

## **What is the earliest a child with CP can be diagnosed?**

Written by Administrator

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### **Q: What is the earliest a child with CP can be diagnosed?**

A definite diagnosis of cerebral palsy cannot be made before the age two. That is because during the first two years of a child's life, his or her brain develops rapidly. Often, signs seen in early infancy that are suggestive of CP, such as stiffness (hypertonia) or other abnormal movements, are often outgrown and disappear before the age two. An infant can be considered "high risk" for developing cerebral palsy or other neurological problems if he or she was very premature with low birth weight (especially less than 2 pounds) or suffered a serious medical complication at or around the time of birth. Brain images (usually MRI) may be helpful in understanding the extent of brain injury; however, these diagnostic assessments generally require the child undergo deep sedation or light anesthesia. A diagnosis of cerebral palsy and accurate prognosis for disability can only be made by an experienced physician or medical team.