Children's Therapy Place

CTP News

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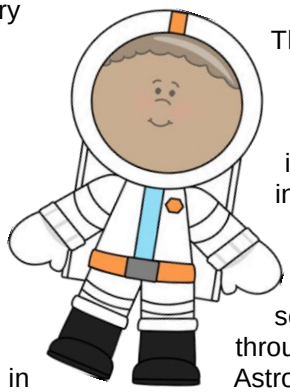
Introducing Astronaut Training

"A specially designed program which addresses three different and very important sensory systems; the vestibular, visual, and auditory systems"

By: Derek H. Bawden, MOT, OTR/L & Ashley Day MS, OTR/L

Don't worry we will not be training your child to solve complex physics algorithms, maneuver through gravity eliminated environments, or navigate a rover on the moon. So, what is Astronaut training? It is a specially designed program which addresses three different and very important sensory systems; the vestibular, visual, and auditory systems.



The Vestibular system is part of the Human Balance System which utilizes sensory input from semicircular canals found in the inner ear to coordinate balance skills and tells us where we are in space. Balance also requires input from the eyes and muscles and joints in our body. Astronaut Training challenges the vestibular system to become more dynamic in receiving and processing our bodies movements within our environment. It can help to improve movement regulation, spatial and body awareness, and general balance coordination.

The Visual system of course starts with the eye receiving visual input from the environment we live in. That input is then processed in the brain where the input is then interpreted. Astronaut Training trains the eyes to use saccades and pursuits to track objects in space in various linear planes. This leads to improved visual attention and visual processing which can positively affect a child's ability to read, write, and attend to academic tasks.

The Auditory system is responsible for our sense of hearing. With it we can locate sound in our environment and increase perception in the space around us. It also assists us to create our own sound output primarily through speech skills. Astronaut Training can help to improve a child's ability to navigate their surroundings and engage with objects and people.

At Children's Therapy Place, we utilize this specialized program to improve skills related to the three sensory systems described above. A rotary board is used to test a child's responsiveness to rotary movements. When a child is positioned in sitting and lying, the head is positioned to activate the inner ear hair cells while the eyes are closed to

Children's Therapy Place

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Offices in Boise, Nampa, Meridian, and Statewide Online.

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create a post rotary nystagmus (flickering of the eyes). The rotary board is rotated in counter clockwise and clockwise directions for up to 10 seconds with directional music input provided. Post rotary, the nystagmus of the eyes is assessed to determine the child's response to the input. Most children's response should last up to approximately 7 seconds. When it is determined that a child has an atypical response, various treatment protocols are implemented to assist the child in integrating their vestibular, visual, and auditory processing.

5 Tips for a Healthy Digital Diet

With the new year upon us, it's a great time to set new resolutions. If you're concerned your child is too dependent on electronic devices, here are recommendations from the experts at the Technology in Early Childhood Center at Erikson Institute;

For a healthy digital diet, include nutritious items from each of the "food groups." Choose content that:

Engages

Find interactive content that appeals to your child's interests and lets him or her control how to explore it.

Promotes creativity

Help your child tell a story or create art using a camera, computer, or other device and share it with others.

Encourages Discovery

Ask your child to identify a topic to learn about, and then use technology to explore, discover, and communicate what he or she learned.

Can be explored together

Engaging in technology with your child promotes learning. Model healthy habits and positive ways to use technology to interact with others, play, learn, communicate, and collaborate.

And leave a little room for "junk food"!

In a healthy digital diet, passive viewing of appropriate content is OK now and then. But remember: Even watching TV together and asking your child questions about the program turns passive viewing into active learning!

For more information: http://www.erikson.edu/

Recipe

Gluten-Free Blueberry Maple Overnight Oatmeal

By: Bettycrocker.com

Ingredients

- **½** cup almond or coconut milk
- **2** containers (5.3 oz each) gluten-free Greek blended vanilla yogurt
- **2** pouches Gluten Free Chex™ maple brown sugar oatmeal (from 9.54-oz box)
- **1/2** cup fresh blueberries
- **¼** cup chopped pecans, toasted, if desired
- **2** tablespoons additional fresh blueberries, if desired

Directions

1 In container with tight-fitting cover, mix almond milk, yogurt and oatmeal. Stir in 1/2 cup blueberries. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

2 Top with toasted pecans and extra blueberries.