Happy Talk

Guidelines for Communication: Children with Special Needs



Jennifer Warters

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by Jennifer Warters

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Cover: Louise Oliver

Light Voice

HAPPY TALK

Communication Guideline for Children with Special Needs

Light Voice

Welcome to Light Voice

My work with voice began when I embarked on my career as a Speech and Language Therapist. This inspired an interest in the mechanics of the ear, the vocal apparatus and the process of listening. I gained extensive experience as a generic specialist, working in hospitals, schools and community settings over a thirty-year period, within the National Health Trust in the UK, coordinating an area wide service to adults with learning disabilities and children with complex needs.

Eventually, having become disillusioned by orthodox methods of intervention, I chose to leave my chosen profession. I had a growing interest in metaphysics and sound vibration and there followed a period of Post-Graduate holistic therapy training with Carol Lamb, a well-respected intuitive trauma therapist, author and teacher. This enabled me to gain an understanding of the links between communication, hearing impairment, memory and consciousness

In 1999, I had a direct experience of non-local communication and was given a system of eight chakra tones. Prior to this profound experience, I had no understanding of vocal toning as a means of expression. In 2000, I established Light Voice Holistic Consultancy offering an integrated holistic approach through toning, colour, music and energetic alignment. The system of Rainbow Chakra Tones is an effective self- help method for personal healing and will enhance existing therapeutic practice

My work with voice has evolved and I have presented my research at international conferences. I run an international online tinnitus clinic, combining toning with emerald alignment to effect a cure for this debilitating condition.

Jennifer Warters BSc MA IPHM

Light Voice

Holistic Healing Programmes for Children

Light Voice healing programmes for children offer a holistic approach, which improves communication, restores confidence and increases the child's ability to socialise. Equal credence is given to the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual growth of the child with a focus on creative play to integrate positive feelings and new patterns of relating in order to strengthen the personality on its path of refinement.

Healing for children is based on the premise that children require an environment where music and sound play a key role. Research has demonstrated that harmonious music aids listening, stimulates and enhances language development and creates a sharing environment to open the mind to new possibilities. Rhythm, which reflects the rhythmical patterns of the heartbeat and the mechanics of breathing improves circulatory flow, stabilises the emotions and aids coordination and balance.

A structured environment with clear boundaries and an understanding of the consequence of action nurtures respect, enabling the child to develop personal responsibility for their own behaviour. An understanding of the power of words and clear communication improves the vocabulary and develops confidence in expression and interaction. A connection to nature instils a sense of belonging and well being while opportunities for creative play and story-telling help to develop imagination and intuition.

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is for those who have a deep desire to work creatively with children but have become disillusioned with systems and methods of working that fail to address the child's underlying emotions. Our own experiences may colour our perception of what is really going on causing us to make judgements which interfere with the child's ability to progress. Professional assessment whilst providing a diagnosis indicates a list of assumptions about what the child is or is not capable of and limits and veils our perception of the child's potential.

Having tried and tested numerous working methods over many years within the National Health Service and Education, I came to the conclusion that focusing on a child's impairment and endeavouring to teach them to do what they find most difficult is a debilitating exercise for both child and teacher. I became inspired with the dawning realisation that children are able to heal themselves surprisingly quickly when offered positive creative choices. These choices should be based on what the child enjoys doing within a structured framework of familiarity, routine and clear boundaries.

This approach caused me to shift my focus to the creative intuitive aspects of the right brain rather than the left-brain, the seat of the impairment. The child's enjoyment of a creative task causes positive light energy to flow into those areas of the brain that are impaired just as sunshine and water droplets stimulate plant growth through the process of photosynthesis.

Children benefit from interacting with the elements of nature, earth, water plants, trees and all life forms. This allows them to engage with those parts of the central nervous system that are unimpaired. Research has shown that plants, flowers and trees respond to our emotional state and harmonise our energy flow. We feel better if we smell the roses.

Relationship to other people, to the land and to animals is how we become connected to each other and how we learn. On my recent travels to Australia and through the connections I made, I found that relationship was of paramount importance to Aboriginal society. Exploration of the environment is encouraged and within the family groups, all generations learn together, sharing knowledge and socialising. The children learn at their own level sharing resources, ideas, thoughts and feelings. Through observation and interaction they learn to gauge each other's emotions, behaviours and style.

Hyperactive children who reflect the anxiety of those around them are more likely to become calmer and settled in the presence of an adult who predictably responds to them with a calm voice and demeanour.

All too often we 'shine a torch' on a child's difficulty in the hope that any new learning will be integrated into their daily life. Instead we need to refocus their

minds away from their own difficulty and involve them in an enjoyable creative experience of their choosing. This will relax them, restore their confidence and begin to melt away self-doubt. A relaxed child will learn more easily. The positive energy of enjoyment will change the child's perception of their own difficulty which will be diminished as a result.

It is my hope that this manual has encapsulated my passion and love of this work and will inspire you too. I have provided some structured guidelines to help you follow your own intuition in working creatively with the children you meet.

THE HUMAN ENERGY FIELD

To understand the functioning of the human body, we must travel beyond the parameters of the brain to realise that we are more than just physical beings. If we stretch our arms out to the side and above us, we perceive this as our personal space, whereas this is our own personal energy field, which is wrapped around us. You may have also heard this referred to as the electromagnetic field. Consciousness is the primary source, energy is the force which consciousness directs; this subtle energy is variously described as magnetism and in Eastern tradition, it is known as the life force, universal energy, chi or prana. All living things have their own unique energy field which is dependent on this source.

Through the process of downward causation, consciousness is stepped down as wave frequencies through an integrated hierarchical structure, corresponding to ephemeral, intuitive, intellectual, sensory and physical states. (Lamb 2015) via a complex network of channels called meridians, which are invisible to the naked eye. This energy is channelled through the spine and the central nervous system to affect our physical health, communication and behaviour.

There are seven major energy centres / power points or chakras. Each energy centre corresponds to a frequency within the light spectrum, which corresponds to one of the seven rainbow colours (see diagram below). The energy centres interconnect to metabolise the in coming energy maintaining balance and flow within the energy field. Thoughts and feelings manifest as fear and control patterns, which interrupt and impede this flow of energy and our will comes into play to determine our choices and actions.

Through an acceptance of the human energy field and an understanding of the process of energy flow we can begin to understand how physical symptoms and behaviour are responses linked to the memory of past experience. Working with the five senses eases the process of memory release and begins to address the underlying emotions.

This knowledge has inspired me to find new and innovative ways of addressing communication impairment and behavioural difficulties. As my work has evolved, I have shifted the focus of my intervention to the creative intuitive aspects of the right brain.

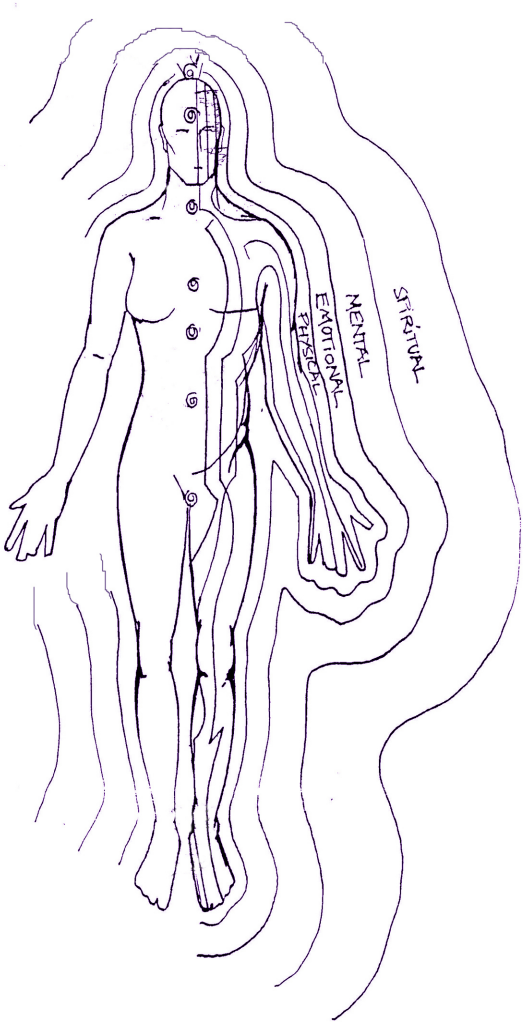
Further Reading:

Anatomy of the Human Energy Field (Lamb, 2015)

Epiphany Press: www.spiritualalchemy.net

THE MAJOR CHAKRA SYSTEM

Crown (Violet)	~	Crown of the head. Governs the mental and intuitive aspects.
Brow (Indigo)	~	Centre of forehead. Governs ability to see clearly and organise thoughts.
Throat (Blue)	~	Throat. Governs voice and all aspects of communication.
Heart (Apple Green)	~	Centre of chest. Heart connections.
Solar Plexus (Yellow)	~	Central abdomen. Determines emotional response.
Sacral (Orange)	~	Below umbilicus. Governs relationship with self and others.
Base (Red)	~	Base of the spine. Holds subconscious memory and entrenched behaviour patterns.



The Four Lower Bodies



The Chakra System

CREATIVE PLAY

All children need to play. They use play to make sense of their experiences, to make sense of what is happening around them, to channel overwhelming feelings and to 'play out' situations that they feel powerless to resolve.

By offering the child a space and providing a few simple props, they can create a character for themselves and be in their own fantasy world, which allows them to explore what they need to explore in their own way and at their own pace.

The adult should be the observer and only get involved and take on a role if invited to do so. It is then of paramount importance that in the play situation the adult follows the lead of the child and does not try to take the story to where they feel it should go or try to hurry it to a conclusion.

The play if allowed to unfold will travel at the pace that is suitable for the child and if the story is not completed in the time allotted, the child is usually happy to carry it over to the next opportunity. This is much better than forcing a conclusion before the story has had time to reach its creative potential.

Case Study Example

One boy of eleven called Roger attended Speech and Language Therapy sessions because of a very bad stammer and was having difficulty integrating into a new step family. I offered him choices of therapy and rather than focus on techniques to help him overcome his speech difficulties, he chose to play and wanted to 'play shops' throughout each session for three months.

Each week he would set up his grocer's shop and display items for sale. I was given the role of the customer and allowed to purchase specific items of his choosing. Over the three months the shop developed into a thriving business and Roger created a café inside the shop where he was also waiter and chef. I was invited to order meals from the illustrated menu provided and waited for an allotted time whilst the meal was prepared and served.

