

BRIGHT START PEDIATRIC SERVICES

"BRIGHT SPOT"



Bright Start Pediatric Services is proud to offer The Interactive Metronome (IM) therapeutic assessment and training program! Recently, Tara Saucier, Certified Occupational Therapist with BPS, took some time to explain this dynamic approach to the evaluation and treatment of children with motor and sensory disorders, learning deficits, speech and language delays, and various cognitive and physical difficulties.

What is Interactive Metronome Therapy and who can it benefit?

Interactive Metronome (or IM) is a computer-based program that involves listening to the sound of a bell, and then syncing movements to that sound. It is an assessment and treatment tool that is used during therapy to help reach the individual's goals. IM is an evidence-based, therapeutically engaging tool that improves both cognitive and motor skills.

How does this intervention differ from more traditional approaches?

IM is a tool used like any other tool during therapy to help enhance motor planning, sequencing, and attention to tasks. The difference is that it is computer generated. It's entertaining and playful game-like interface makes it fun and challenging for children.

What do you feel the benefits of using Interactive Metronome are?

IM helps clients to improve their overall functioning by targeting timing and processing within the brain. IM has been proven to help individuals increase their attention and concentration to tasks, improve motor control and coordination, and decrease impulsivity.

Do you have a personal philosophy on how therapy should be approached, and how does that mesh with Interactive Metronome therapy?

My personal philosophy on therapy is to focus on the individual's independence and functional performance, whether it is at school, home, daycare, or during therapy. IM is another therapeutic tool that incorporates fun and challenging activities and can be integrated into all aspects of life to help improve independence and functional performance.

In your experience, what is the most challenging part of using IM? The most rewarding aspect?

If properly trained, there are few challenges or barriers to using IM. If a child is overly sensitive to wearing headphones over their ears, we place them on their shoulders or use speakers instead. If a child cannot perform tasks on her own, hand-over-hand assistance is provided, or sensory input is given.

The most rewarding aspects have been seeing functional changes in children who use IM. I've also had the pleasure of speaking with parents who report that their child is able to get up and prepare for school without extra reminders and that their child is better behaved and focused at school. It has been very rewarding to see and hear about the progress that children using IM have made.

What is the best piece of advice you feel that you could give to a parent/caregiver who is interested in this type of therapy approach?

Give it a try. The IM program specifically focuses on timing in the brain, which is the root of issues with attention, speech/language processing, and motor coordination (among others). I generally start to see changes after about one month of once a week IM therapy sessions.

On a personal note... How long have you been an OT, where did you graduate from, and what are your credentials?

I have been an OT for ten years. During that time, I've worked with early intervention, preschool, and school-aged children. I graduated from Worcester State University in Worcester, Massachusetts with a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy and Psychology.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I love to knit when I can find the time. I also enjoy baking!

Who are your personal and professional mentors, and where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

There are too many wonderful people in my life to name both professionally and personally. I feel I am surrounded by so many great therapists and colleagues, who have taught me so much about myself, and the kind of therapist I want to be. In my personal life, I really could not be where I am without the love and support of my husband, family, and friends. In ten years from now, I would like to think that I would still be working as an OT, but with new skills and knowledge. I truly love my job!