

Somatic Movement Therapy with Children: A Creative, Developmental, Individualized Approach
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Movement Therapy that is based in the somatic educational system of **Body-Mind Centering®** emerges from the principle that support precedes movement. Utilizing a **child's strengths**, a movement therapist works to **establish ease** within the child's existing movement, social, and emotional patterns, while simultaneously building a solid foundation to support future learning templates.

Somatic Movement Therapy assesses and **engages the whole person** while supporting and promoting her or his success. When working with children at CKE we use a developmental approach that offers your child a unique opportunity to **enhance sensory-motor skills through brain-based learning** models. A Developmental Movement Therapist uses skilled observation, easeful movement and gentle hands-on re-patterning to allow your child the opportunity to facilitate motor, developmental, and perceptual integration. The movement therapy process fosters greater **self awareness, dynamic social skills, sensory integration, coordination, neuromuscular re-education, memory and academic enhancement**--ultimately allowing your child to reach their fullest developmental potential.

The movement therapist pays attention to the unique configurations of each person's body and mind. Our bodies fall into patterns, as do all natural phenomena. The nervous system has the potential of innumerable patterns some of which are more "reflexive" or automatic. However, **no movement patterns are accessible until they are actually stimulated.** When someone has a limited range of perceptual-motor patterns it limits the choices in everyday thought and action. For example, a child who does not fully use or sequence through his or her feet and legs when crawling may later experience instability and difficulty while trying to establish a connection to the ground as they walk. This inefficient patterning may in turn adversely affect the child's ability to move through space, play sports, stand tall, or socialize with other children. Weak thrust through the legs is often associated with weakness in the core muscles of the trunk with further implications for overall bodily posture. We engage children in activities to **strengthen the entire body by designing personalized games for your child that s/he is responsive to.** Each movement challenge will stimulate coordination enhancing the neuro-muscular system, as well as fine-tune both flexibility and strength through whole body's the musculature. Activities will be provided to **reinforce this stimulation and integration throughout the week at home, at play, and/or at school.**

During infancy, a baby's movement patterns develop in a progressive and critical sequence. It has been observed that incomplete or disrupted sequencing can lead to chronic physical and emotional problems as well as learning difficulties, many of which can be compounded into adulthood. When these problems present themselves, Somatic Movement Therapy offers a **holistic approach to their re-patterning**, often through the use of Development Movement Therapy (DMT). DMT works well in conjunction with Brain Gym and other neural-motor or perceptual approaches to help stimulate incomplete patterns.

This somatic approach uses **hands-on facilitation as an educational tool to help increase awareness.** The physical engagement of the therapists helps to regulate a child's response to stimuli and to monitor proprioceptive (internal body) feedback. The hands-on guidance can also **facilitate movement possibilities** that open new neuro-motor pathways, creating a wider range of well-coordinated and efficient movement choices. More specifically hands-on somatic education can help reduce levels of Cortisol ("the stress hormone") allowing the child to **unlearn previously stressful movements and achieve developmental milestones** with ease. As a result the child is able to experience greater focus, balance, coordination, tone, motivation, and sequencing. Goals can also include an increase in athletic and academic performance.

Individual or group educational sessions may include Cranio-Sacral therapy, Neuro-Motor approaches (Interactive Metronome, Brain Gym, or Dance), and a Body-Mind Centering approach to re-patterning, including **contacting the different layers and types of tissues** that make up the body and embodying a deep supportive connection with self and the environment.

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