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Exploring the Physical Environment Opportunities for Accessibility in Homes of Children with Cerebral Palsy in Malaysia

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Abstract
Cerebral palsy (CP) is a common disorder and disability in children. Statistically, 2 to 3 out of every 1000 births are diagnosed with CP globally. The therapists are the main point of reference among caregivers of children with CP for advice when building the appropriate built environment. This study aims to identify the elements in the home-built environment to improve accessibility and promote independence among children with CP. The methodology used for this study was interviews with occupational and physiotherapists in Malaysia. Findings show that the elements in the physical environment designed or modified for the use of children with CP are similar to the guideline MS 1184: 2014 Universal Design and Accessibility in the Built Environment—Code of Practice. These physical attributes are commonly suggested by therapists to families of children with CP when making adaptations to their homes. However, most therapists are not familiar with the said national legislation. Accessibility in the built environment to promote the independence of children with CP is very important for their well-being and preparation to enter adulthood. This study concludes the importance of MS 1184 as a reference for modifying and designing the built environment for both therapists and architects. A suitable built environment will be beneficial to children with CP to enhance accessibility and promote independence while also mitigating the dependency on their caregivers.

Author Keywords
Accessibility; Built environment; Cerebral palsy; Independence

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