



## Free Special Education Resources, Consultation, Trainings Your Arizona Parent School Connection

### Orthopedic Impairment

#### What is an Orthopedic Impairment?

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-761(18) states: “‘Orthopedic impairment’ means one or more severe orthopedic impairments and includes those that are caused by congenital anomaly, disease and other causes, such as amputation or cerebral palsy, and that adversely affect a child’s performance in the educational environment.”

Examples of orthopedic impairments (OI) that may be caused by birth defects are clubfoot, spina bifida, brachial plexus/erb’s palsy, and absence of, or malformation of one or more limbs. Orthopedic impairments that may be caused by disease include muscular dystrophy, arthritis, and childhood obesity. Other causes of orthopedic impairment may include fractures, which cause stiff and/or immovable joints called contractures.

A student is determined eligible for special education services if: 1) the criteria of the state definition of a student with an orthopedic impairment is met; 2) the multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET) determines that the orthopedic impairment negatively impacts a student’s educational performance; and 3) the child is in need of special education and/or related services to benefit from his/her education.

Occasionally there may be a student who has been in an accident and has broken bones; he/she may be eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for a temporary placement while healing from the injuries.

#### How Common is an Orthopedic Impairment?

In the 2006–07 school year, 695 students in Arizona were classified as having Orthopedic Impairments (OI) and received special education services. This number represents 0.06% of the 1,112,610 students enrolled in Arizona public schools as of October 1,

2006 and accounts for 0.56% of the total special education population.

#### What Effect Does an Orthopedic Impairment Have on a Child?

Some students are mildly affected by their orthopedic impairment. Children who are moderately or severely affected may have difficulty with coordination, the ability to move, stamina, communication or learning. Many times basic adjustments can be made to the environment and/or instruction so that special education services and supports may not be needed. Some children may be so significantly limited in their activities and learning, that they may require intensive medical and/or educational assistance.

Educational services are provided in a variety of settings including regular classrooms, resource rooms, special classes, hospitals, the home or special schools. The child’s unique academic needs and required related services will be identified in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Related services may include such things as assistive technology, special transportation, environmental adaptations, adaptive physical education, cognitive therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy or school health services. Communication with school staff is important for the successful implementation of necessary services and supports in the school environment.

The IEP team will consider the benefit of assistive technology (AT) and the access to learning it affords the student with OI, along with other special factors that impact the student’s learning. Orthopedic impairments may require a more extensive evaluation to identify the child’s unique educational needs.

## References

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. (2000). *General information about cerebral palsy, fact sheet #2*. Washington, DC: NICHCY.

March of Dimes. (2004). *Professionals and Researcher's Quick Reference and Fact Sheets: Birth Defects*. [www.modimes.org](http://www.modimes.org)

## Resources

### Books

Arthritis Foundation. (2004). *Safe or sorry: What parents need to know about kids and sports injuries*. Atlanta, GA. Author.

Geralis, E. (1998). *Children with cerebral palsy: A parent's guide*. Rockville, MD: Woodbine Books.

Thompson, C, & Thompson, M.D. (1999). *Raising a child with a neuromuscular disorder: A guide for parents, grandparents, friends, and professionals*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

### Videos

*Video and book lending library bibliography*. Special Needs Center, Phoenix Public Library, Phoenix, AZ, [www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/snc.jsp?lwbid=6027](http://www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/snc.jsp?lwbid=6027)

*2007 Audio-visual catalog*. Parent Information Network, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, Phoenix, AZ, [www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals](http://www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals)

### Organizations/Hotlines/Web Sites

Arizona Governor's Council on Spinal and Head Injuries, 10640 N. 28<sup>th</sup> Dr., Ste. B-102, Phoenix, AZ 85029, 602-863-0484, [www.azheadspine.org](http://www.azheadspine.org)

Arthritis Foundation, 1313 E. Osborn, Ste. 200, Phoenix, AZ 85014, 602-212-9900, 800-477-7679, [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN) [www.azed.gov/ess/eapn](http://www.azed.gov/ess/eapn)

Family Center on Technology & Disability, 1825 Connecticut Ave. NW 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, DC 20009, 202-884-8068, [www.fctd.info](http://www.fctd.info)

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY) P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013-1492, 800-695-0285, [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

National Spinal Cord Injury Association, [www.spinalcord.org](http://www.spinalcord.org); AZ United Spinal Cord Injury Association, 901 E Willetta, Ste. 2306, Phoenix, AZ 85006, 602-239-5929, 877-778-6588

Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs, (OCSHCN) 150 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ste 330, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-1001, [www.azdhs.gov/phs/ocshcn/crs/crs\\_az.htm](http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/ocshcn/crs/crs_az.htm)

Parent Information Network, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, 2384 Steves Blvd., Flagstaff, AZ 86004, 928-679-8102, 800-352-4558, [www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals](http://www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals)

Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona, 2600 N. Wyatt, Tucson, AZ 85712, 520-324-3150, 877-365-7220, [www.pilotparents.org/](http://www.pilotparents.org/)

Raising Special Kids, 2400 N. Central Ave, Ste. 200, Phoenix, AZ 85004, 602-242-4366, 800-237-3007, [www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org)

Spina Bifida Association of America, Arizona Chapter, 1001 E. Fairmont, Phoenix, AZ 85034, 602-274-3323, [www.azspinabifida.org](http://www.azspinabifida.org)

United Cerebral Palsy, 4002 E. Grant Road, Tucson, AZ 85711, 520-795-3108, [www.ucpsa.org](http://www.ucpsa.org)

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