

SECTION G

Age Considerations

How Young?



25 minutes



Figure G1. Reyna...a loving, engaging 18 month old. Participated in a 3 month OT program to address feeding and sensory issues, including Interactive Metronome.

A question burning on the minds of many practitioners is “at what age can I effectively introduce Interactive Metronome activities into my treatment programs?”

I have to say that I have a soft-spot for this inquiry, as I made it myself in the early years of using IM. I had learned from my self-study manual that it was generally accepted that six years

of age was the youngest age you could treat with IM. But as I incorporated the principles of re-educating a child’s basic timing and rhythm into my treatment sessions, I found myself looking more closely at my younger children. The disparity between what their bodies were ‘driven’ to do versus what was being required of them became more and more evident to me. It surely made more sense to address a child’s timing tendency at the youngest age possible. And so I moved on into Phase One of IM treatment with many of my kids (learn the reference tone – a patient will illustrate this when there is an obvious attempt to hit on the beat). These sessions covered kids as young as 3 years of age and used the same principles as those learned from my certification – establishing a baseline (Short Form Assessment - Task 1) and then basic tasks using Both Hands, Right Hand or Left Hand. Sessions for this age group were typically 30 minutes in length, with IM tasks repeated often and in short duration throughout that time. Modifications were made for positioning, reward systems and sensory needs.

Did I see results? Amazingly yes! I was thrilled that with a little creativity outcomes could be advanced so rapidly. But then, just as I began to sit back more comfortably on my laurels, along came the IM Professional Conference in Chicago in the Fall of 2007. It was here that my mindset for ‘appropriate age-range’ parameters were blown out of the water. I attended Patricia Sullivan’s presentation entitled “The Use of Interactive Metronome in Infancy” (A case study by Lucy Barlow CCC-SLP, RIMC, Merry Raber, IMC, and Debbie Bennett SLPA, RIMC). The presentation detailed the course of recovery of an 18 month old infant diagnosed with Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum, Failure to Thrive, Seizure Disorder, Global Develop-