Roger had complete control over the business he had created and was totally engrossed in his play, paying attention to every detail. During this time his speech and behaviour problems gradually resolved as he became more settled and integrated at home. School reported that his organisational skills had improved dramatically as he grew in confidence.

At the end of a three-month period Roger said that he did not want to play the game anymore and felt that he was 'alright now'. His mother and I agreed with him and our sessions ended. I would not have suggested 'playing shops' because I would have assumed that he was too old for such a game.

However, because Roger's play continued to unfold as his shop expanded it felt important that he was allowed to play this game until it had reached its own conclusion and he was ready to stop and not because I felt it had gone on long enough.

Have no expectations and make no assumptions

Children are able to create situations, which to the observer have no bearing on their reality but include the same elements and allow the child to resolve situations, relationships and fears in an imaginary situation, which will then impact on their life in ways which we would not think possible.

Children are able to resolve painful memories and grief through play situations. Fairy stories provide a perfect vehicle for children who have suffered trauma and abuse, for in the stories the main characters overcome incredible hardship by exhibiting courage and compassion in the face of cruelty and neglect.

Simplicity is the key

An abundance of different materials in the clear spectrum colours of the rainbow can become a headdress of an African Chief; a star spangled dress for the ball; a magic carpet to an exotic land; a rainbow path to lead you out of a dark wood; a warm coverlet in the bitter wind, a sumptuous Bedouin tent in the desert; a deep crystal lake preventing access or the elements of earth, air, fire and water… the possibilities are endless.

The child could bring a favourite piece of music or song to the play session. Play this for them quietly in the background to provide a sense of comfort and familiarity. The child's chosen music will give an indication of the emotions they are dealing with.

Case Study Example

One pale, withdrawn little girl of five had lost her mother to cancer two years earlier and was now struggling to cope with school and her father's new girlfriend. Her favourite song, which she played over and over at home was the popular hit song 'Tragedy'.

In the play situation, her new confident self emerged, she turned up the volume of her chosen song, tied flame coloured material around her waist as a skirt; transformed herself into a flamenco dancer; beckoned me to follow and 'strutted her stuff', stamping her way across the floor as the dance provided her with a vehicle to release the overwhelming emotions that had been trapped inside her little body for so long.

All children love to play and are able to play and show their enjoyment in their own way however disabled and whatever the medical diagnosis says.

Prepare to be amazed and humbled by what you see and hear. Forget yourself, this is not about you and what you can do. Have clear boundaries for what is acceptable, provide the space and the materials and wait, watch and listen for the magic to begin!

USE OF MUSIC

In 1999, I researched the use of music as a healing agent to enhance language development and awareness in infants and was inspired and motivated by the results of this exploration. My discoveries led me to promote the use of music in all my healing and training programmes with children and adults with learning disability and I have since witnessed the healing impact of music with many clients.

Many of us feel that we make better decisions when we listen to music.

Albert Einstein said that he had his greatest inspiration while playing the violin because it 'liberated his brain so that he could imagine'.

- Music is an effective way of engaging children with an activity and it helps the child make the transition from passive recipient to active participant. Music enhances the imagination and awakens the brain to be receptive to positive stimuli in the environment.
- Soothing music inhibits the brain's release of the stress hormone cortisol, reducing observed stress behaviour and healing the damaging effect of verbal abuse and parental distress.
- Music will help the child understand the concepts of beginning and ending enabling the child to adjust to change rather than demand that everything stays the same.

Musical Magic CD Pack

'Musical Magic' provides a bridge to healing for young children and includes two CDs, one for play during the day with Nursery Rhymes to improve speech and communication and a simple bedtime story for children to aid relaxation and instil peaceful feelings before sleep.

Website: www.amadeusproject.co.uk

Use music to define the activity

- Each activity could have a musical theme tune that the child will learn to recognise.
- Use specific music to signal the ending of the activity and to cover the putting away and clearing up.

- Again use themed music to signal that you are ready to begin the next activity or to close. This will encourage the children to listen.

The Music of Mozart

- Exploration into the 'Mozart Effect' (Alfred Tomatis) has established that Mozart's music with its inherent high frequencies relaxes and opens the brain to new experience and learning; the slow movements instil peaceful feelings before sleep and enhance language development during play.
- Mozart's music alleviates distress and anxiety and will facilitate harmonious interaction in the classroom if played quietly in the background.
- Alfred Tomatis (1920 – 2001) a world-renowned Ear, Nose and Throat physician who received his Doctorate in Medicine from the Paris School of Medicine believed that voice problems were hearing problems and a failure to communicate had to do with listening and the ear. He developed an internationally successful technique using an electronic ear which electronically modified the music of Mozart by enhancing the missing frequencies to successfully target auditory processing problems.

To Aid the use of Technology

- Evidence shows that children are able to concentrate for longer periods on the computer if Mozart or Bach is played as background music. Music will improve the child's ability to retain information.

PREPARATION

FOR

GROUP WORK

- Stop
- Look
- Listen

PREPARATION FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN A GROUP

It is important to instil in the children the desire to listen because it is through interaction with others that the child builds his/her identity and sense of self.

It is essential to have the child's full attention before you give any instruction or they will not hear you or listen to what you are saying.

- **The child who is relaxed will learn more.**
- **Give clear instructions.**
- **Keep the learning SIMPLE and FUN.**
- **Adapt the activities to the ages of the children.**

VISUAL AIDS

Use large coloured pictures or easily recognisable symbols so that that the children can **see** a picture of what you are saying as well as **hear** what you are saying. For example, put a large red disc on a stick to represent the traffic light for **stop.** Hold it up in front of the children when you want them to stop.

- Make sure that the children understand the meaning of key words before you introduce a picture.
- Check that the child understands the names of:
- **Objects** e.g. door, window, coat shoe etc.
- **Body Parts** e.g. hand, arm, foot, etc.
- **Action Words** (verbs) e.g. sit, stand, stop, go etc.
- Once the children can understand the meaning of single meaningful words, you can introduce pictures and symbols.

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN

Ensure that the children STOP when you say STOP

Use the visual aid for **STOP** to reinforce your words

The child must **STOP** what they are doing and **LOOK** at you

Only then can the child **LISTEN** to the instruction

Make sure the children

STOP TALKING

STOP FIDGETING

LOOK AT YOU

Use the visual aid for **'LOOK'** to reinforce your words

When this is accomplished, the children are ready for the next stage

A GOOD LISTENING POSTURE

The spine and head should be in alignment to effect listening.

This means that the children's spines are straight and their heads are in alignment with their spine.

Why good posture is important

- We must sit up straight because a straight spine strengthens the muscles of the back and keeps the organs in their proper place.
- When we sit up and hold our head up we can hear and see better.
- A weak back and poor head control affects our ability to listen and affects the way we move and how we look.
- A weak back and poor head control affects how we see everything around us.
- Slouching causes back ache, headache and weakens the muscles.

GIVE A DEMONSTRATION OF BAD POSTURE

Demonstrate bad posture and magnify the faults to make the children laugh, this will reinforce the learning and help them to remember.

Tell the children why good posture is important.

TO STOP FIDGETING

When sitting and listening it will help the child to stop fidgeting if each child adopts the same body position.

Choose one of these options for the children. Adapt the position if the child is disabled:

- **Sit cross-legged with arms folded.**

- **Sit cross-legged with hands resting in the lap.**

The children will then be able to listen to you.

Do not give the instruction until these things are accomplished.

FUN ACTIVITIES TO REINFORCE GOOD POSTURE

The children need to feel and understand the difference between good and bad posture so that they can correct themselves.

If the activities are fun, a physically disabled child will enjoy being motivated to sit up straighter or hold their head up higher so that they can see what is going on etc.

MOVEMENT

Use different music to illustrate the different postures

- Walking bent over, arms hanging down, head down
- Walking with back straight, head up
- Marching /arms swinging /head up
- Sitting in a chair, slouching/ then sitting up straight

An artificial spine on a stand

- Ask the children to describe their spine
- What is the function of the spine?
- Show the children the spine on the stand
- In pairs ask the children to feel each other's spine
- Ask the children to feel the little bones in each others' back
- Again stress the importance of the spine
- Use the spine to demonstrate how the spine supports the head as well as providing attachment for the arms and legs

The activities will help the children to understand how their bodies work. This understanding will improve their sense of self and self esteem. Posture work will also help to release tension from the body.

The aim is to help the child to develop and express their own opinion so that they can learn to assess their own achievements. This will enable the child to respond positively and in a balanced way when asked to evaluate something they are doing, rather than relying on or seeking another's opinion or approval. When the child is confident in their own ability they are no longer disheartened by another's criticism.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is a two-way process with a sender and a receiver, the speaker and listener. In an ideal world, we are able to express our feelings and our thoughts to another who listens without interruption and understands what we are trying to say. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case because we often have difficulty organising our thoughts and expressing ourselves clearly. We may be poor listeners and talk over another or think more about what we are going to say next rather than listening to what is being said to us.

We each have our own emotional baggage of past hurts and experiences, which colour our perception, distorting what we hear and triggering an inappropriate emotional response as memory rekindles an old feeling. A voice raised in anger will affect the child's ability to hear and carry out an instruction because their own fears will be triggered and the emotion will inhibit their ability to think and act.

Children with communication impairment usually believe themselves responsible when their attempts to communicate fail. This belief reinforces their difficulty and they may stop trying. Children who are traumatised either emotionally or physically are understandably cautious and reluctant to communicate and will often withdraw into silence.

The ability to listen has a profound effect on communication because "the voice can only emit what the ear can hear". ('The Tomatis Effect', A. Tomatis, 1957) Communication depends on the desire to listen and a child with limited speech usually has poor listening skills.

SIMPLICITY: THE KEY TO GOOD COMMUNICATION

- Remember communication is a turn taking activity. If the child has difficulty waiting for their turn in any activity they will have difficulty following the rules of communication.

- Use the child's name when wanting to attract their attention so that the child knows that you are talking to them.

- The child will need to look at your face to see your eyes and mouth and to read your body language (facial expression, body position, movement etc.) in order to begin to understand what you are saying to them.

- Make sure that your facial expression and gesture match what you are saying. Do not smile if you are reprimanding the child, this will give a conflicting message.

- Adults and children receive about 75% of their communication signals from the tone of the voice, facial expression and body language.

ENDEARMENTS

When working with children in a group, always address them equally with respect by using their name rather than a 'nick name' or endearment, e.g. darling, sweetheart etc.

