

CO-ORDINATION & MESSAGE TO HELP DYSLEXIA

By Katie Losty

A special programme to help improve learning ability through movement and massage.

Almost everyone knows some school going child that has difficulty with their reading, spelling handwriting or ability to concentrate. This can mean anything from spending a little extra time at homework to, as many parents have described it, schoolwork in general feeling like “a huge struggle” or “homework taking forever”. This can be a real nightmare situation for both parents and child involved. Ironically, these children often have other extra schoolwork to get done at home as they are unable to keep up with their classmates and have not managed to complete certain tasks during the school day.

Many parents contact The Katie Losty Dyslexia Association searching for help to alleviate this struggle with schoolwork. At The Katie Losty Dyslexia Association, **Co-ordination exercises & Massage are used to help Dyslexia** and other learning difficulties or differences.

What can co-ordination and massage do to help the learning process?

It can do a huge amount...and here is how –

It is no coincidence that many of the children who struggle with schoolwork may be also a little awkward in themselves, probably tend not to participate so much in sports and find things like tying shoelaces quite tricky. These are some indicators that the gross and fine motor skills are weak and that co-ordination between the right and left hemispheres of the brain is not operating as smoothly as it should (an early indicator is seen with infants who skip the crawling stage) and therefore presents us with some minor or in some cases major problems. Almost all areas of learning and schoolwork demand co-ordination.

More often than not when assessing children for the **Co-ordination training & Massage programme**, one becomes amazed at how well these children are coping with both school and play as the gross and fine motor skills along with hand to eye co-ordination and eye tracking ability of many is quite poor. The effort expended on simple everyday tasks such as writing down teacher’s homework notes from the blackboard can be enormous but not without a price of course. Naturally the child with poor co-ordination becomes quickly tired and loses interest and concentration. Unfortunately, lack of interest and concentration can be misinterpreted as laziness and occasionally develop into behavioral problems.

Once it has been established that co-ordination skills need to be improved, we can embark on the programme. As physical movement stimulates brain function the exercises involved incorporate using as much of the body as possible, e.g. legs, arms, eyes, fingers and even the tongue. Dyslexia, Dyspraxia or ADD are common diagnoses established on many of those participating in the programme but it is not necessary to have a specific diagnoses. In many cases children attending are experiencing very mild learning difficulties or differences but for the sensitive child even a very mild learning difficulty may become exacerbated by poor self-esteem and results in a very stressful situation.

To help rectify the co-ordination skills etc, the training programme is carried out on one to one basis over a period of twelve weeks. The **Co-ordination training & Massage programme** is attended once per week and between visits a short training programme is carried out daily. The exercises are fun and are tailored to suit the individual.

Conversation, encouragement and positive feedback are important ingredients of each session.

Massage and improved learning ability

Massage therapy is one of the most natural and powerful therapies known to us. As massage therapists we are already aware of the wonderful effects regular massage can have and research from places like the Miami Touch Research Institute endorse its positive effects more and more. During the twelve-week programme, a relaxation massage together with special facial acupressure is carried out on each visit. Stress inhibits the learning process and stress generally goes hand in hand with a learning difficulty. Massage is the perfect complement to this co-ordination exercises programme as it helps to improve functioning of the nervous system; it also reduces anguish and anxiety.

What we expect to see as a result of the programme

Feedback from parents, teachers and children show time and time again that improvements occur in the following areas –

- physical co-ordination like sports, dancing, less clumsy movement
- comprehension of the various areas of schoolwork, reading and spelling better, mathematics
- hand eye co-ordination and handwriting
- social skills, communication, self-esteem and self-confidence

Signs of improvements are often noted as early as three to five weeks after training has commenced. Most children I have worked with have improved in all the above areas but as each child is unique it is impossible to predict an exact result. For some parents and children the effects have been life changing.

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AROMANTICS WORKSHOP – EDINBURGH
...for everyone who wants to learn how to make products.

Aimed at all Complementary Therapists, the first day will be a beginner's day where we will be making a moisturising cream and also a shampoo with conditioner, aloe vera gels (2 types) and lipbalms.

The first part of the day we will learn about which vegetable oils to use in different skincare products and massage oils. The students will receive Education Pack 1 containing approximately 133 recipes.

The second day will be a massage product day where we will make massage-lotions, massage creams and massage bars, massage oils for Swedish Massage. The students will receive 41 recipes.

Please look at www.aromantic.co.uk for more information on each course – beginners and massage products.

The cost of each day will be £50 per person per day inclusive of all the recipes and raw materials. If you attend 2 days the cost per person will be £90 for both days. Insurance is included for all participants.

The minimum number of students is 12-14 students.

SATURDAY 14TH AND SUNDAY 15TH OF MAY 2005
9AM TO 5PM BOTH DAYS
CALL 01224 822960 TO BOOK YOUR PLACE

“Co-ordination & Massage to help Dyslexia” – continued from page 14

As a practitioner for **Co-ordination training & Massage programme**, I feel privileged to be equipped with such an amazing and effective tool. While living in Sweden, I trained as a Physical Therapist at Axelsons Gymnastic Institute, Axelsons is Scandinavia's largest Complementary Medicine College, and there they employed the theories of the importance of movement for learning. They learned from the extensive studies and research of specialists in that field like Dennison, Hannaford and Moshe Elbum and had the foresight to combine a movement programme with massage. My tutor at Axelsons, Ann Chatrine Jonsson had spent over twenty years working as a teacher for special needs, having observed the positive effects of the **Co-ordination training & Massage programme** had on her pupils she feels it impossible to teach without it.

Returning to Ireland in 2000 gave me the opportunity, through my practice at The Sandycove Health Clinic, to introduce here this unique therapy and new approach to helping learning difficulties or differences. From a practitioners view, observing the changes from week to week in those attending, gives a feeling of immeasurable satisfaction.

This therapy may also be tailored to suit adults.

It is not designed to replace any resource teaching a child may be getting but can be a powerful catalyst in the whole learning process, where everyone involved benefits!

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