

PAYING ATTENTION

How we choose to attend and how attention deficits can be addressed in therapy with equines

Robin Abbott, MS, OTR

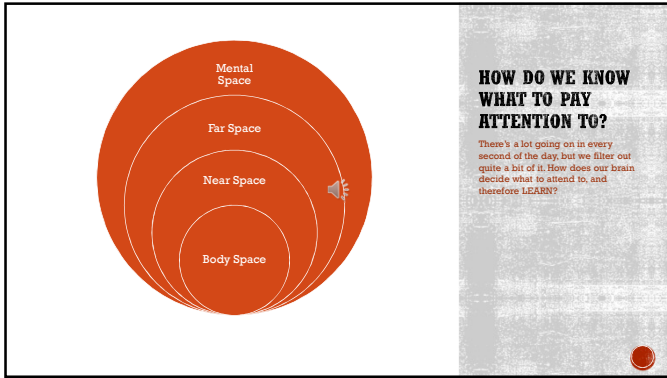
ROBIN ABBOTT

Trained and put horses under saddle
Not a life-long "horse person"
Horses have taught me about myself!

SOUND ADVICE

How to Help Your Child with SPD, Autism and ADHD from the Inside Out

ROBIN C. ABBOTT
MS, OTR/L

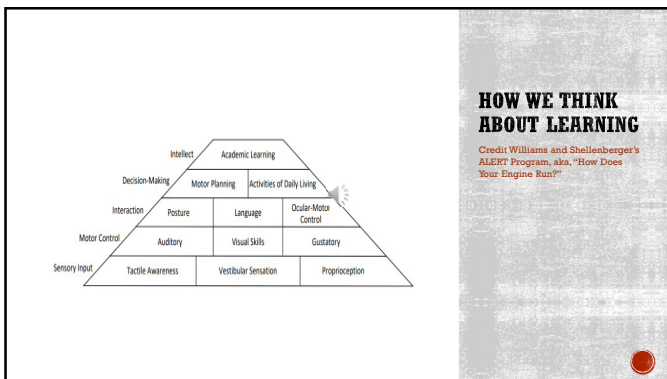


HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT TO PAY ATTENTION TO?

There's a lot going on in every second of the day, but we filter out quite a bit of it. How does our brain decide what to attend to, and therefore LEARN?

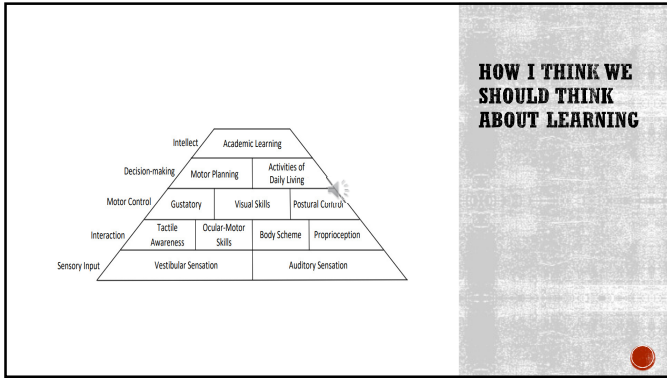
THE EAR CONTROLS OUR ATTENTION

- Vestibular Sense**
 - Gives us "Ground Zero", the "You are Here" dot on our mental map
 - Informs us when we are safe and secure
 - Directs and filters our attention
 - Helps to sequence events and objects in our surroundings
 - Coordinates our eyes and bodies
- Auditory Sense**
 - Provides a mental map of our surroundings
 - Alerts us to changes in our environment, including dangers
 - Tells us in which direction to send our attention
 - Develops our internal sense of time, rhythm and sequencing

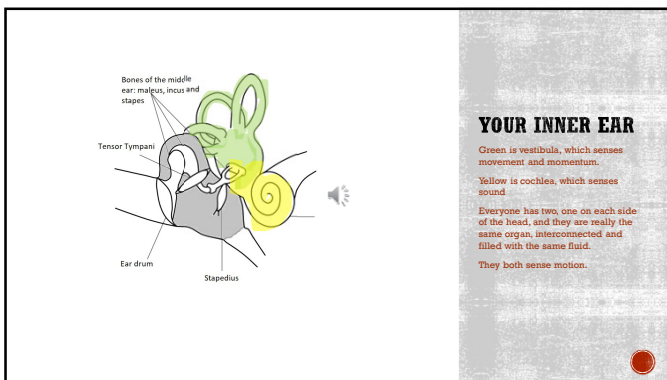


HOW WE THINK ABOUT LEARNING

Credit Williams and Shellenberger's ALERT Program, aka, "How Does Your Engine Run?"