Children and parents are very quick to notice anything that indicates favouritism.

WHERE TO STAND WHEN TEACHING

Stand in front of the child but stand to the right so that you are speaking to the child's right ear. In this way your words will be transmitted directly via the right ear to the left-brain, the area of language processing. This is a more direct neurological pathway and will help the child to process the information more easily. A useful tip when reading to children is to sit on their right .

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Be consistent

- Tell the child what you want them to do rather than what you don't want them to do. This will change a negative request into a positive one.

- Children with autistic spectrum disorder or who have learning difficulties often have a great resistance to words such as 'No', 'stop', 'don't', 'you mustn't' etc. Telling children what you want them to do will save time and energy.

- Use the child's name and make simple specific requests in a firm voice, e.g. 'Jane please walk' (rather than 'Jane don't run or stop running'); 'Mark, hands down please' (rather than 'Mark, stop pulling Alan's jersey or stop doing that'). With practice it will become second nature and will help you to avoid unnecessary conflict.

Instructions should be

CLEAR, BRIEF, SIMPLE

To avoid misunderstanding

- Anxiety, confusion and misunderstanding will give rise to disruptive behaviour.

- The child may be anxious or afraid that they will not be able to do what is asked of them, distress will cloud their ability to listen to your instruction.

- If the child becomes disruptive on receiving instructions, it may be because they have not understood your language and are afraid to say so.

- Always check out that you have been understood.

- It will help to demonstrate your instruction so that the child can see what you are saying as well as hear what you are saying. You could use role play, visual aids or coloured silks to illustrate.

- Remember that repetition aids understanding.

- The child must be able to hear, then choose to listen, then be able to understand the message.

USE OF LANGUAGE AND TONE

- The tone of your voice will affect how the instruction is received.

- Make a request rather than command child, e.g. 'Let's stand up' not 'stand up'. 'Let's put our coats on' not 'Put your coat on'.

Having researched the use of language used by teachers in Schools and Nurseries I found that teachers use many more commands than requests. When it was suggested that the teachers experiment by changing their use of language, they all found that the children responded immediately more positively when the commands became requests.

Keep the instructions simple.

- Give one instruction at a time. When the child has completed the first part, give the next instruction.

- This will be easier to follow and understand than a complex request that contains a variety of instructions. Or a request, using language that is beyond the child's understanding.

- As the child's listening improves, they will be able to follow more complex instructions.

LEARNING TO WAIT

We are in an age of immediate gratification where we are unwilling to wait 'we want it all and we want it now.' It is not helpful to offer unlimited choices as this creates confusion.

Respect for others

- Children have lost their ability to wait. Parents bribe and cajole and all too easily give in to their child's feigned protests and crocodile tears. Abortive attempts are made to fill the bottomless pit of emotional need with technological gadgets and processed food.

- Many children no longer have respect for a hierarchy of authority and experience and are therefore no longer obedient.

- Through respect for parents, teachers and authority figures children learn that their own needs are not necessarily of first priority. Fairy stories are an excellent way of illustrating respect and obedience.

- To respond appropriately, children need to know who is in charge. Those who have not learnt this lesson can grow up to be demanding and inconsiderate. Through cooperation, taking turns and waiting patiently for their opportunity children will understand and learn the balance of giving and receiving.

ATTENTION SPAN

- **Maintaining Attention**
- **Concept of Time**
- **Transferring Attention**

THE ATTENTION SPAN

Children with communication impairment will have difficulty listening to spoken instructions and remembering what has been said to them.

Concept of Time

Prop: A large egg timer or hour glass

- Everything you say will need to be reinforced through demonstration and action because the concept of time is not easy for the child to grasp.

- A large egg timer is a very good way of illustrating the time left before an activity ends and the next one begins.

- You can extend an enjoyable activity in little ways to maintain the child's attention, e.g. turn it into a turn taking activity.

- A child will always concentrate for longer on something they enjoy doing.

Transferring Attention

- It is important to complete one activity before beginning another; this will help the child to transfer their attention from one activity to another or from one object to another.

- To avoid tears and tantrums prepare the child by warning them that the activity will be ending soon.

- Prepare the child for an ending by turning the egg timer over and telling them that the activity will be over in five minutes when all the sand is at the bottom (or however long it takes).

- Put away and out of sight anything that is associated with the activity that has just finished. This will help the child to refocus.

ATTENTION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Helpful Procedures

Constant Questioning

To gain extra attention some children will ask the same question over and over again although you have already answered them or they know the answer.

If this is occurring a good way to stop it happening again is to ask the child the question they are repeatedly asking you. This will stop them in their tracks and encourage them to remember the answer you originally gave them or to think for themselves.

Boundaries

- A child will always test to see where the boundaries are.
- It is in your interest to be clear and consistent.
- Better to have a few clear rules and to keep to them rather than a lot of do's and don'ts.

Joint management of a group

If you are co running a group it is of paramount importance that you both agree and are comfortable with the rules and boundaries you are putting in place.

Check that your response to broken rules or boundaries is the same as your co-worker or the group will not work.

The children will test you on this and will very quickly discover the weak link and will lose respect and play one off against the other.

Guidelines for Behaviour

- Reward good behaviour by giving small helping jobs at the end of the session, e.g. helping to clear away.
- A disabled child may not be able to fold material but perhaps with help will be able to drop something into a box.

- Decide which jobs can be offered and be clear about what you will and will not allow.

Silly Behaviour

- Turn your attention away from the child who is being silly and attention seeking, do not encourage or cajole. Ignore the child concerned and give lots of positive attention to the activity and those involved in it, making it so interesting and exciting that the child being silly with no audience to annoy or amuse will want to join in with the others.

- Do not react when the child eventually rejoins the group, carry on with the activity.

- Children with learning disabilities can be wilful and like to be in control of those whom they perceive to be in charge because they may feel that they have very little control in their own lives.

The Three D's as a Guideline for Behaviour. ('Play Therapy', V.M. Axline, 1996)

I have found this method to be very effective.

- **Danger**
- **Damage**
- **Discomfort**

If a child has abused these guidelines he/she will not be allowed to help.

Do not bribe or threaten.

Sitting Out Time

Prop Hour Glass or Large Egg Timer placed in view.

As a guideline I would suggest a **five-minute** sit out for able children and a sitting out time of **three minutes** for children with behaviour problems. I feel that this is a long enough waiting time for them.

Depending on availability another member of staff other than group leader may have to sit with the child initially until the children in the group are familiar with the rules for naughty behaviour.

Do not ask the child why they behaved as they did, they will not be able to answer you because it was an emotional response which they will not understand or be able to express in words immediately after the event.

Inappropriate behaviour

- If the child is behaving in a way that you consider to be **dangerous,** tell the child to stop and sit them away from the group for the allotted time of three or five minutes (use the Egg Timer). Tell the child briefly why they are sitting out. This will calm the child who is becoming over excited.

- If the child **damages** any equipment **deliberately**, breaks anything **deliberately** or hurts anyone **deliberately**, tell the child to stop and sit them away from the group for the allotted time (use the Egg Timer). Tell the child briefly and clearly why they are sitting out.

- If you consider the child's behaviour to be **inappropriate,** causing **discomfort** to you or another child, tell the child to stop. If the behaviour is **repeated** sit the child away from the group for the allotted time (use the Egg Timer). Tell the child briefly why they are sitting out

Returning the child to the activity

- At the end of the allotted sitting out time, ask the child to say **sorry** to you (and the child concerned if relevant) before re-joining the group.

- If the child refuses to apologise return them to the chair to sit out for another period of allotted time.

- If the child gets up from their seat during the sitting out time, calmly but firmly lead the child back to where they were sitting. Tell the child quietly and calmly that it is not time to come back to the group do not engage in conversation or reason with the child. Start the egg timer again. If the child persists repeat this process until the child remains seated. **Do not give in to the child.**

- In my experience a child will focus on the hour glass or egg timer while sitting out and it is a good way of teaching the passage of time.

- Remain calm.

- Do not shout or raise your voice.

- Inform the parent at the end of the session.

Repeated behaviour

- If the above behaviour occurs on two consecutive weeks, review the suitability of the class with the parent, there may be difficulties at home or the child may be acting out his/her reluctance to attend or may not be mature enough to cope with the activities

- Suggest a break and a trial return at a later date.

- Keep the door open for the child to attend when ready.

Disturbing Behaviour

Extremes of behaviour for example bullying, violence and sexualised activity indicate that group activity may be an inappropriate environment for the child at this stage.

- Observe the child and trust your intuition and responses.

- If you are uneasy about what you see/feel, discuss with an experienced colleague as soon as possible before deciding what action to take.

Parents and teacher's response

- At home the child will often 'rule the roost' and the child's parents are exhausted trying to respond to every mood change. It is an important lesson for the child to learn that **they are not in charge you are!**

- In this way they will learn that they have a much nicer time if they are part of what is going on.

- Remain aligned and calm. The child will sense immediately if your 'buttons are being pressed' and will continue to do this in order to find out how to get what they want.

- Do not coerce or encourage a reluctant child but leave a space for them to join in when they are ready to.

Home Time

- If the child is being difficult and refusing to put their coat on and go home, do not engage with the child or allow yourself to be pulled into the child's conversation with the parent.

- Carry on giving clear signals that the class is over by no longer interacting with the child and pack up and put away the equipment, turning off lights and leaving the room if necessary.

- It will help to have a clear structure by ending each class in a quiet way with the same calming activity and having 'going home music' to prepare the child who has no concept of time

COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENT

AUTISM

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENT

Children with communication impairment prefer to be involved in music, movement and play rather than those activities that have an expectation of interaction. However where there is a difficulty in communication, the ability to interact in play will also be restricted and these children will often prefer to isolate themselves from other children to create their own world of play.

Children who have difficulty expressing themselves through words and language remind us to be accurate, brief and clear in our communication. Our body language and tone of voice need to match what we are saying so that we do not give a conflicting message.

To avoid confusion or misunderstanding it will help to offer multisensory aids (music; objects; pictures; signs; symbols etc.) to cue the child into the next activity. This will encourage them to listen, see, feel and touch so that they do not have to rely on only one channel of communication in order to understand the words being used, the instruction being given or the request being made.

Children will have difficulty understanding pictures or symbols if they have a limited understanding of familiar words, i.e. names of significant family members and names and function of significant objects around them.

