

Anatomy of a Problem Reading and Language Difficulty

For decades, it has been well established that one child in five has serious reading difficulties. Many systems of special teaching have been tried. (1)

In his paper "Ontogeny of Reading Problems" presented to Claremont Reading Conference in 1963, Dr Carl Delacato, Ed.D reasoned that "*the process by which one attains the ability to read – the ability to learn to express oneself starts at birth. If the child is not afforded the opportunity to develop total neurological organisation, the child cannot become totally "human", and as a result cannot communicate at the level at which the child might have been able to, had neurological organisation been completed.*"

In 1970, Carl Delacato proposed a new revolutionary concept together with a new curative therapy, outlined in his book, "A New Start for the Child with Reading Problems".

The 1963 paper, and his book in 1970, both stem from original research presented to the Institute of Physical Medical and Rehabilitation, New York in 1953, by Delacato, Doman and Doman, entitled "Behaviour, Learning and Mobility, cause and effect of Rehabilitation". In this paper the principles of Sensory Integration Therapy are proposed.

To put this theory into its simplest terms, systems of reading and language difficulty, show up where there is conflict between one side of the brain and the other to gain language dominance.

In the human brain the language area is usually located in either, the left, or right side of the brain. Likewise, man is usually left- handed or right- handed.

Normally, dominance in the brain begins as soon as baby learns to speak, total dominance achieved around 7 to 8 years of age. Theoretically, a missing of any stage of development between crawling, creeping, walking, seeing, talking and writing creates problems in reading.

Accordingly, for the poor reader, the method suggests re-imprinting the early stages of brain dominance, by repeating in the brain, the early steps in creeping and crawling ,and other physical exercises that develop the receptivity of the language area of the brain.

Here is now outlined a beginner's guide to the causes, recognition off, and description of how to overcome the child's difficulty.

There is an increased risk of mild diffuse brain injury, leading to reading difficulty and learning delay, from, difficult pregnancy, difficult birth procedures, including

emergency and elective Caesarian section delivery, and early post natal period up to 6 months.

The child who misses a stage of development i.e. crawling and creeping increases the risk of reading problems and learning delay.

In the event that the parent believes that such an event, like viral or bacterial infections, risk of miscarriage during pregnancy, premature birth, a birth procedure longer than 12 hours or less than 2 hours, has occurred, should be aware of increased risk to the normal development of the child.

The next critical stage is at approximately 5 months when the child should start to creep on hands and knees. In the event that the child wants to start to walk without creeping, the parent should not ignore this wish, and encourage the child to creeps on hands and knees for at least 4 months. After which, walking erect is then allowed.

Should you now recognise that you have a problem with your child, then the following rehabilitation can be practised.

For children over the age of 2-3 years and up to the age of 5 years, the following exercises can be carried out.

Each exercise to be carried at least twice a day, for a duration of 2 minutes each exercise, for a minimum of 4 months until you believe your child has improved to your satisfaction

- Creeping on hands and knees for at least 4 months.
- Rolling the child on a well-carpeted floor or alternatively on the bed up and down. You do the rolling, do not allow the child to do it itself.
- Slow controlled spinning in a revolving chair, alternatively rotating 3 times to right and 3 times to left. You spin the child, remember that children spinning and rolling themselves are self-stimulation, you spinning the child are therapy.
- Catching and throwing balls, rolling balls, catching after one bounce, catching balloons, chasing bubbles, kicking balls.

Record the preference of which hand the child uses to pick up objects and holds a pencil. If the predominance is right hand, then you will create the brain dominance on the left side of the brain, left-hand preference creates right hand side dominance of the brain.

For the child older than 5 years of age the encouragement of the use of hand, eye, foot, and hearing on one side of the body only, is necessary to create the condition for effective reading and writing.

When you have determined which hand your child prefers to use you can then reinforce this preference to fix the handedness and make your child all one-sided, and achieve hemispherical dominance.

This you can do by ensuring he always uses his preferred hand to write, pick up objects, throw and catch balls.

Next ensure that when he starts to walk from a standing or sitting position, he starts to walk always using his leg which is on the same side as his preferred hand. With ball games roll the ball to the foot you want your child to kick back to you with.

A good exercise for footedness is to stand the child at the bottom of the stairs and have the child place the preferred foot on the first step and then return to normal standing position. Repeat the exercise until this becomes a natural instinct.

To ensure he only uses the correct eye we can use the effect of red/red or red/green filters when the child is writing or reading.

When writing with a red/orange pen/crayon/pencil the words disappear when viewed through a red lens. Putting a green filter on a page of a book, the words disappear when viewed through red lenses.

To enable the child to use the eye correct, we cover the other eye with a red lens.

The child uses the red lens for 2 minutes twice a day for reading and writing exercises. These exercises continue until you the parent are satisfied that your child has successfully mastered reading and writing.

To complete the handedness and create one- sided dominance in the brain, hearing needs to be addressed. Spend two, five – minute periods each day talking or reading to your child. While sitting on the right side, ask your child to cover the left ear while listening to you. If left- handed, sit on the left side and cover the right ear during listening.

When your child is all one-sided, using eye, ear, hand and foot, on one side of the body only, neurological organisation is complete.

For further reading go to article “Revealing Autism”

Reference;

(1) “A New Start for the child with Reading Problems” Carl Delacato, Ed.D. 1970

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