

Get ahead of the class with IM



Shay is an 11 year-old-girl with ADHD and LD. Her IEP allows her to go to the school Resource room, have extra time for written tests, and she is in some special education classes. Shay has failed many classes but kept getting promoted to the next grade level. This has GREATLY impacted Shay's self confidence over the years as she saw her report cards with consistent failure marks on them. Her mom wondered if she was truly learning anything. Shay was very embarrassed and withdrew from activities with kids from school. She became the child who was bullied in the cafeteria and on the playground. Other children would get her into trouble and she would get sent to the principal. She frequently went to the nurse for stomach issues and also began receiving some counseling in the community. Shay's homework time was a nightmare as was her bedroom which was a total mess all the time. Her mom would email Shay's teacher because her homework notebook was never filled in.

Shay's mom heard about Interactive Metronome (IM) and sought the program out to help her daughter. IM provides a structured, goal-oriented process that challenges the patient to synchronize whole-body exercises to a precise computer-generated reference beat. The patient attempts to match the rhythmic beat with repetitive motor actions. An auditory-visual guidance system provides immediate feedback measured in milliseconds, and a score is provided. Before Shay started IM she was assessed, and performed terribly, using the Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency and the IM Long Form Assessment (LFA).

Various IM activities were used to help Shay learn how to focus. It was very difficult for her to attend for longer than a few minutes so we started simple exercises such as bilateral coordination at 100 repetitions and worked her up to 1200 repetitions by our 15th visit.

During our 15th session, we re-administered both the Bruininks and the IM Long Form Assessment and she had significantly



improved on both tests. On the Bruininks, Shay now scored in the average range in fine motor precision and bilateral coordination, when she hadn't even been able to pass before. Her visual motor integration score is now in the age appropriate range. Her writing has always been neat but now she can print much more quickly and is writing at 81 letters/minute, (8th grade level). She commented that she now can get her assignments done more quickly in the classroom.

After our last session Shay's mom told me that Shay had gotten all C's on her report card that marking period. **This was the first time in her life that she had passed any class!** She also reported that Shay had gone out for the track team and was sticking with it. She had started to have some sleepovers with some girls from school and was not reporting to the nurse's office for an upset stomach. She was getting her homework done at night and was remembering to turn it in the next day. Her self esteem skyrocketed and her conversations became light and funny. Her mom actually said, "Although this has been the worst school year ever for Shay, she has passed classes for the first time in her life" with a big smile on her face. IM had a big impact on Shay!

Wendy Harron, OTR/L



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