Some children with sensory impairment are fearful and resistant to touching or holding any hard or solid object but will reach out towards something that is soft to the touch. Conversely, other children prefer to touch hard objects and are resistant to the touch of anything soft or furry. However, with sensitivity and patience these difficulties can be overcome as the deep unconscious memory affecting their behaviour is safely released through a pleasurable activity.

Play:

A Case Study

A subdued little boy of eight struggled at home and school because he was unable to order his thoughts. His speech was muddled and incoherent and his actions were clumsy. When given a choice of play materials, he chose to turn the playroom into an obstacle course. He asked if I would let him blindfold me so that he could lead me through his creation.

I agreed because it felt important for his confidence that he was in charge and that I was dependent on his instructions and physical prompts for my safety. He then proceeded to tell me when to crouch down, when to lift my foot, when to crawl under a table or slide through a tunnel etc. He had invented the game and took full responsibility for his role and was totally focused on my safety in our joint venture.

I attached a very long piece of yellow ribbon to my waist and as I moved I left a trail of ribbon behind me. When we had completed the course we looked back to see the golden yellow trail that marked our steps a mirror of the re linking of the little boy's own disconnected neural pathways. His instructions were clear and confident throughout because he was thinking more about me than his own communication difficulty and the activity proved a turning point for us both in many ways. We had connected with each other in a unique way and both had learnt from the experience.

Children with Autism

Children with Autism will often let go of their repetitive behaviours if they are in a safe, structured and predictable environment where the responses to their behaviours are also predictably calm. Colours from the rainbow spectrum each correspond to a specific frequency of vibration and material in these colours, slow flowing movement and appropriate music will link the child to a higher frequency of light and to dynamic possibilities for healing.

Remember that children with Autism have great difficulty seeing things from another's point of view and will often enjoy observing the effect that their behaviour is having on others. These children have difficulty connecting to their feelings and therefore have difficulty comprehending the feelings of another.

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Is the child unable to hear?
or
Is the child choosing not to listen?

- If a child in a group has a hearing loss they will have difficulty hearing the instructions given to the group.

- If the child is wearing a hearing aid, remember that the aid will amplify all noise and the child will have difficulty isolating speech from the other sounds around them, e.g. coughing, paper rustling, a chair scraping on the floor, conversation around them etc.

- This difficulty will be amplified in a space with a wooden floor because the hearing aid will pick up the echo. School buildings are often 'looped' to avoid this problem and to accommodate children with hearing impairment.

Be aware that a child may also be reluctant to hear for many reasons.

Speech Problems associated with hearing impairment

- Some children with hearing impairment will have difficulty hearing certain frequencies of sound and will therefore be restricted in their use of sounds. (We can only repeat what we hear.)

- For example a child may be able to hear and respond to the lower frequency voiced sounds of /b/ /d/ and /g/ but will not hear the higher frequency voiceless sounds of /p/ /t/ /k/ and /s/ etc. This will affect the clarity of the speech the child hears as well as the speech they use.

- The child with hearing impairment may be able to see how a sound is produced (e.g. lips closing for /b/ /p/ and /m/) although they cannot

hear the sound. Therefore the child will produce these consonants in the same way although to us they each sound different.

- Connected speech may sound distorted like the hiss of radio that has lost its frequency band.

- Some children may be able to hear and feel the vibration of the drum but not the bell.

- Make sure that you are standing in front of the child with a hearing impairment when you are talking to them or making a request. Do not stand to the side or behind them because the child will need to be able to pick up clues from your face, lips and body language etc.

Memory

Memory can be triggered in many ways and may affect the child's ability to listen. Some children may have a positive response to the higher frequency of the female voice rather than the lower frequency of the male voice or vice versa.

HELPFUL ACTIVITIES

Have several short activities that keep the child interested. Always clear away props associated with a former activity before beginning the next.

Manage the class so that every busy, moving activity is balanced by a quieter structured activity. In this way the children will learn to listen and control their behaviour and not become over excited. Children with epilepsy are in danger of having an epileptic fit if they become over heated, over active or excited.

Always have a clear structure for the class and **begin** and **end** in the **same** way. This will indicate that the session has started or that it is over.

- Include an activity that involves passing a large coloured ball or bean bag to another child.

- Say the name of the child that you are passing the ball or bean bag to before you pass it.

- The child then passes the ball or bean bag in the same way by choosing and naming another child to pass to.

- This will help the group to gel as the children get to know each other's names and get used to looking at each other.

- Change the way the ball is passed e.g. bounce, roll, throw etc.

This will encourage the children to use each other's name and to become familiar with the rules of the game by observing and copying the activity.

• SIMPLE ACTIONS TO AID UNDERSTANDING AND LISTENING

- Ask the children to place their coat on the chairs against one wall.

- Ask the children to place their shoes on the floor against another wall.

- Ask the children together and then in turn (when they are more used to the activity) to follow these instructions:

- Walk to their coat.

- Jump to their shoes.

- Slide on their tummies to the door.

- Bunny Hop to the window.

- You could introduce many variations on the same theme.

- The children will need to listen to the action and the object (or person) they are moving towards.

- The children could take turns at being the leader and give instructions to the other children. This will help them to express themselves and gain confidence.

- You could buy a large length of brightly coloured stretchy lycra from a material stall. You will need two adults, one at each end to hold the material. Most children and especially children with autism or physically disabled children love the sensation and will squeal with delight when they are bounced in this hammock or pulled swiftly along the floor.

- At the end of the class children often enjoy an opportunity to say one thing that was hard and one thing they liked. Begin by recapping on the activities to remind them before asking the group. End on a positive by asking what, if anything, they enjoyed.

- During this activity, encourage the children to listen to each other. The child could **hold a specified object** when it is their turn to speak (Native American Indians used a 'Talking Stick'). Nobody else is allowed to speak but the child holding the chosen object. Many noisy children who dominate the conversation in a group often find this fun and enjoy the challenge of not talking until it is their turn to do the holding!

- This activity will enable the child to express their opinion and to wait for their turn.

- It is important that the teacher accepts what is said by each child without comment and does not question or respond to the comments made.

- Do not encourage a reluctant child to speak, simply move on to the next child. If the child's silence is happily accepted they may soon want to join in.

- If a child is reluctant to stop talking and give the next child a turn, you could use the egg timer to time each contribution.

Time passing

As previously stated the passage of time is a very difficult concept for children to grasp and an hour glass or giant egg timer is an excellent way of illustrating the passing of time for an activity or to indicate the length of time the child may have to wait.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Children and parents are often emotionally dependent on each other and parents may be reluctant to leave their child with you and the child will mirror this need by emotionally clinging to the parent.

- Be sensitive but firm and encourage the parent to have a break to enable the child to enjoy the session on their own to build their confidence and self esteem.

- If the parent is reluctant, request that they leave their child with you for a few minutes initially and maybe stay in the next room and then each time they attend, gradually extend the time that the parent is out of the room.

- Both children and parents will benefit enormously from this separation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING FAIRY TALES

It is important for parents, grandparents and teachers to be aware of the importance of reading fairy tales to their children, grandchildren and pupils. We are holding the light for a lost generation who are becoming increasingly disconnected from their intuition and from nature and their environment.

A child is like sleeping beauty in the fairy tale, asleep and waiting for the prince (their higher intuitive self) to wake them up and reconnect them to a deeper understanding of the joy of life and its meaning. True Fairy tales (not the re-written ones or the politically correct ones with the anti-hero) introduce children to moral choices and demonstrate that all choices like actions, have a consequence. Fairy tales build confidence and self-esteem as the characters struggle against the horrors of their situation and through discernment make positive choices to eventually emerge victorious.

We cannot hide our children from the horrors of life, sooner or later they will have to be out in the world and will have to learn to cope with its dangers and disappointments. We can help to equip our children and grandchildren to face what is to come by reading fairy stories to them, with which they can identify and that will inspire them to develop qualities that will help them to be compassionate human beings.

THE EMERALD ALIGNMENT
FOR CHILDREN

What is the Emerald Alignment?

The Emerald Alignment is unique, in that it not only provides a simple safe and effective way of releasing tension from the body and mind but it also stabilises the emotional energy and realigns the body energy through specific pathways to restore health and well being.

The Emerald Alignment is effective with both children and adults and has been successfully integrated into Yoga, Tai Chi and Pilates classes. Within residential care, the Emerald Alignment is written into care plans and provides a positive focus enabling clients and their carers to maintain emotional and mental health. It is used by mental health practitioners within National Health Service Trusts in the North of England.

Who can it help?

The alignment can be used successfully with children of all ages and ability, from the very young in Nursery education to those in their final year at school who are struggling to cope with the pressures of adolescence. The Emerald Alignment if practised regularly, reduces the need for medication and helps all children, especially those who are physically disabled or who are recovering from trauma, loss or abuse as well as those children who have been labelled with a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder, Dyspraxia or Dyslexia.

What does it do?

The alignment process improves coordination and mobility. It balances and aligns the emotional and mental energy to positively affect emotional response, verbal clarity and thought processing to improve communication, coordination and relationships. Energy alignment can easily be incorporated into daily life or into the school programme to bring some peace and calm to the day.

The alignment technique is taught as a simple, safe and effective way of realigning the electromagnetic field to bring full integration to the physical body. It can be used as a self-help technique by children on an everyday basis to correct imbalance. It will help those children who are suffering emotionally and mentally, are about to undergo surgery, receive an injection or dental treatment or who have been involved in an accident where they have received injury to the physical body. Regular practice will improve the child's performance and concentration at school, stabilising the emotions and eliminating negative and destructive behaviour.

How does it work?

As the child focuses on the colour of emerald, their body responds by releasing tension and anxiety. Visualising the colour aligns the subtle energy and focuses the mind to improve communication and coordination. This has a positive affect on thoughts and feelings.

The child therefore has opportunities for choice as he/she learns that positive thoughts and feelings enhance the flow of subtle energy and negative thoughts and feelings restrict the flow entering the physical body.

This understanding has inspired me to find new and innovative ways of working with children and addressing communication difficulties via the creative intuitive aspects of the right brain. Integrating The Emerald Alignment into the child's day will positively impact on all aspects of the child's life. The alignment will give the child a better understanding of their own bodies and the energy system that surrounds them.

Encourage the child to interact and discuss the process at every opportunity.

The Emerald Alignment:

www.livingmemoryresearch.net

Musical Apothecary

Musical Magic CD : Bridge to Healing for Children

www.amadeusproject.co.uk

THE EMERALD ALIGNMENT PROCESS

- For the first seven years of life the child is developing and strengthening their personal energy field. This process is dependent on the child's experiences, their perception of their environment and the thoughts and emotional responses of significant people in their lives.

