Monkey see, Monkey do! Utilization of yoga intervention for a child with non-verbal Autism
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BACKGROUND & PURPOSE
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties with social skills, repetitive behaviors, communication and motor planning. According to the CDC, 1 in 68 children have been identified as having ASD. Therapy services are required to address physical, language and social skills. Along with the cardiovascular benefits, physical activity has been shown to improve socialization, visual attention and decrease the frequency of self-stimulating behaviors in children with ASD. Yoga offers structured and predictable patterns which can support the learning needs of children with ASD.

The purpose of this case report is to describe the effects of yoga intervention with traditional physical therapy on motor performance and visual attention in a young girl with non-verbal ASD.

CASE DESCRIPTION
6 year old female with Autism spectrum disorder

Motoric Challenges
• Dyspraxia
• Decreased coordination
• Mild Hypotonia
• Decreased age equivalent scores on Peabody Developmental Motor Scale (PDMS-2)

Cognitive/Communication /Social challenges
• Decreased attention to task
• Intermittent eye contact
• Limited sign language

Sensory Processing/integration challenges
• Sensory seeking

Received PT, OT, SLP, and aquatic therapy

INTERVENTION
Yoga poses
Balance
Visual Attention
Gross Motor Activities
Coordination
Strengthening

REFERENCES

RESULTS
• Increased visual attention
• Improved spontaneous eye contact
• Improved functional balance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PDMS-2 subtest</th>
<th>Initial Evaluation</th>
<th>Re-Assessment</th>
<th>Final Assessment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raw score</td>
<td>Age equivalent</td>
<td>Raw score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locomotion</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22 months</td>
<td>149</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object Manipulation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>29</td>
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</tbody>
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*Although the PDMS-2 is validated for the population up to 6 years old, it was used due to the patient’s inability to complete the Bruininks-Oseretsky Test for Motor Proficiency.

CLINICAL RELEVANCE
The outcome of this case report supports yoga as a feasible intervention for the pediatric autism population. Yoga has been shown to increase flexibility, strength, balance and coordination which are common impairments in children on the Autism spectrum. Along with the physical benefits, the addition of yoga poses to traditional therapy had positive effects on social interaction and communication. Utilizing yoga as an intervention may give further opportunity to working in a group setting which may enhance social skills while providing an economic alternative in physical therapy care.

RECEIVED

https://www.amazon.ca/Magnetic-Yogarilla-Exercise-Activity-Game/dp/1586508598