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Primitive Reflex Spotlight: Moro Reflex Integration Explained

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Primitive Reflex Spotlight: Moro Reflex
Integration Explained

What Is the Moro Reflex

The Moro reflex, also known as the Startle Reflex, is a normal primitive reflex

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observed in infants.

It is triggered by a sudden change in sensory input, often a loud noise or a sudden movement.

The reflex involves an outward spread of the arms followed by a clenching or hugging motion as the infant tries to grasp onto something for security.

The Moro reflex typically develops in utero and should integrate by around 4 months after birth. Integration means that the reflex becomes less prominent and gradually disappears as the infant's neurological system matures.

What Happens When the Moro Reflex Doesn't Integrate Properly

In some cases, the Moro reflex might not integrate properly within the expected timeframe. This can lead to various challenges such as the following:

- Exaggerated startle response
- Hypersensitivity
- Sleep problems
- Poor self-regulation
- Balance and coordination problems

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Fortunately, there are exercises and therapies aimed at integrating the moro reflex if retained.

These interventions focus on sensory experiences, movement patterns, and developmental activities to support the integration process. The goal is to ensure that the reflex becomes appropriately integrated, contributing to the child’s overall motor and sensory development.

Exercises/Techniques to Help With the Moro Reflex

The following are some exercises/techniques to help with moro reflex integration:

- **Star to Ball Lying on Back:** Lie on the back and stretch arms and legs wide like a star, then bring them together like a ball.
- **Popcorn on Therapy Ball:** Sit on a therapy ball, bouncing gently while holding arms out.
- **Pop Game:** Have the child lay on their side on the floor with arms bent near their face and feet touching the wall (fetal position). Next, tell them to “pop” away from the wall by

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pushing their legs and rolling to their stomach (prone positioning) with arms extended overhead.

- **Ball Hugs:** Have the child wrap arms and legs around a therapy ball imitating a hug for approximately 5-7 seconds.
- **Seated Starfish on Therapy Ball:** Sit on a therapy ball with legs apart and arms outstretched like a starfish.
- **Penguin and Pigeon Exercise:** Ask the child to walk like a penguin or pigeon with arms out to their sides.
- **Bridges:** Have the child lay supine with knees flexed and feet on the floor and raise bottom off floor.
- **Decreasing Container Time:** For babies, minimizing time spent in containers like car seats or swings can help integrate the Moro reflex.

For More Activity Ideas and
Documentation Samples

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