Conductive Education

Conductive Education (CE), also called the Petö Method after its founder Andras Petö, MD, is a rehabilitative-pedagogical program for individuals with motor (physical movement) disorders. The foundation of CE can be traced to its origin in Hungary in the 1940’s (post WW II era) when the primary focus was to increase mobility in children so they might transition into school programs. Now similar programs are also available for adults. The ultimate intent of CE is to integrate rehabilitative techniques into a classroom setting to provide a holistic approach to rehabilitation, i.e. addressing socialization, activities of daily living and educational content. A “conductor” leads the class through individual and group verbal commands, individual tactile facilitation and singing, a strategy that enables the students to develop a rhythmic approach to movement acquisition. Each instructional period has a pre-established set of activities called a “task series” that are designed to increase motor skills. Although wooden plinths (tables) with slats and straight-backed chairs have become synonymous with Hungarian conductive education tradition, current CE disciples advocate that it is not the furniture that makes it successful. Many CE programs exist around the world, with limited use in the US. However, many US parents seek CE programs for their children (or establish their own) and continue to be enthusiastic supporters.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What is CE?
Conductive education is a holistic educational-rehabilitative practice that integrates therapeutic techniques into the classroom setting with a primary focus on increasing motor independence. It was designed in Hungary in the 1940’s by Andras Petö.

Who can participate in CE?
CE was originally designed for children with motor disorders to increase independent motor movement. Now programs participants include adults and children with a variety of central nervous system (CNS) disorders who are capable of learning. This includes primarily individuals with cerebral palsy (CP) and multiple sclerosis (MS), as well as traumatic brain injury (TBI) and strokes. Adults with Parkinson’s Disease have also been participants.

What is a “conductor”?
The conductor directs the group task-series activities of the classroom and motivates each participant to perform motor movements through verbal encouragement and tactile facilitation. Conductors can also lead students in activities of daily living (ADL) such as dressing, toileting, and eating.

Is a conductor different than a therapist?
Speech-Language, occupational and physical therapists in the US have a Bachelors (or in many cases a graduate degree) and are certified nationally and licensed by states. All of these professions have in-depth knowledge in their specific area. A conductor is trained in the principles of conductive education with an overview of therapeutic practices. They are not licensed or certified currently here in the US.

Has CE been effective in treating CP?
Reports from the Hungarian International Petö Institute indicate that many individuals have made significant gains with intensive CE treatment. Researchers in the United States have reported findings indicating that CE is beneficial, but have not proved that CE is more effective than a traditional intensive therapy program. However, anecdotal reports from parents and conductors agree that conductive education develops motor skills and increases independence and self-confidence.
What training do conductors have?
Graduates of the Conductors’ College at the Petö Institute have the equivalent of a BA degree that includes a combination of regular education, special education, rehabilitative techniques (including some occupational, physical, and speech therapy) and many have musical training as well. They also have an intensive conductive education practicum (internship).

Where can someone train to be a conductor?
There are currently two places outside of Hungary that support conductor-teacher training. In the US the Aquinas-Petö School in Grand Rapids, Michigan currently offers an undergraduate degree program in early childhood focusing on conductive education and the National Institute of Conductive Education in Birmingham, England which offers a bachelors program in conductor-teacher training with the University of Wolverhampton (see below for site locations).

Where are CE programs located?
Programs are scattered throughout the US and not listed in any one database. See program locations links below. Many programs are located throughout the world, including the UK, Europe, Sweden and Israel.

How can CE fit in with the IEP services a child receives?
CE is not officially offered as part of a child’s educational program in the US. However, parents (e.g. in Illinois) are succeeding in placing conductive education on their child’s IEP and including it as part of the educational programming.

How much does CE cost?
The cost of conductive education varies tremendously depending on the intensity, duration and the location of services. It is best to contact programs directly for the most accurate information (see below).

Information adapted from:

Helpful Links on Conductive Education
- **http://www.conductive-education.org.uk**
  The Foundation for Conductive Education in Birmingham, England is a primary source for information about CE around the world. It contains links to many programs for children and adults, facts about CE, conductor connections, a discussion board, and postings of events significant to the CE community. ADDRESS: The National Institute of Conductive Education Cannon Hill House Russell Road Birmingham B13 8RD England. Phone: +44 (0)121 449 1569
- **http://www.iacea.org**
  The Inter-American Conductive Education Association, Inc., a non-profit founded in 1992, is comprised of professionals, parents, and grandparents of people with cerebral palsy, and other neurological disabilities whose primary aim is to promote and disseminate the principles of Conductive Education. ADDRESS: P.O. Box 4048 Roselle Park, NJ 07204 USA Phone: (908) 298-0819 or (800) 824-ACEA
- **http://www.peto.hu**
  The International Petö Institute, the original home of conductive education, has a multi-lingual website that outlines CE, details current residential and non-residential programs for children and adults, provides statistical data, and information about the Conductor College. ADDRESS: Kútvölgyi út 6. 1125 Budapest Hungary
- **http://www.aquinas.edu/conded/index.html**
  Aquinas College Lab School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A college degree program and a program for children. ADDRESS: Conductive Learning Center 1607 Robinson Road SE Grand Rapids, MI, 49506-1799
- **http://members.aol.com/jimceleste/cond_ed/**
  Conductive education web page developed by parents with links and program listings. Last updated 1/8/02.