- During this early period the child will mirror the emotions of their parents and key adults in their lives and will respond to any tension in the environment.

- If parents, teachers or carers are able to practice the Emerald Alignment regularly, it will assist them in feeling less tense and more relaxed. This will have a positive impact on their communication and action with the child within their family and/or at work.

To Prevent Bullying

Bullying has an impact on a child's confidence, communication and physical health. The sense of powerlessness and lack of personal control will disable the child and colour every aspect of the child's life and behaviour at home and at school.

When the child's energy is affected by fear or threat the child will feel shaky, tearful and vulnerable. The Emerald Alignment aligns the energy to instil peaceful feelings helping the child to feel calm, steady and confident.

The Importance of Colour in Visualisation

- Rays of the sun contain seven different colours and each colour vibrates at a specific frequency within the rainbow spectrum, we are able to feel the vibration of colour as well as see it.

- Give the child an emerald green piece of card to hold as they listen to the words of the alignment.

- Hang a length of emerald green material in front of the child to help them to visualise the colour of emerald.

- Give the child a length of emerald green material to hold and at the end of the process, place a length of blue material around their shoulders like a cloak or a bubble of blue.

Visual or Mental Impairment

If the child is visually or mentally impaired, place a length of emerald green material over their body as you say the words.

Wrap a length of blue material around the child at the end of the process to denote a bubble of blue.

- In a creative play situation, the child will willingly respond to colour and light. It has been scientifically established that the colour of emerald green raises the vibration of the physical body and is generally accepted as the colour of balance and harmony. In the British Isles in the returning cycle of spring we see green all around us reflecting the balance of nature as the green pigment in plants invokes the sunlight energy in the process of photosynthesis.

- It is no coincidence that police and fire service uniforms are blue. Those in charge of law enforcement and protection of the general public are easily recognisable as the 'men in blue'. The colour blue has also been proved to have a calming, cooling, soothing effect and becomes a positive focus for the child who feels protected in a bubble of blue as a peaceful calm replaces fear and impending threat.

Here are some creative play examples:

- Use lengths of emerald green material to create an emerald path for the child to walk on. Tell them that with each step along the path they will become stronger. At the end of the pathway the child finds a blue cloak to wrap around their shoulders to give them protection and keep them safe.

- Hang an emerald star above the child. Ask the child to stand under the star and tell them that the emerald star is sending a beam of emerald light to them to keep them straight and strong. Place a length of emerald green material around their shoulders to denote the emerald light. Then place a length of blue material around their shoulders to seal in the emerald light.

- Create a situation where the child finds an emerald sword, which is fixed into the ground. When the child pulls the sword out of the ground and holds it against their chest, produce a blue cloak as if by magic. Place the blue cloak around the child's shoulders because he/she has now attained the rank of 'Keeper of the Sword'.

With each repeated alignment, the child's energy will be strengthened and protected and their confidence and emotional stability will visibly improve. This will positively impact on the behaviour of others towards them.

The Vibration of Words

Allow the child to hear the words of the Emerald Alignment even though the child is severely impaired or you think that they may not be able to understand the language. The child's energy will respond to the vibration of each word.

Recommendation

Practice the Emerald Alignment together. It is particularly beneficial before sleep. The Alignment can be used as often as required and will be most beneficial when used regularly as this allows the energy to build and prevents energy loss.

TONING FOR CHILDREN

The Rainbow Chakra Tones Manual and the Rainbow Chakra Tones CD

Document and demonstrate the eight- tone system of Rainbow Chakra Tones

It's important not to tone forcefully infront of a child because the frequency of vibration acts as a laser of light and will be too strong for the child's electromagnetic field. Tone **softly** and use the coloured silks to enhance the process and then wait, watch and listen to the child's response.

In my experience, children of all ages love to tone and if unable to make the tones themselves, enjoy listening to and feeling the effects of the tones. Toning can easily be introduced in a play or dressing up situation or into singing time. Silky material in the corresponding colours of the individual chakra tones could magically

Begin with the tone that receives the most positive response from the child, this may be one of the higher tones because the child has a fear of lower sounds. Do not add the tone below until the child has become familiar with the tone you are using.

The child will indicate when they are ready for you to introduce a lower tone which will allow you to move on to the tone below until you eventually reach the Base Tone.

The tones help the child to release any held emotion which is impacting on their behaviour at home and in school, disrupting mealtimes and disturbing sleep or affecting the bowel causing irritability and constipation.

Children with impaired communication respond very favourably to Toning. Regular practice of toning improves coordination, thought processing and social interaction by restoring the energetic flow which enhances neurological function and stimulating positive cell to cell communication.

The Rainbow Chakra Tones Manual document and demonstrate the Rainbow Chakra Tones and outline procedure and risk factors.

Epiphany Press: Living Memory Research Trust
www.livingmemoryresearchtrust

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How can I encourage the children to be more imaginative?

Children often need help to stimulate their imagination and require assistance to join up the dots in their thinking and imagining.

If you begin by inventing a simple sequence of events for them to act out, they will eventually be able to continue the story and invent a sequence of events for themselves.

Initially they may not be able to do this and will require your prompting.

2. Improvised Activities using Music

* Begin with familiar everyday activities.

Magic Pebble

- Ask the children to curl up in a ball on the floor
- Opening eyes
- Stretching
- Getting Up
- Washing
- Dressing
- Eating a bowl of cereal
- Opening the door to go out
- Closing the door
- Going for a walk
- Open the gate
- Along the path
- Look down and see an imaginary (pebble) and pick it up
- Turn around three times

Change into:

- A giant in heavy boots striding across the field, climbing a fence, splashing through puddles.
- Bee looking for flowers to gather pollen

- Snowman melting in the sun
- Becoming tired and falling asleep
- When the child wakes up they are back to themselves again and curled up in a ball.

Think of your own ideas e.g.

Day at the Seaside

- Curl up in a ball
- The child listens to the instructions to find out what to do next.

Emerging from an Egg

- Cracking the shell using your beak.
- Head pushing through the hole
- Upper body pushing out
- Crawling out
- Stretching
- Trying to stand up
- Stumbling walk
- Falling over
- Gradually becoming stronger

Making a Machine

- Deciding what the machine will make
- Working individually or in pairs
- Using one repetitive movement with one sound
- Putting everyone together to make one machine.

3. How can I help the children to be more aware of each other?

Teaching Observation Skills

Disappearing Game

- One child turns their back or stands behind the door
- Cover one child with a large piece of material
- When the other child comes back into the room they will need to remember who was in the group, where they sat and then say the name of the child who is missing from the group and therefore under the material

What has changed?

- One child turns their back or stands behind the door
- One of the other children: Puts on a hat
- Takes a shoe off
- Changes places with another child
- Changes jumpers with another child
- The other child comes back and has to say what he/she thinks is different.

Examples of a structured/turn taking activity

- Variations on the ball name game: saying the name and throwing the ball to the named person.
- Simon Says copying activities
- Sitting in a circle and one child thinks of a movement which everyone copies.
- Taking turns to change the movement.

4. I would like to encourage better listening. How can I do this and make it fun?

- Make sure when giving your instructions below that you don't give the children a clue by looking in the direction that you want them to go.

Refer to: 'Simple Actions to Aid Understanding and Listening'

If you have enough space you could ask the children to

- Touch something blue
- Touch someone's foot
- Sit on something hard
- Sit on something soft
- Touch something cold etc. etc.

5. What should I do if a child sits out and doesn't want to join in with the group?

Refer to guidelines: Attention Seeking Behaviour

- This can be any behaviour that is a refusal to join in with the group activity.
- All behaviour is a communication. Therefore, it's important to check at the end of the session and make sure that the child who is being uncooperative is not distressed in any way.
- Their behaviour may be a response to events at home or at school.

When the child who is sitting out decides to re-join the group, include them immediately and be your usual friendly self with them, now that they are cooperating.

It is important that the child understands that you like them but that it is their behaviour you did not like and was ignoring

*If the behaviour persists for two successive weeks in spite of the above procedures. This may mean that the child is not mature enough to cope with being part of a group.

6. Are there any activities to assist right/left brain integration?

- Use a figure of eight as a guideline.
- This movement will assist flow.

Examples of activities

- Being an elephant waving its trunk in a sideways figure of eight movement.
- Incline the head to the outstretched arm with the cheek resting on the shoulder.

- Demonstrate the weaving sideways movement of the figure of eight.
- Follow a path on the floor in the shape of a figure of eight
- Weaving in a circle with others in the group, using the right hand and then the left hand.
- Touching the right hand to the left shoulder
- Touching the left foot with the right hand and right foot with the left hand
- Sit next to the child when you demonstrate the above actions because the child may be confused and have difficulty copying if you are opposite the child.
- Touching a body part with either right or left thumb.

7. What do I do about Inappropriate behaviour that is making another child feel uncomfortable

- Stop this as soon as it occurs by telling the offending child what you want them to do

E.g. if the child is lifting up another child, ask them to put the child down or ask them to move into a different part of the room away from the child they are annoying.

- If the child on the receiving end of the offending behaviour is passive, suggest that they stop what is happening by saying 'No' or use the name 'Jane/John, stop it'
- If it happens again, follow the procedure in the manual for inappropriate behaviour. Explain to the offending child why you are asking them to sit out.
- After the sitting out period, ask the child to say sorry to the child they were upsetting
- This will help the child to be more aware of their own behaviour and its effect on others.
- It is important to be consistent and predictable in your response and always to deal with a situation in the same way.
- The children in the group will then know what your response will be. This will help them to feel safe and to know who is in charge and will prevent them from trying to manipulate the situation.

- At home because they are on duty all the time, parents often deal with things in different ways depending on how they are feeling.
- Unsure of the response to a behaviour, the child learns to manipulate and to develop strategies to obtain their own way.

8. How can I incorporate music into the day?

Cue activities with music

- Cue each activity with its own familiar theme tune.
- This will improve the child's ability to listen and will enable the transition from one activity to another.
- Use different instruments to develop listening to high and low sounds (frequencies) and to discriminate between the different instruments.

9. How long should the activities be when working with children with a disability?

- Children with disability initially have a short attention span and therefore to hold their attention, it is best to ensure that each activity is no longer than 10 minutes
- Have a balance of activities so that a disciplined (structured) activity is followed by an improvised activity moving to music.

Remember that we limit children by making assumptions about their ability and potential. Always keep an open mind.

