Certification Training Manual

Primitive Reflexes and NeuroDevelopmental Movement

The training in NeuroDevelopmental Movement is teaching you a skill set that uses the whole of the Developmental Sequence to help the child mature their reflex, sensory, and motor systems together, not as separate skills. Many of the parents with whom you work will have educated themselves online or by other research and will be aware of organizations that do reflex integration or sensory integration. We, as consultants, know that primitive reflexes, as well as sensory skills are integrated as the child moves through the Developmental Sequence and completes each stage through their NeuroDevelopmental Movement Plan.

We can explain to the parents that:

Primitive reflexes, or birth reflexes, are a roadmap given to all of us so that every fetus can do their job to prepare for birth, guide their body through the birth process, and keep themselves alive after birth. One example of this is the rooting reflex that helps the baby find the nipple or bottle immediately, or soon after birth.

The normal neurological development that begins at conception generates reflexes throughout the pregnancy, which the mother can feel in the flutter and the kick of her unborn baby. We address these reflexes, in part, through the fetal patterns. Reflexes that help the infant participate in the birth process are replicated in the birth patterns.

But by the time we are walking, talking, and functioning at a cortical level, we no longer need these primitive reflexes. We do not need, for instance, the Spinal Galant Reflex, which helps the baby move down the birth canal, because we are never going to take that trip again.

However, for some children, because they have not completed the Developmental Sequence, these reflexes are retained and can cause problems from bedwetting to toe walking to poor pen grip. These primitive reflexes that are not 'integrated' or suppressed, can actually become stumbling blocks that interrupt the full expression of the postural reflexes, which we will need for the rest of our lives.

We will list and explore some of the reflexes that you will see as you test children. But continue to be aware that this is not a 'reflex integration program'. However, if a parent asks about reflexes, you can explain that they are integrated as part of the replication of the Developmental Sequence. Reflexes become integrated through NeuroDevelopmental Movement.