

Dwarfism

FACTS:

- Dwarfism is a medical or genetic condition that results in an adult height of 4'10" or shorter.
- There are over 200 forms of dwarfism. The most common form results in arms and legs that are disproportionate to head and trunk size.
- Most children with dwarfism are born to parents of normal height.
- Dwarfism does not affect a child's intelligence
- There is no cure for dwarfism; however, some of the associated medical problems can be treated.
- With some adaptations being made for their height difference, children and adults with dwarfism lead normal lives, even having children of their own.



Children with dwarfism are shorter than normal.



Dwarfism does not affect a child's ability to play, laugh and love.



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TREATMENT:

- Treat children with dwarfism as you would any other child that age. Do not treat them as babies because of their small stature.
- Modify the child's surroundings to help them be as independent as possible. This is very important for development of a positive self-esteem.
- Children with dwarfism should be strongly encouraged to be as active as possible. This helps to develop the muscles that support the body and aids in weight management.
- Children with dwarfism many have moderate to severe orthopedic difficulties that can result in deformities that lead to a loss of mobility. A good relationship with a doctor who is knowledgeable about dwarfism is very important.
- The following three serious conditions can be related to dwarfism. Please have doctor check a child with dwarfism to rule out these conditions. If these symptoms arise, see a doctor immediately.



Treat a child with dwarfism like any other child.



Children with dwarfism should be as active as possible.

- ⇒ **Compression of the brain stem.** Symptoms include failure to thrive and apnea (breathing stops momentarily during sleep).
- ⇒ **Hydrocephalus.** Excess fluid on the brain causes the head to be abnormally enlarged.
- ⇒ **Obstructive apnea.** Symptoms include failure to thrive, sleep apnea, sweats, snoring due to a partially blocked airway, frequent night awakenings, excessive sleepiness during the day and inattentiveness.