STORIES OF MY WORK

WITH CHILDREN

ALICE



Alice was referred to me at the age of five by a team of health service professionals who were offering counselling support to Alice's father and his new girlfriend. Alice was suffering from the loss of her mother who had died of cancer when Alice was three years old. The little girl had watched helplessly as her mother had slowly deteriorated before her eyes. Her father's inability to come to terms with the loss of his wife, Alice's mother, had led to his new girl friend leaving the family home on repeated occasions. This obviously had an impact on Alice.

Alice was a pale, solemn little girl with fine curly brown hair and large grey eyes. She was reluctant to join her classmates in their activities at the group table in school and was refusing to read or write.

I suggested that rather than insisting on group cooperation, a place should be kept for Alice at the activity table so that she could join her group when she felt ready to do so but meanwhile she should be allowed to sit separately so that she could draw and paint, activities which she enjoyed, which would enable her to freely express the painful emotions she seemed to be holding inside.



I hoped that a period of six weekly sessions of creative play would provide Alice with another channel of expression. I was offered one of the smaller classrooms to work in and arranged to see Alice for a total of six play sessions on a once a week basis, I limited my props to a pair of 'magic' glittery slippers and a piece of music previously used in a research project to explore the use of music as a healing agent to enhance language development.

I took swathes of silky, diaphanous material in the clear spectrum colours of the rainbow, as well as darker murky colours to create costumes for characters in the stories that would be the key to her healing process. Also a small golden box of mixed polished crystals. At the beginning of each session without prompting, Alice placed the magic slippers on her feet before entering the world of her imagination. Her favourite fairy story was sleeping beauty and in her shortened version she cast herself as the princess and I was given the role of the prince. My first instruction was to ride around the table on a pretend horse until I eventually found my princess alone and asleep in her castle surrounded by brambles.

Pretending to cut my way through the thicket I found my little princess and the kiss on the cheek awoke her from her slumbers. One day early on in our

sessions she informed me in a calm, grave voice that she "had been asleep for two years." This was the length of time that had passed since Alice's mother had died of cancer. This was another confirmation, demonstrating the healing power of fairy tales, the stories are held deep within our unconscious. They are key to helping children make sense of their experiences in life enabling them to find ways of dealing positively with their pain. In Alice's version of the story the prince and princess hugged and rode away on the pretend horse to live happily ever after.

In another story she created, Alice as a princess found a wicked witch who was dying, she said that she couldn't save the witch's life, although she had given her food and warm blankets. This indicated to me that in her own short life she had been unable to make her own mother well and had helplessly watched her grow old and ill before her eyes, until she was eventually taken away from her forever. I felt that to complete the healing Alice needed to separate her mother from the cancer she had suffered and that had caused her death.



Together we created the following story: There was once an ugly old witch who became ill. She lived alone in a cold rickety house in the forest. The witch was really a princess who had had a spell put on her. One day a beautiful child was riding her horse through the woods and came upon the witch who had been out gathering sticks for her fire but had collapsed in the cold. The child gave the witch food and magic crystals to make her well. She visited the witch each day and noticed the witch changing before her eyes. As she slowly recovered, the witch grew more and more beautiful. She told the child that a spell had been put on her but that she had been able to break free from the spell with the help of a child who had been unafraid and kind to her. I was cast in the role of the sick and ugly old witch and Alice played the child who was riding by on her horse. Although the witch was hunched over and dressed in dark murky clothing, the child was unafraid and told the witch to hold the precious stones she had chosen for her. She gave the witch food and eventually through kindness and frequent visits the witch became well again and the dark clothes fell away to reveal beautiful rainbow colours underneath as the witch was transformed back into a beautiful princess thanks to the love and kindness of the child.

I held fortnightly review meetings with Alice's teacher who reported that Alice was beginning to integrate into her class group once more and was choosing to sit at the table with the others. She wanted to read and write and asked to be allowed to do so. To her delight her teacher discovered that although Alice had

not read aloud in class before, she could understand the words in her reading book and was only a little behind the others.

We had one follow up appointment three months later in the playroom at the clinic when Alice was brought by her father's girlfriend. Initially Alice played with the toy oven and made a pretend meal for herself and me, following our meal she asked to play the favourite music that I had asked her to bring with her which was 'Tragedy', a popular hit song of the day.

As the music swelled, Alice, with new confidence, transformed herself into a Spanish flamenco dancer by tying flame coloured material around her waist and assuming the appropriate recognisable posture. She beckoned me to follow as she strutted across the floor expressing her own remembered tragedy through the movement, words and music.



I later discovered that her father's relationship with his girlfriend had stabilised and there was a growing bond between Alice and the young woman who had brought her to see me. No further help was requested but the door was left open for further contact if required.

I did not hear from the family again.

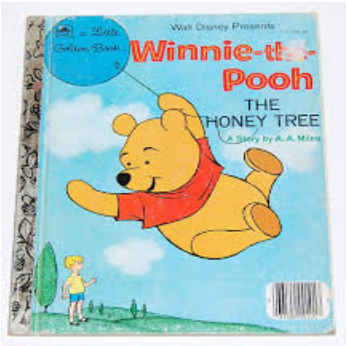
HEALING HENRY



Ten-year old Henry was referred to me by his paediatrician because she was concerned about his deteriorating health and wondered if Henry was still grieving for his grandmother, who had unexpectedly died twelve months earlier. Henry had had a close relationship with her and both he and his mother would have been traumatised by her sudden disappearance from their lives. I was told that Henry used a wheelchair because of poor mobility and coordination. His paediatrician believed that his understanding of speech was limited and I was told that Henry made sounds to communicate rather than words. He had a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder.

Henry must certainly have been struggling to make sense of his change in circumstances because his mother, her partner and her sister had recently moved into his grandmother's house, which was full of memories for them all. Henry's mother was having difficulty coming to terms with her loss and each was adjusting to living together for the first time in somewhat bizarre circumstances.

When I first met Henry at home, he was sitting in his wheel chair, although his mother told me that he had some mobility. He was clutching a cardboard book of Winnie-the-Pooh. Henry's communication was restricted to vocalisations and gestures when excited but he had no clear words. He attended a special needs school in the area. At that first meeting he was quiet and withdrawn, avoiding eye contact with me and continually turning his head from side to side when I spoke to him. After a while, however, without looking at me, Henry extended his right hand and offered me his Winnie-the-Pooh book several times but then refused to let go of it once it was in my hand.



I offered creative play sessions in the holistic healing centre where I worked, to allow Henry an opportunity to release his feelings through music, colour and sound and I offered sessions of energy alignment and reflexology to Henry's mother to help her to stabilise her energy and begin to come to terms with her grief by offering an oasis of calm in a fraught daily schedule. I hoped that this would have a positive impact on her relationship with Henry and other family members. She welcomed an opportunity to experience holistic therapy for the first time.

During his play sessions Henry climbed out of his chair and moved freely, though awkwardly around the room using the furniture as anchor points to steady himself. In our initial session he repeatedly picked up some brightly coloured mats and threw them across the room.

To establish Henry's colour preference, I produced swathes of silk in the colours of the rainbow and waited and watched for a positive response to any particular colour. I did not have long to wait because he reached out and vocalised when he saw the silk in a beautiful shade of sky blue and laughed excitedly when I wrapped it around him like a cloak.

Henry's response was equally positive, when I softly made specific chakra vocal tones for him and wrapped him in the colour that corresponded with the tone I was making. It's important to tone softly with a child because the amplification of vibration could be too strong for the child's electromagnetic field (aura). I used corresponding coloured silk to enhance the process and then waited, watched and listened for Henry's response, which could have been vocal or physical. He responded by pulling my face towards him with both hands. He laughed and vocalised 'ay, ay, ay' when I made the heart tone and wrapped him in its corresponding colour of apple green silk. This vocal tone, resonates with the heart chakra and is a particular favourite with children. Henry also loved the song Knick Nack Paddy Whack and smiled and again vocalised, rocking from side to side whenever I sang it to him.

To gauge musical preference during our play time sessions, Henry was introduced to music from different cultures as well as popular and classical music. Within three weeks, his firm favourites were the didgeridoo from Aboriginal Australia and The Blue Danube by Strauss. When I played either of these, he waited until the music had stopped and then picked up the CD cover, offering it to me with a look of eager expectancy on his face. When I responded by playing the music again, he laughed animatedly, rocking from side to side as the music played.

To provide some structure and routine at home, I suggested that a favourite piece of music be used to signal bath and bedtime and that a different piece of music be used to signal getting up time. We also found that music could be successfully used to prepare Henry for a change of environment and to ease a difficult transition between one activity and another.

Henry's demeanour altered as our sessions progressed. I believed that the creative play sessions with music, vocal sound and colour were enabling him to experience and focus on a positive emotional experience, which indirectly released emotion and painlessly healed uncomfortable memories. Henry began to initiate and enjoy turn taking activities, (a prerequisite for appropriate verbal interaction) and he discovered a liking for inset jigsaws and although his

hand mobility and eye/hand coordination were initially poor, they continued to improve as he enjoyed a 'hide and seek' game of taking turns to find a specific piece of the jigsaw before placing it in its specific shape.

Henry's mother enthusiastically remarked that he was becoming much happier at home and was laughing and smiling more. Sleeping had improved and he had recognisably said 'I love you' back to her for the first time at bed time. In the same week Henry had delighted everyone by appropriately naming family members and a vocabulary of single words was growing on a daily basis.

I was funded to see Henry six times over a period of three months, his mother was able to enjoy two sessions of reflexology and had learnt the Emerald Alignment and was beginning to use it to align her energy at home. She said that for the first time she was experiencing a feeling of calm. Further sessions were requested for both mother and son but unfortunately both were denied because of lack of available funding. I followed up a request to visit Henry's school and passed on musical suggestions to link activities, which were then successfully incorporated on a daily basis.

A PRECIOUS MOMENT



I worked for several years in a school for children who were severely physically and intellectually disabled and discovered that children with communication impairment prefer to be involved with music, movement and play rather than those activities that have an expectation of interaction. However when there is a difficulty with communication, the ability to interact in play will also be restricted and these children will often prefer to isolate themselves from other children to create their own world.

Children who have difficulty expressing themselves through words and language remind us to be accurate, brief and clear in our communication. Our body language and tone of voice need to match what we are saying so that we don't give a conflicting message. To avoid confusion and misunderstanding, it may help to offer multisensory aids (music, objects, pictures, signs, symbols, fragrances) to cue the child into the next activity. This will encourage the children to listen, feel, see, touch and smell so that they won't have to rely on only one channel of communication in order to understand the words being used, the instruction being given or the request being made.

