

Timing program part of therapies



Interactive Metronome available at rehab center

By Deborah Kennedy
Enquirer contributor

FLORENCE - Nichole Stiene of Burlington doesn't want to see her 6-year-old son, Dakota, become a zombie.

"The people at his school have said he is most likely ADD (attention-deficit disorder) or ADHD (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder), and I want to educate myself about ways to treat that without medicating him," she said.

One possible treatment is the use of the Interactive Metronome, a computer-based program meant to improve motor skills, information processing and focus.

First used to help athletes improve their timing and accuracy, the technology is now a common part of therapy for people suffering from many different diseases and disorders including Parkinson's, autism, Asperger Syndrome and stroke.

Cardinal Hill of Northern Kentucky, an outpatient rehabilitation center in Florence, recently purchased a system with the help of an \$8,000 grant from the charitable arm of a Louisville-based radio and television station.

"This is the first Interactive Metronome in Northern Kentucky," said Vicki Briggs, Cardinal Hill rehabilitation director. "Before now, people had to go to Children's Hospital to use it."

The program requires patients to listen to a series of rhythmic beats through headphones. They are then instructed to match those beats by clapping their hands or tapping their feet.

Cardinal Hill occupational therapist Rebecca Shaw presented the technology to a group of parents like Stiene as well as educators, therapists and caregivers Thursday night at the Northern Kentucky Area Development District.

She said studies have shown that the Interactive Metronome is an effective treatment tool for people struggling with motor control and attention deficiencies.

"It has been linked to improvements in balance and focus, and to reduced impulsivity and aggression," she said.

"Once someone has gone through the program, the positive effects should be permanent."

Alice Westbrook of Villa Hills said she hopes the Interactive Metronome can help her son, Zachary, who has Asperger Syndrome, adjust to high school next year.

"He has a lot of help now, but I know he'll have to be more independent when he gets to high school, and I hope this might be able to help him with organization and concentration," she said.



Kathy McGlasson of Hebron tries out the Interactive Metronome at the Northern Kentucky Area Development District.
The Enquirer/Sarah Conard

TO LEARN MORE

Interactive metronome therapy is paid for by most insurance companies. There is, however, a \$150 flat charge for anyone taking part in the program to pay for software use. Those interested in learning more should contact Cardinal Hill of Northern Kentucky at 525-1128 or visit www.interactivemetronome.com.