-motor-function-classification-system-expanded-revised-gmfcs-e-r](http://canchild.ca/en/resources/42-gross-motor-function-classification-system-expanded-revised-gmfcs-e-r)