Some children with sensory impairment are fearful and resistant to touching any hard or solid object but will reach out to something that is soft or furry. Conversely another child may pull away from something soft, preferring solid objects to touch. With sensitivity and patience these difficulties can be overcome as the deep unconscious memory affecting their behaviour is safely released through a pleasurable activity. The colours of the rainbow spectrum each correspond to a specific frequency of vibration and slow flowing movements of diaphanous material in these colours enhanced by appropriate music will link the child to a higher frequency of light (vibration) with dynamic possibilities for healing.

Children with autism often have difficulty seeing things from another's point of view and may enjoy observing the effect their behaviour is having on others. These children often have difficulty connecting to their feelings and therefore have difficulty comprehending the feelings of others. They will often let go of their repetitive behaviours if they are in a safe, structured and predictable environment where the responses to their behaviours are predictably calm. Young children will mirror anxiety and emotional upset in the adults around them and the introduction of the Emerald Alignment to parents, carers and teachers has proved very beneficial. Daily practice of this simple, safe

technique aids relaxation by releasing stress from the cells of the physical body through attunement to a higher stream of consciousness. It is more than a visualisation because we are transformed at a sub atomic level. Reduced anxiety improves relationships and stabilises emotional response.

Timmy was only five when we first met, he had a diagnosis of autism and no speech. He would sit quietly, his hands folded in his lap staring in front of him. When we were alone, I sang nursery rhymes for him and he would occasionally look at me and touch my cheek gently. He then sat patiently until I had finished singing and then stood up to return to his classroom. I used a few very simple props and on this particular day I had chosen a pink rose from the garden, a small gold star and some golden thread. Before taking Timmy into the little side room we used, I threaded some golden twine through the star so that I could hold it up for him.

We then went hand in hand into the room and sat together facing each other on the floor. I held the pink rose towards him and he paused and then bent his head and put his little nose into the velvety petals. As he breathed in the fragrance, his face lit up with a smile. The first smile I had seen. Timmy then sat back and turned to the little gold star lying on the floor beside me and lifted it up in the air by its golden thread and turned to me with a solemn gaze. I took this as my queue and sang 'Twinkle twinkle little star'.



He sat looking at me holding up the star in his chubby little hand,…….I sang it again. When I had finished he put the star beside him on the floor and took hold of my arms and to my astonishment pulled them round him tightly and held them there for a moment. After our hug, he stood up solemnly, put his hand in mine and we walked slowly back to his class room. Had the pink rose and the golden thread and the star and the singing helped him to reconnect and remember where he came from? I like to think so. I have documented my research with practical suggestions in my Sensory Rainbow. My manual for parents and teachers. We cannot possibly know the perceived experience and retained memory of others and therefore the senses must be stimulated gently and with respect. What calms one child, may frighten another.

An Emerald Alignment for Children_to reduce anxiety, instil peaceful feelings and restore sleep is available. (see contact details)

LENNY THE LEGO KING



Lenny was a ten-year old boy who was the oldest of four children. The family's Health Visitor noted his delayed development and communication impairment when he was two years old and Lenny was subsequently seen by a variety of professionals and submitted to repeated episodes of intervention in an endeavour to effect some improvement with limited success. Hopeful beginnings rapidly deteriorated into disillusionment and non-cooperation.

Lenny's negative behaviour had escalated until school became a place of containment rather than learning. This negative spiralling eventually resulted in his exclusion from school at the age of ten and a home tutor was appointed for ten hours a week. At the time of Lenny's referral to me, the home tutor had established a good and trusting relationship with Lenny's parents but her pre planned structured teaching approach with Lenny was failing miserably. His speech was virtually unintelligible; he continued to explore objects by putting them in his mouth and chewed pencils and other inedible items.

Lenny's home tutor was endeavouring to establish a relationship with him through play but needed help and advice to do this. She readily agreed to my offer of training and supervision, which included a joint hour with Lenny every three weeks. It was important that Lenny's home tutor was able to provide a calm and steady presence because Lenny's behaviour (the same applies to all children), deteriorated when in the company of someone who was anxious or distressed, he merely mirrored their anxiety. I explained that the Emerald Alignment technique would give her more awareness of her own thoughts and emotional responses and would enable her to release her anxiety, stabilise her emotions and seal her energy from outside influence. Through daily practice of the alignment, she was able to provide Lenny with the behaviour model he required.

By building a relationship of mutual enjoyment through playfulness, warm physical contact and positive responses to Lenny's communication, she began to facilitate his ability to relate to others. Lenny's mother, who was party to our earlier discussions, acknowledged that because of Lenny's fears of school and inability to learn in that environment, another method of teaching was required.

Through observation and involvement in Lenny's sessions with us, his mother began to understand that Lenny's learning was increasing through his creative

play sessions. She realised that he needed to relax and to be in charge of his own learning in the presence of someone who enjoyed spending time with him. Any negative behaviour was successfully managed through firm, consistent, clear and positive communication.

Lenny's mother's perception of him gradually changed and she began to offer him a more positive mirror in which to see himself. He also stopped barricading himself in with cushions and chairs in defensive comfort. Through trial and error we discovered that Lenny had a talent for building with lego and we persuaded the Local Education Authority to purchase a large pack of lego bricks and figures for him to use in his sessions.



The impact of this was amazing. After two weeks of designing and building his own unique creations, Lenny was beginning to complete tasks in other areas and was starting to control his own behaviour without outside intervention. His brothers and sisters reported that he was respecting their possessions instead of 'trashing' them. His home tutor was eventually rewarded and was delighted to report 'Lenny is beginning to connect with me'.

Lenny began to tell his home tutor when he wanted to stop an activity rather than just abandoning it and walking off. He realised that with language he could control the length of a game by asking for more time because his tutor would not interrupt him. This freed Lenny from approaching everything with the same panic lest it be taken away. He was communicating in a safe environment with a known person who offered him acceptance warmth and understanding.

His tutor realised that the more she stopped him from doing something that was important to him the more stressed Lenny became. Music was used to signal the approaching end of an activity. When Lenny began to hav an understanding of structure and time and was able to wait without demanding, he was able to move easily on to another activity. He began to express his feelings in words rather than acting them out through tantrums i.e. by saying 'I'm cross with you'.

Lenny had previously had difficulty sharing space with another child but as children were gradually introduced into his environment to play with him, he was more able to communicate confidently and effectively. After a period of twelve months Lenny's parents moved from the area and the last I heard, he was successfully attending the local school where he was welcomed and accepted.

In my years as a Speech and Language Therapist, I found that the directive approach of symptom focused therapy often proved ineffective. I strongly believed that children were capable of healing themselves if they were allowed the freedom to direct their own play with an adult who accepted and responded positively to their attempts to communicate.

FINBAR



My work in Ireland introduced me to some amazingly creative children. One of them was a little boy called Finbar. I only saw him twice but he taught me that children are able to quickly gain what they need in a space free from judgement and expectation with a variety of versatile props to allow them to express themselves creatively.

Finbar was seven years old, the only child of parents who lived in a cottage deep in the Irish countryside. Finbar's mother was a healer who used alternative therapies and astrology to solve her difficulties in life. She was warmly expressive and colourfully dressed with long dark hair and olive skin. Finbar's father was gentle voiced of slight build with long wispy hair which fell onto his collar. At home and school, Finbar refused to sit on the toilet and refused to have his hair cut. In a previous interview his mother told me that she was concerned about Finbar's preference for girlish things and desire to play the female role and he had difficulty maintaining friendships because of his toilet phobia and soiling.

Session One

When I first met Finbar, I was working in a small hotel room in the town of Skibbereen in the Republic of Ireland, this very small room was filled by two arm chairs and a coffee table. A full length mirror was on the back of a door leading to a small ensuite bathroom.

From my selection of materials and dressing up clothes, Finbar chose a piece of indigo to wrap around his waist like a long skirt and a piece of turquoise diaphanous material, which he wanted to tie like a cloak. He wrapped a narrow golden scarf across his forehead and asked me to tie it to the side so that the ends hung down over his right ear. He looked at himself in the mirror and stared in silence. I lifted his hair up from his shoulder and scooped it back from his face in a knot at the back of his neck and asked what he thought as he continued to gaze in the mirror. "Cool" he said! He told me that his Daddy had long hair. I asked him if he would want short hair if his Daddy had short hair. He said he would but that his Mummy teased his Daddy because he was bald.



I commented that he looked like a prince and he quickly corrected me by saying that he was a King not a prince and proceeded to cover one of the arm chairs

with a piece of blue material. At my request he had brought some favourite music, two CD's, one classical and one Celtic. He chose to play a track from the classical CD, which he said was both 'scary and happy'. Finbar told me that the king was sad because there was a dragon in the kingdom, which had to be killed. When I asked where it was, he said, "It's in there" pointing to the door leading to the ensuite bathroom. (Finbar didn't know what was behind the door.) I asked him if there was anyone who could help him. He said the Queen could and informed me that I was the Queen and chose a piece of golden yellow material for me to wear as a cloak.

I asked if there was anything else we needed. He said we needed a fire sword and selected a length of orange gauze as his sword. He gave me a length of red material for my sword. I told Finbar that there was a sound that went with the orange colour, which if we made it loudly would frighten the dragon away. I demonstrated the sacral Tone, which resonates with the corresponding frequency of the colour orange and Finbar happily made this Tone. His strong, resonant toning voice surprised me. He led the way into the bathroom and pointed to the toilet indicating that that was where the dragon lived. We called the orange tone Finbar's tone and we made the tone in unison as we brandished our fire swords to frighten the dragon away.

After a pause, Finbar lifted the lid of the toilet to show me where the dragon had lived. I told him that the dragon would now need to be washed away with clear water. Finbar agreed. He created a waterfall of blue material, which flowed into the bathroom and around the base of the toilet, he then pulled the toilet chain. Having thoroughly washed away his dragon he rolled the waterfall back to its source and then spontaneously bathed the whole room in swathes of golden yellow material. He framed the door of the bathroom in golden yellow and suggested that we make a rainbow in the centre of the room as a sign that the dragon had gone for good. To end the session he drew a picture of the story he had created. As he drew his picture he told me that he wanted to be an artist when he grew up.

