

NO MORE DELAYS FOR PETER, HE MOVES FORWARD AFTER IM!



I've been an OT for 20 years now and have seen many patients with the diagnosis of Developmental Delay. As these children age, some of them do "catch up" but others tend to develop at their own pace. Sometimes other syndromes or conditions or influences are impacting these children as well. One day a mother was talking to me after our OT session and she stated – "He is just marching to the beat of his own drummer!" and that has stuck with me for the past 15 or so years. Well, that statement in itself has a rhythmical reference to it, so I thought why not try IM with some of my patients who had Developmental Delays and see if it would be helpful.

Peter a 12-year-old boy was my first prospect. I had known him and worked with him since he was 18 months old. I reviewed with mom what I had learned, and let her know that I thought this might be a good option for her son who was struggling in school and was very slow and awkward in general. She agreed, knowing that at the very least it would be a good workout for him and that he would have to do some

good motor planning during the tasks. She committed to coming in 2x/week before school to do the sessions and we would see what happened. She decided not to tell teachers at school or any family members so that we could get any feedback unsolicited.

Our sessions were VERY difficult at first. He scored in the extreme deficiency range for his age and had difficult following the directions to perform simple motor tasks. But we kept it up! I helped him try to find the beat by putting my hands over his or modeling the exercise right next to him so he could follow along. Slowly but surely he started to "get it" – something clicked one day, and we had an "AHA" moment! He began understanding what the red, yellow and green colors meant on the computer as well as how to earn bursts during the sessions. In the clinic, his movements become quicker and we were able to do exercises at 54 beats/minute, which is the default for the program. I noticed that he was able to follow more complicated directions and needed much less verbal and physical cues during our sessions. At the end of 15, 1 hour sessions, his scores were

at the high end of average in all of his upper extremity exercises, and his lower extremity exercises were in the below average range. Both were much improved over his initial assessment.

But the best news came from the family and teachers. It happened to be the time of year when his mom went in for a parent teacher conference and the teacher wanted to know what was different about her student! Mom was so excited as she listened to a good report about her son who was now raising his hand in class and participating in class discussions. He was making friends on the playground, even friends who were not in his special needs class! She heard how he was suddenly picking up how to use the calculator and even doing better in computer class. His speech therapist at school also noted that words seemed to be coming easier for him and his fluency improved greatly. He actually volunteered to sign up for Special Olympics basketball and bowling – something he NEVER would have done before. Mom was thrilled, and the only thing that had changed in her son's life was the IM sessions! It also happened to be right around Christmas when we finished, and family members were astonished as this typically quiet kiddo began chatting up a storm with his aunts, uncles and cousins – and boy did he have a lot to say!

Developmental delay covers a wide spectrum of abilities – but maybe your child could benefit from trying IM. You just never know what changes may occur.

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