

Dyslexia, RMT and Reflexes

Dyslexia is a difficulty with reading and processing sounds which may lead on to writing and spelling challenges. Sometime people these difficulties can also have problems with written math. When people have difficulties with working out math problems this is called dyscalculia.

At its core dyslexia, and its associated challenges, is a sensory processing dysfunction. As the brain develops we are more able to understand the world around us. In simple terms the brain processes the information coming from our sensory organs. What we see, hear, touch, smell and taste, as well as information coming from our balance (vestibular) and internal (interoceptive) senses are the clues the brain uses to work out what is happening. As the brain matures the more we perceive and understand.

In dyslexia the messages about what we see and/or hear can be confused, and it is difficult for the brain to work out what is going on, and this leads on to difficulty in reading and processing sounds.

Some of the challenges associated with dyslexia are:

- Swapping letters around when reading. Eg saying **saw** instead of **was**
- Mixing up letters **b** and **d** or **p** and **q**
- Reversing numbers and letters
- Missing words when reading
- Add words that are not there when reading
- Lose place when reading
- Difficult to stay on the right line when reading
- Get headaches or irritated eyes when reading
- Late talker
- Pronunciation problems
- Can read the words however have very little comprehension or memory of what is read
- Cover one eye when reading
- Difficult to copy things of the board
- Confuse left and right
- Difficult to write neatly
- Have good idea, however lose them when writing
- Spelling poor

The biggest challenge for people with dyslexia is the frustration and despair they feel when they do not understand what others seems to understand so easily. They often feel stupid. However nothing could be further from the truth. The way they process information is in many ways is a gift. So many dyslectics have superior problem solving skill, inquiring minds, solve problems well and are adept at finding different ways of doing things, are good at 3-D construction, see the big picture, and have good insight and ability to analyze situations.

It is important to remember that dyslexia is not an illness. It is a processing dysfunction. We do not have to cure dyslexia, rather we need to work with the person to find the best strategy to process information so that it makes sense to them. There is no one size fits all program.

The role of primitive reflexes in dyslexia

People with dyslexia often have motor coordination problems. They are clumsy and have poor posture. Many did not crawl and either walked very early or scooted around on their bottoms for extended periods of time. Crawling is important for infant. It helps the corpus callosum (the pathways between the brain hemispheres) to myelinate; is an important step in helping to understand left and right; essential for the development of binocular vision and accommodation (near/far vision).

When infants don't crawl it is because one or more primitive reflexes are still active. So when the baby goes to creep and crawl the position of her head is still controlling what the arms and legs are doing. This means that she is very unstable when she tries to crawl and cannot maintain coordination and control. It is easier to get up and walk (actually mostly they run, and keep running), or to scoot around.

The movements of the eyes are also immature and jerky for many people with dyslexia. It is very difficult to maintain visual stability when the eyes struggle to keep still and focused.

Rhythmic Movement Training working with dyslexia

The movements and activities of the RMTi program work at establishing:

- the basis of postural control, coordination and muscle tone
- more efficient neural networks and strengthening connections
- better binocular vision and accommodation

The movements are based on the natural movement patterns of an infant. They are gentle, rhythmic and easy to do at home. The other techniques work at promoting efficient left and right connections.

When we have more efficient neural connections and foundations in place it is easier for the various sensory processing programs and strategies to work.