

## SMALL STEPS AND CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION

Here at Small Steps our sessions are based on the principles of Conductive Education. But what is it?...

A Hungarian doctor of medicine, in Budapest, called Dr Andras Peto, devised Conductive Education in 1945. He wanted to create an educational system for children and adults with neurological disorders such as cerebral palsy and other motor disorders.



(Dr Peto)

So he developed a programme where groups of individuals could learn components of skills which are needed to meet the challenges of everyday life. Children learn about their bodies. Life skills are broken down into small achievable steps.

Conductive Education is about active learning. It presents as a positive discipline, based on the strong belief that children with physical disabilities can learn new or different ways of approaching and dealing with everyday tasks through a greater knowledge of their own abilities.

At Small Steps we utilise the principles of Conductive Education in order to meet the needs of a wide range of children.

## IS IT 'THERAPY'?

Conductive Education is **HOLISTIC**. It is a learning process which incorporates therapy and play in the daily routine. The child is not a recipient of treatment, but an active participant.



They are led by a 'Conductor' through a series of tasks in order to enhance their abilities across all areas including sensory, physical, social, emotional and cognitive.

## HOW IS IT USED IN SMALL STEPS SESSIONS?

Conductive Education provides a perfect philosophy and an ideal base for our practical work with very young children (0-4 years) at Small Steps because:

- We too organise our sessions in **GROUPS**. Children/parents watch and learn from each other with the lead of the Professional who is responsible for that group. Parents support each other and share their experiences within their groups.
- We too devise **TASKS AND PROGRAMMES** for each group according to their **AGE AND ABILITY**, ranging from the **BABY SENSORY** session to an **INDEPENDENT MOBILITY** session. We offer the children different experiences and opportunities to develop their existing awareness and skills.

- We too believe in **ROUTINE**. The sequence of activities devised for each group is repeated each time they come to a session, though utilising different topics and motivators. **MOTIVATION** is an important factor in enabling participation.

- We too **DIFFERENTIATE** all the tasks for individual children within the group according to their individual needs based on **OBSERVATION**. We always focus on the **POSITIVE**.

- We too use **ALGORITHM** when devising the tasks. Meaning that in order to be able to do something (i.e. to stand up), you have to achieve smaller targets (i.e. raise foot awareness, put feet flat, shift weight forward..)



- We too use **RHYTHMIC INTENTION**. Traditionally this means that specific language is used to support each activity. For us at Small Steps we use certain songs to reinforce each activity and as markers throughout the session.

- We too use careful FACILITATION techniques meaning that we help the children with verbal prompts, the right physical support, or SENSORY CURRICULUM input, in order to achieve their goals eg. tilted stool to help achieve straight posture, or a 'pot scourer' brushed firmly over the body to reinforce symmetrical lying through tactile input.

- We too use SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT including plinths, ladders and slatted stools, which have been around since the days of Dr Peto! We have also developed a resource base (fibre optics, bubble tubes etc) to complement our MULTISENSORY approach.



Most importantly we have lots of FUN, children and grownups alike, whilst keeping in mind all these aspects.

## IT CAN BE USED EVERYDAY...

Children and their parents take home our ideas and apply them in their every day routines at home (e.g. getting out of bed or lying over a roll to watch the TV). The intention is for as much consistency for the children throughout their day as possible.

We also work with other settings to increase their 'disability awareness' and understanding of all that the children are able to do.

## "Take it and use it!" (Dr Peto)

Conductive Education in it's relatively pure form only exists in it's birthplace at the International Peto Institute, Budapest, Hungary. However it is now practised all over the world in various forms and settings, adjusted to the culture and the existing educational system of the different countries.

Peto was not a fundamentalist. "Take it and use it", he said in 1966 to the British Ester Cotton, who brought the system over to the U.K.

And that is what we have done! At Small Steps in Putney, one of the particular strengths is utilising the approach in working with children who have more profound and sensory needs.

For more information or to arrange a visit contact:

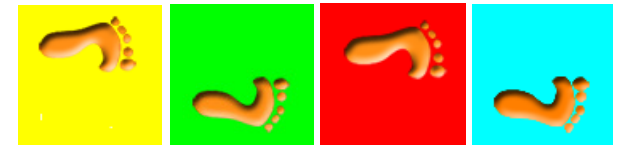
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