

GMFCS – Level 4

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 4 mean?

Children can get around mainly with a wheelchair and use a body support walker for recreation (health and enjoyment). They may use powered mobility without help. 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 4?

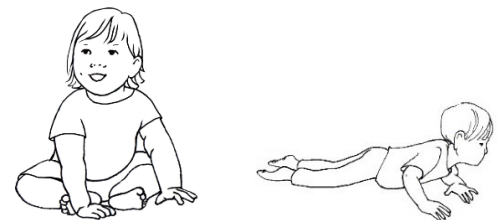
Before age 2

- Can control head but need support for sitting
- Roll onto back and may roll onto belly



Age 2 to 4

- Floor sit when placed, but need hands for support
- Usually require equipment for sitting and standing
- Roll, army crawl or crawl on hands and knees without leg movement indoors



To Learn More

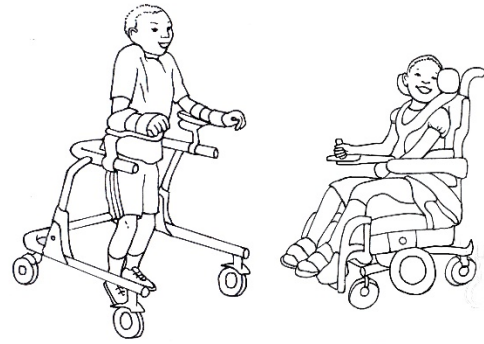
- Cerebral Palsy Program
206-987-0199
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

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.

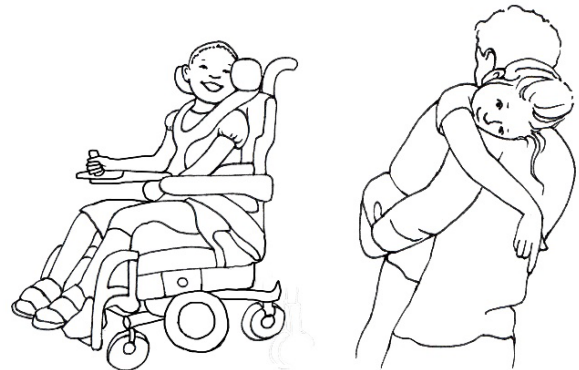
Age 4 to 6

- Can sit in a chair but need help from extra equipment to sit up and move their hands freely
- Walk short distances with a walker and adult supervision
- In body support walker, may have trouble turning and balancing on uneven surfaces
- Require use of a wheelchair outside of the home
- May use a powered wheelchair to get themselves around



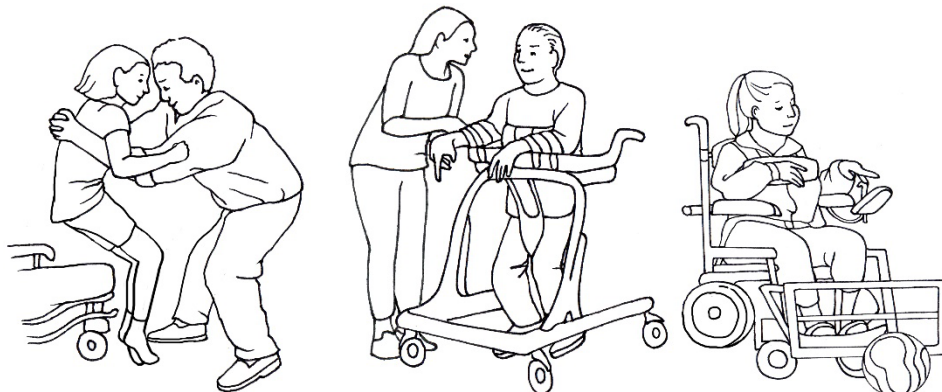
Age 6 to 12

- Require adaptive seating and help from a caregiver getting in and out
- May roll, army crawl or crawl, walk short distances with caregiver assistance, or use powered mobility at home
- May use a body support walker at home or school
- Need to be transported in a wheelchair or children use powered mobility outside the home
- Need help or powered mobility for physical games and sports



Age 12 to 18

- Use wheeled mobility in most settings, including a powered wheelchair
- Require adaptive seating
- Require help from caregivers for transfers and may support weight with their legs to assist.
- May walk short distances with caregiver assistance, use a wheelchair or use a body support walker indoors
- Need adaptive equipment or powered mobility for physical games and sports



How can I help my child?

- In early years, support assisted standing and walking with equipment (standers and body support walkers) to help bone development and prevent hip problems/loss of flexibility.

Where can I get more information?

You can read more at GMFCS E&R by CanChild:
canchild.ca/en/resources/42-gross-motor-function-classification-system-expanded-revised-gmfcs-e-r