



# CO-OP

## INFORMATION SHEET



### What is the CO-OP approach?

The Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance (CO-OP) approach is a problem-solving approach designed for children (and adults) who experience difficulties with performing the skills they want to or need to perform. The CO-OP approach guides children to independently discover and develop cognitive strategies to perform the necessary tasks of everyday living. This may involve learning how to tie your own hair, skip, handwrite, tie shoelaces, or ride a bike. CO-OP is based on theories of motor learning.

CO-OP is an individualised client-centred program that encourages the child to take the lead and be meaningfully involved in their own therapy sessions, including developing their own goals and plans to achieve these. The therapist uses a process of guided discovery to help the child think of their own strategies through questioning and not telling.

The overarching goal of CO-OP is to provide the child with a problem-solving technique that they can apply to any performance difficulties they may encounter in the future without having to rely on a therapist.



## What is Goal-Plan-Do-Check?

The child will be introduced to a problem-solving strategy called Goal-Plan-Do-Check. This is used to facilitate their motor learning. The Goal-Plan-Do-Check strategy helps the child remember:

Goal: What is it that I want to do?

Plan: How am I going to achieve this?

Do: I do it.

Check: Did I remember to carry out my plan? Did my plan work?

This strategy encourages children to actively think about a new activity. This supports the child to develop a better understanding of all the aspects involved and in finding their own solutions. Being involved and solving our own personal problems, helps us gain self-efficacy and our competence grows.

## What does the research say?

CO-OP was developed to support motor skill acquisition in children with developmental coordination disorder (DCD) (Polatajko & Mandich, 2004). The theoretical foundations of CO-OP are based on evidence and the approach itself has been well researched. There is strong evidence for the effectiveness of the CO-OP approach for children with DCD and there is growing evidence for its use in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). New research estimates that up to 80 percent of children with an ASD diagnosis also have motor difficulties.

## Who is the CO-OP approach suitable for?

CO-OP is suitable for children over the age of 5 years who experience motor difficulties and who are able to set their own goals, are able to problem solve and come up with their own strategies.

Caregiver involvement is encouraged. Children will be provided with home practice after every session to support your child and practice skills at home. Practice to reinforce the strategies identified is important. If you can find 10 minutes per day for 3-4 times per week to practice, this will increase the skill improvement of your child. Caregiver involvement also helps to generalise strategies and apply these after the intervention period.

## Who can deliver therapy using the CO-OP approach?

CO-OP can be delivered by health care professionals, commonly these are occupational therapists, who are trained in the CO-OP approach.

### How can I get involved?

CliniKids is currently taking enquiries from families who would like more information about CO-OP or who would like to receive CO-OP therapy. If you would like to register your interest or access further information, please contact us:

[clinkids.reception@telethonkids.org.au](mailto:clinkids.reception@telethonkids.org.au) | (08) 6319 1133