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OT

r/OccupationalTherapy

• 3 yr. ago

_thehangedman

Timeframe on integrating retained reflexes

Hello, I hope this is the right place to ask and apologies if I missed it being asked elsewhere. Thanks in advance for any insight or suggestions.

My seven year old daughter started seeing an OT in April and has been doing the exercises daily for a number of retained primitive reflexes. We have yet to see any real improvements, though. I keep reading that this normally only takes a few months, which gave me some hope that they would be integrated before school. Unfortunately a lot of the behaviors associated with the retained Moro reflex are causing problems now that school is here. Should we be exploring other things at this point, or just keep at it?

Her Moro reflex is especially bad, and she'll spend time doing the starfish exercise, but has never had a problem with it from the beginning. I tried to find another exercise to mix it up a bit, but I can't find one anywhere. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated!

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tyrelltsura · 3y ago

I'm going to give more of my personal opinion here even though I don't work pediatrics, but I did use to work for Brain Balance. Take my opinion with some grains of salt.

There is not very good scientific evidence of "retained primitive reflexes" for behavioral issues. That's very different from things like retained ATNR in someone with cerebral palsy where you can literally see it. Integrating primitive reflexes in things like ADHD in autism is a decently controversial treatment method and it's not something all OTs will use as a treatment methodology, nor do all OTs believe in it. When I worked for brain balance a lot of kids would show "retained primitive reflexes" but the thing is:

1. The tests didn't actually test for the primitive reflex
2. The issues the kids were experiencing had pretty much nothing to do with the primitive reflex. Problems I dealt with were more executive functioning and mental health (trauma) based, sometimes even parent behavior issues.

If you're noticing that there's no improvements it's completely fair to try something else. Whether it's another treatment approach or another OT. If you want my strictly personal opinion, I'd explore other things.

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perpetual_researcher · 3y ago

If something doesn't seem to be improving as it relates to her goals, it is certainly reasonable to ask for another approach. There are many others. If you are not happy with the answer, then explore seeing another therapist. Most pediatric therapists will use a combination of strategies until we find the winner.

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just_meeshell · 3y ago

I am a peds OT and from what I understand is there isn't a significant amount of research behind reflex integration, so I never recommend specific exercises for this. However, I do believe that through participating in gross motor play, we are also addressing retained reflexes. I am curious what "behaviors" you are seeing in your daughter that you are concerned about?

Another question for you is, what other 7 year olds do you see that sit down to do their daily exercises? Probably not a ton I would guess... If your daughter were my client, my approach would be figuring out what is motivating for her that would help her to naturally move her body through the motions you'd see in the exercises you were provided. I had to look up the starfish exercise and the first thing that came to mind for me was hiding a small toy that she likes up high so she has to climb up on something and reach up for it. Children learn/develop sooooo much faster through play. It is so important to find a way to help them be motivated to participate in the play.

I would think that if you are not seeing progress after months of consistently doing a home program, then it may be helpful for you to find a different OT with a different approach, or ask your current OT to change their intervention.

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AutoModerator MOD · 3y ago

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