

### What is Cri du Chat Syndrome?

A disorder present at birth that results in severe physical and developmental disabilities.

### What causes Cri du Chat Syndrome?

The syndrome results from a missing piece of chromosome 5.

### What are some signs and symptoms to look for?

There are many signs which may include:

#### Medical/Physical signs

- Mental retardation
- Microcephaly-small head
- Abnormal face
  - Low set ears
  - Skin tags in front of ears
  - Round face
  - Cleft palate/small jaw
  - Wide set eyes with downward slant
  - Broad nasal bridge
  - “Dropped jaw”/open-mouth expression
- Mewing cry as infant
- Low birth weight
- Feeding difficulties during infancy-including poor suck reflex
- Slow growth
- Premature graying of hair
- Language difficulties
- Vision and/or hearing impairments
- Scoliosis
- Small hands-with single line on palm (simian crease)
- Hypotonia-low muscle tone
- Shuffling gait/Delay in walking

*continued*

- Webbing to fingers/toes
- Frequent upper respiratory infections
- GERD
- Heart defects

### Behavioral Signs

- Hyperactivity
- Aggression/Tantrums
- Behaviors that mimic Autism
- Self injurious behaviors(SIB)-head banging, self biting, rumination
- Repetitive movements
- Hypersensitivity to sound
- Clumsiness
- Obsessive attachments to objects
- Social withdrawal
- Many are happy and social

What are some important tips for caring for someone with this syndrome?

Tips include:

- Maintain adequate medical care by following physician's orders for medications prescribed and notify physician of any medical changes as medical conditions can increase behavioral signs such as SIB.
- Remove or reduce things from environment the person may be hypersensitive to.
- Control or limit the time period of the obsessive attachment to objects, but pick your battles. A small rubber band may be allowed, but an attachment to a large object may be a problem.
- A well-organized routine, with a predictable, calm environment.
- Use communication tools to introduce changes-calendars, schedules, pictures.
- Practice in learning new skills.
- Make up or find games that demonstrate the person's strengths and skills to increase their self esteem.