



## The Intensity Program at The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh

The Intensity Program at The Children's Institute is an outpatient program that provides a higher frequency of therapy than in our traditional therapy programs for patients with neurological impairments. The Intensity Program involves a combination of physical therapy (PT) and occupational therapy (OT) services for two hours per day. Sessions are held five days a week for three weeks at both our Squirrel Hill and Wexford locations.

The goal of the program is to reach patient-specific goals that may not be obtainable at a lower frequency of therapy service. The structure of the program allows for the child to have the opportunity for increased repetition and practice to maximize achievement of set goals. A variety of traditional treatment approaches are used (stretching, massage/soft tissue mobilization, manual therapy, therapeutic exercises, strengthening, balance/coordination training, neuromuscular re-education, functional activities, gait training and sensory integration therapy) to meet each child's unique needs. This program also utilizes the Universal Exercise Unit (UEU).

### Criteria for Enrollment:

- Patients must be at least 2 years old at the start of the program.
- Patients must have the cognitive ability to follow and understand basic directions.
- Patients must have the endurance and ability to tolerate 2 hours of therapy.
- Patients must be motivated to work and must be able to transition from one activity to another without any negative behaviors.
- Parents must be able to assist the therapy team in development of appropriate functional goals and willing and motivated to attend all sessions. Parent participation is required for this program.
- Patients must be evaluated by our therapy team and deemed appropriate for our program.

### Diagnoses Treated

This program is appropriate for, but not limited to, patients with neurological diagnoses such as cerebral palsy, brain injury, developmental delay, and movement disorders associated with spasticity, and hypotonia. This program may also benefit patients with cerebral palsy who have recently undergone surgery and are not making gains with traditional therapy.

## Typical Intensity Treatment Session

The first part of the treatment prepares the muscles for active movement. This may involve warming of the muscles by use of hot packs and massage followed by stretching and range of motion exercises. This portion of the program is completed daily by the parent under therapist supervision.

The second part of treatment focuses on strengthening exercises with and/or without the use of the Universal Exercise Unit (UEU). Balance training, coordination training and postural training are often implemented using traditional methods as well as the spider system.

The third stage of treatment focuses on improving the patient's functional activities. Functional activities may include rolling, crawling, transitions, sitting, standing walking and activities of daily living. Gait training may be worked on with or without assistive devices.

This approach to treatment has been found to be beneficial when provided intermittently for moderately to severely disabled children with neurological diagnoses who have significant functional limitations.

## The Universal Exercise Unit (UEU)

The Universal Exercise Unit (UEU) is a device that is used to strengthen weakened muscles through use of a pulley system of weights. This device allows for a child to isolate and strengthen individual muscles through the entire range of motion. The UEU can also be set up as a "spider" system which consists of a belt and bungee cords. The "spider" system is a dynamic system in which the child can perform functional activities while the bungees assist with independent movement. This approach to treatment has been found to be beneficial for children with moderate to severe disabilities with neurological diagnoses who have significant functional limitations.