A week later I met Finbar's mother to discuss his progress. He had told her about his story and she said it was the first time she had known him cast himself in a male role as a King, he usually wanted to be a Queen. He and his father had both had their hair cut. Finbar's mother told me that Finbar was talking about his feelings more and the homeopathic remedy I had suggested was helping them to be less enmeshed and attached to each other. Finbar was now willing to return to his own bed in the middle of the night. He made the orange sacral chakra tone while sitting on the toilet and his mother felt that this was taking away his fear.

Each evening before bed, Finbar's mother and father made Finbar's tone with him. His mother told me that in some strange way she felt that making the

sound together was helping them all. I told her Toning was an ancient form of healing that would cement a positive bond between them all just as the native American Indians had chanted tones to bind the people together in unity and courage. Toning also releases tension within the bowel and lower digestive tract. Regular practice meant that Finbar was no longer suffering from constipation and each time he spontaneously sat on the toilet he was given a golden star for his box.

Session Two

I returned to Ireland a month later and saw Finbar one more time. I had hired a room in a hotel in Clonakilty, a few miles from where I had first seen him. This room was bigger and gave us more scope for play. This time Finbar's father brought him along to see me. His father looked pale and exhausted. The family had been disturbed by Finbar having nightmares for the past two weeks, although he couldn't remember his dreams.

In preparation for the play session I had placed swathes of gold, silver and rainbow coloured material over a long trestle table at the far end of the room. The material fell in colourful pools on the floor.

Finbar rushed over to the gold material and tried to scoop it up and drape it around his shoulders but there was far too much of it and he complained that it was 'too heavy'. He told me that he wanted to talk about Egypt and Lord Pharaoh because he had seen a programme about it on the television. I asked him if he would like to dress up as Lord Pharaoh and he said that he would. He selected an orange skirt and a red cloak. He asked for a gold crown but was satisfied with a length of gold mesh, which I wove around his head like a cap.

He placed a chair in the centre of the room as his throne and created a grid like pattern of material on the floor at the foot of the throne in indigo, emerald, royal blue, orange and pink which gave the appearance of a large colourful chequer board. I told him that the Egyptians used sound in their daily life in prayer and work and taught him two more Tones, which we made together with his orange Tone. The throat tone to strengthen his voice and help him to express himself and 'RA', the Tone that the Egyptians used in praise of their sun god Ra.

Wanting to make a pyramid, he told me that he could make one with the chairs in the room. He placed four chairs together back to back and then placed a chair facing outwards at each corner. He draped the gold material over the chairs and filled the gaps with rainbow coloured material. He covered his throne in turquoise and draped some sandy /brown material on the floor to represent sand. He said that he was going to crawl through the secret passage

way and that the eye of the fire was in the centre. He had to open up the spaces between the chairs because he said the passage way was too narrow to crawl through.

He stated that he had to crawl through the tunnel without touching the sides. First he crawled one way and then the other. He then returned to his throne because he said the people were hailing him as king saying 'RA'. As with ancient rituals of initiation, Finbar told me that if he had not crawled through the passage way successfully and had bumped the side then someone else would be made king instead of him.

His next task as king was to journey to the volcano that spewed out molten larva. He created the volcano in a corner of the room using orange cloth to depict the larva. He hid under the table, which he said was a cave. I suggested that he wore blue because it was the colour of protection and he readily agreed. He suggested using blue water to cool the larva and proceeded to overlay the orange molten larva with blue and then pink silk.

Returning to his throne triumphant and smiling, he gestured a hand towards his imaginary Egyptian people, he said that they were hailing him again by calling 'RA' as he passed. In his final initiation Finbar announced that he had to find a shorter router through the pyramid. He accomplished this by making a left turn down an orange tunnel, once he had reached the centre.

Finbar's father was very encouraged when he saw the pyramid that Finbar had created and he agreed to buy him a picture book of Egypt to strengthen his connection to that time. He told me that Finbar's teacher had recently said that Finbar only wanted to draw at school. His father spoke about Halloween and I suggested that Finbar dress up in a positive costume as a force for good rather than a frightening costume, which would fuel his nightmares and anxiety.

I said that I would send Finbar a picture of Arch Angel Michael, who represents protection and strength in times of distress and I suggested that Finbar and his father make the 'RA' Tone together. His father agreed and I prescribed appropriate Bach flower remedies to alleviate Finbar's fears of the unknown and to help him stabilise his emotions.

On my return to England I wrote to Finbar's parents with a documented record of our play sessions together enclosing the promised picture and offered to correspond with advice should they require it. I did not hear from them again.

KEVIN



When I met Kevin, he was four years old, I had been teaching in the Republic of Ireland and Kevin's mother had attended the workshop. At the end of the day she approached me for help.

She was a single parent who was struggling to cope with her four-year-old son, Kevin, who was, she said, 'unmanageable and hyperactive', a 'ball of energy' who refused to sit still or do as he was told. She said that Kevin had difficulty relating to other children.

Her relationship with Kevin's father was not good and his visits to see his son were spasmodic and unreliable. There were no new men in her life because Kevin slept in her bed each night and constantly demanded her time and energy during the day. She told me that she wasn't coping and felt unable to impose any structure or routine at home.

At our first meeting Kevin darted into the room in front of his mother, clutching a small brown bag of toy instruments. His mother's tension was palpable and in her lilting Irish brogue she continually remonstrated with him with pleas of "Don't be wild now". Kevin ignored her and continued to run around the room in excitement. I reassured her that he would be fine, suggested that she went for a cup of tea and quickly ushered her out of the room, with a request to return for Kevin in half an hour.



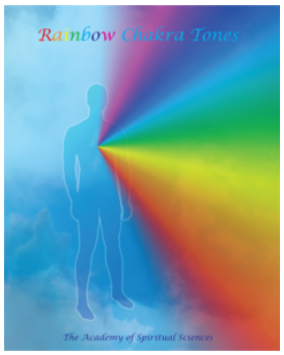
Once she had left, I sat on the floor in the middle of the room in silence. Kevin, stopped what he was doing, looked at me and stood very still, he then came and sat cross legged on the floor opposite me, looking intently into my face. He was like an elf, small boned with delicate features, large blue eyes with long lashes and spiky brown hair cut around his ears but long in the neck. I was enchanted. His small Irish voice was high pitched and rasping "I remember you a long, long time ago" he said "when I was a pirate and had a pirate hat." "Who was I?" I said, somewhat taken a back "You were a pirate too," he said. "What was your name?" I asked "Red Beard" he said. I asked him if he wanted to play a pirate game.

Kevin excitedly agreed and picked out a swathe of deep blue material, which I wrapped around his waist, tying a length of blue material around his hair. He told me that before we made his pirate ship, he needed a knife. We looked

round for something suitable and Kevin produced a drum-stick from his bag of instruments and I attached it to his waist with another length of blue material.

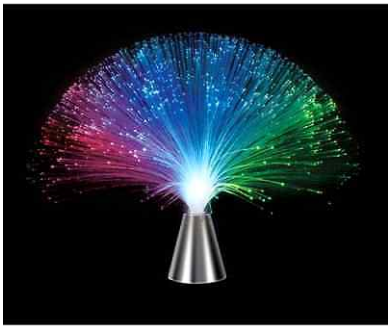
Together we created the pirate ship by removing the starched white cloth from a small square table in the corner of the room and turning it upside down. We hoisted a sail of orange silk on one of the table legs and swirls of more blue material became the foaming sea beneath the ship. At this point, Kevin told me that he couldn't swim, when I asked what we should do, he suggested building a wooden bridge to allow him to cross to dry land.

We completed this task, using a length of brown material to look like planks of wood. A pirate needs treasure, he told me, which he said would be at the end of the rainbow, he then created a rainbow out of rainbow coloured material which was under the table at the other side of the room. For the treasure, Kevin chose a large coil of golden ribbon from my dressing up bag and made a rainbow path leading up to it.



My vibrational healing work involves using a system of sounds or Tones, which resonate with the chakras (energy centres) to release held emotion, encourage vocal expression, build confidence and strengthen the voice. Each Tone links to a specific anatomical area of the body. I told Kevin that each colour of the rainbow had a special sound (Tone) and I suggested that we make the sounds together as we walked along his rainbow path. Kevin eagerly agreed and repeated each Tone after me as we walked. He then selected his favourite two Tones without prompting. The Base tone *(which releases emotional holding and corresponds with the colour red)* and the Throat tone (*corresponding with the colour blue to improve listening and strengthen the voice).* At the end of our session, Kevin explained our game to his mother and she agreed to my suggestion that they should practice his two favourite tones together at home. I arranged some further time with her on her own before they left.

When Kevin's mother came to see me the following week, I explained that Kevin's behaviour mirrored her own emotional state and to improve his behaviour, she needed to find a way of centring and stabilising her energy and emotions. I taught her the Emerald Alignment to relax, balance and align her energy and suggested that she practice this on a regular basis at home. I offered Bach flower remedies, chicory for them both to help to



alleviate the intensity of emotional pull that inhibited their ability to function independently and sweet chestnut to give her some hope that things would improve.

I saw Kevin six weeks later, when I again returned to Ireland. He was much calmer, he had been practising his Tones at home with Mum but hadn't been taking the chicory because his Mum admitted that she had forgotten to give it to him. However, she was using the Emerald Alignment she said, when she remembered and felt better for it. Unfortunately, this was not enough to encourage her to practice it on a daily basis.

Session Two

In our second session, Kevin wanted to play pirates again and chose an indigo cloak and a rainbow scarf for a headdress. We made another ship and this time he used four dining chairs to create a square platform, which he covered in pink and orange material.

We again surrounded the ship in blue material to represent the water, which he said was full of fish, sharks and crocodiles. He made a ladder to climb aboard and stood proudly at the prow surveying the room. It was then that he noticed an optic fibre light, which I had plugged in and placed on a table in the far corner. Kevin pointed to it and told me to listen because it was making a magical sound. I listened and asked him what sound it was making, because I could not hear it. He said that it was the blue sound; he made the throat tone for me in his high little voice and said that it was a bird calling him over to the Island. He then began to rock rhythmically from side to side as though the ship was moving through choppy water.

On reaching his chosen destination, he climbed down the ladder and ran over to the light and stood mesmerised gazing at the coloured optics as they moved through the rainbow spectrum. He reached out to the lamp and ran his fingers through the coloured strands.

Soon it was time to go home and we tidied up the room together. This was the last I saw of Kevin because before my next trip to Ireland, his mother had acted upon a decision to move further North to share accommodation and work with her brother with whom she had a good relationship.

I hoped that this male support and companionship would give Kevin and his mother the balance and structure they needed to move forward with their lives.

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