

# Using Interactive Metronome® with Infants:

At only 20 months, Sawyer tackles Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)

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## Introduction and Previous Infant Training Success

In 2007, I became aware of the Baby Emma story: The 18 month old baby who had a number of serious medical conditions including cerebral palsy, and complete agenesis of the corpus callosum. Doctors believed this baby would experience almost no developmental gains and it was expected that her highest achievement in life would be sitting upright. She had an unresponsive, ragdoll demeanor and slept 18-20 hours a day. It was noted that she had hypersensitivity on her face, hands, and feet and that any change in the taste, texture, or temperature of her food would result in rejection of the food to the point of vomiting.

A Speech-Language Pathologist, Lucy Barlow, decided to try out IM training to see if it would benefit the baby. Baby Emma, at her age, certainly could not do IM on her own and this required the therapist to do the exercises hand-over-hand. Immediately following her first IM session, Baby Emma's parents were aware of a change! Before long more changes occurred and she was soon making eye contact, babbling, making crawling motions, sitting upright unsupported and eating a variety of foods. Since that time IM has been used by therapists to benefit babies and children of all ages.

## Timing 4 Life, LLC

Until recently the youngest clients receiving IM training through Timing 4 Life, LLC in Fairfax, VA were five year old boys. However, in November 2013, I had the opportunity to take my equipment to Houston, Texas to practice (for the first time) working with a 20 month old. My intention was to see if I would be able to keep him engaged and suitably positioned in order to effectively administer the training. It was also my hope to introduce IM to his parents so that they could decide whether or not to seek out an occupational therapist to work with their son after I returned to the DC area.

## Sawyer

Sawyer was diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD). In his case his nervous system was over-responsive. SPD can impact a single sense or multiple senses. For some, clothing, sound, food or other sensory input may be unbearable.

At 20 months old Sawyer was able to ONLY eat baby food. The texture of any other foods was rejected and would result in a strong gag reflex. Sawyer's uncle had a similar trait and for his entire life has only been able to eat about five foods. Sawyer's three year old brother is displaying similar characteristics.

## IM Training

While in Houston I did IM training twice on Sawyer within a four day period. Neither was a full length session; rather, each session was under ten minutes. The guide sounds were turned on and the headphones were hung around his neck. The default screen was used and the IM-Universe "Fishin" and "Fairy" screens were also used. Again, my intention was to give the parents exposure to the technology.

## The Future

Sawyer's parents have decided to invest in an IM-Home unit where they will continue to work with him using sessions that I customize for their needs. They will correspond through the IM-Home system and I will be able to see his scores after each session. We expect to see additional gains as they begin this phase of the training. The parents also anticipate using the IM-Home unit for their three year old son who has similar characteristics.

## Results

I did not anticipate seeing a change after such brief exposure. However, less than one week from the first session I received a video clip of Sawyer holding a peanut butter cracker and willingly feeding his self. A day or two later I received a second video clip, this one taken at the occupational therapist's office. Again, he willingly ate a whole cracker (feeding his self). He has also eaten goldfish crackers.

## Other Improvements

Other improvements were also noted: His grandmother and part time caregiver says "He is more talkative, shaking his head yes and no, he appears happier and is having more of an opinion." She added that he is "just really blossoming!" Sawyer's mother said she and his father "are forever grateful."

*Be sure to check out the two videos of baby Sawyer online on our Youtube channel, IMetronome. These videos show Sawyer using IM and feeding his self after training. Look for the playlist "Sawyer Videos."*

