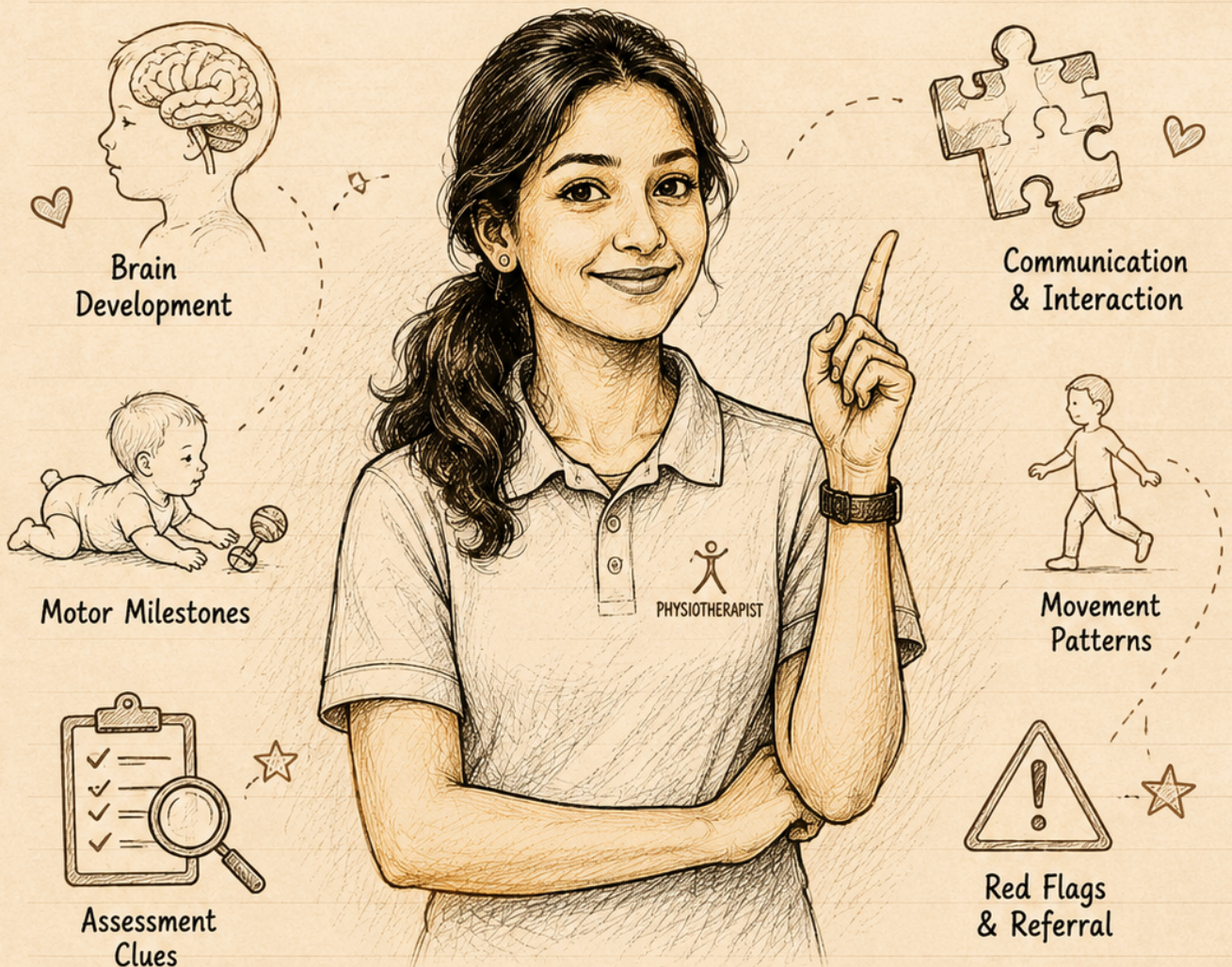


SLIDE 1

CP & AUTISM

HOW TO IDENTIFY AS A PHYSIOTHERAPIST



Early signs | assessment clues | referral red flags

SLIDE 2

What is CP?

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a non-progressive disorder of movement and posture caused by injury to the developing brain.



Delayed motor milestones



Early hand preference / asymmetry



Abnormal muscle tone (too stiff or too floppy)



Poor head or trunk control



Persistent primitive reflexes



Scissoring, toe walking, or unusual movement patterns



Physiotherapists help identify early motor red flags and guide timely referral.



SLIDE 3

What is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

A neurodevelopmental condition that mainly affects social communication, behaviour, and sensory processing.



SCREENING CLUES



Poor eye contact
or joint attention



Limited response
to name



Speech or
communication delay



Repetitive behaviours
or stereotypies



Sensory sensitivity
or sensory seeking



Difficulty with play,
imitation, or transitions



Some children with ASD may also show
motor coordination or postural challenges.



SLIDE 4

CP vs Autism

WHAT SHOULD A PHYSIOTHERAPIST OBSERVE?

 CP	Autism 
 Motor disorder	 Social-communication differences
 Abnormal tone	 Poor eye contact / joint attention
 Delayed gross motor milestones	 Speech-language delay
 Poor postural control	 Sensory behaviour changes
 Reflex abnormalities	 Repetitive behaviours
 Gait / movement pattern changes	 Play and interaction difficulties



Overlap can occur: both may present with developmental delay, motor coordination issues, or sensory-related difficulty. Screen carefully and refer appropriately.

5 SLIDE 5

Screening During Physio Assessment



- ✓ Take developmental and birth history



- ✓ Look for reflex persistence or abnormal movement patterns



- ✓ Observe posture, head control, transitions, and gait



- ✓ Observe eye contact, response to name, play, and imitation



- ✓ Check muscle tone, symmetry, balance, and coordination



- ✓ Ask parents about milestones, feeding, behaviour, and sensory issues



Physiotherapists can screen and document concerns, but formal diagnosis requires specialist evaluation.



SLIDE 6

Refer When You See These Red Flags



CP red flags



Marked asymmetry



Persistent
primitive reflexes



No head control or
significant motor delay



Scissoring / toe walking /
abnormal posture



Feeding difficulty
or seizures



Loss of previously
gained milestones



Autism red flags



No response to name



Poor eye contact



No pointing / limited
joint attention



Speech delay



Regression of language
or social skills



Extreme sensory
dysregulation or
repetitive behaviour



Early identification matters.

Screen early, educate parents, and refer
to pediatric / developmental specialists when needed.