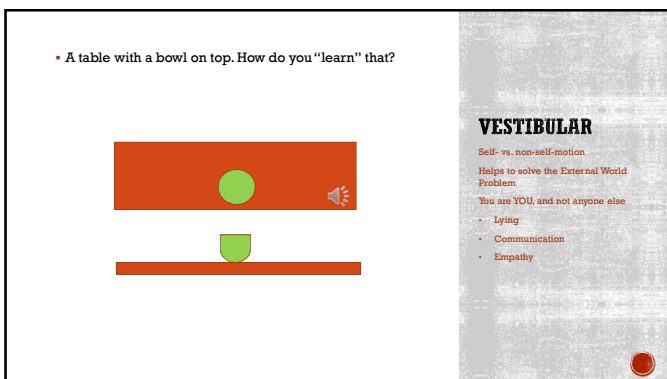


HOW I THINK WE SHOULD THINK ABOUT LEARNING



YOUR INNER EAR

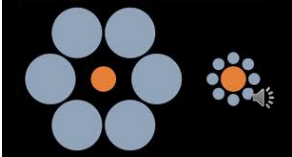
Green is vestibula, which senses movement and momentum.
 Yellow is cochlea, which senses sound.
 Everyone has two, one on each side of the head, and they are really the same organ, interconnected and filled with the same fluid.
 They both sense motion.



VESTIBULAR

Self- vs. non-self-motion
 Helps to solve the External World Problem.
 You are YOU, and not anyone else

- Lying
- Communication
- Empathy



SAFE AND SECURE

You are moving when you EXPECT to be moving, and you are still when you EXPECT to be still.

If a child's vestibular system DOES NOT tell them when they are safe, they will depend on other senses.

Visual
Tactile
Proprioceptive

VESTIBULAR: FILTERING ATTENTION

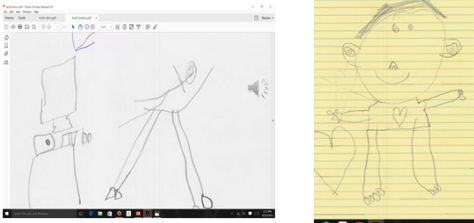
Children who don't feel secure in their position in space will seek out MORE information.

It creates a paradox the children who are NOT SENSITIVE ENOUGH to vestibular input will be HYPERSENSITIVE to other inputs

Also, HYPERACTIVE children are seeking more information for their HYPOactive vestibular systems.

The filters are broken!

VESTIBULAR: DIRECTING ATTENTION



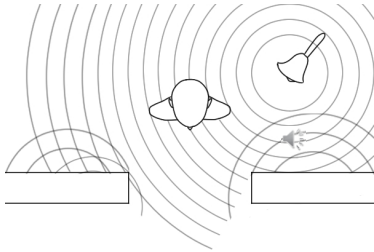
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VESTIBULAR

Control of the eyes and body
You can see that Caleb does not know when his body is above his legs and he can stand on the stool.





AUDITORY

Gives us a map of our space
Allows us to NOT have to physically check how big our space is
Also allows us to filter and concentrate because we are aware of the size of our space and who is in it. That can lower anxiety.
How might this affect a person entering a big riding arena?



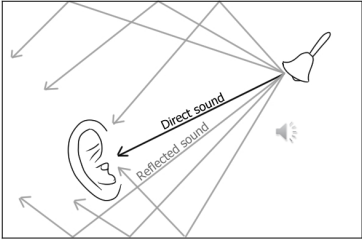
AUDITORY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

What would your life be like if you had to investigate every sound?

What if you couldn't tell how far away sounds are coming from?

Different sounds register differently in different situations. If you are already "ramped up" because of fear, anxiety or a new situation, distinguishing between sounds becomes more difficult. It becomes harder to pick out voices.





AUDITORY

Our ears control our eyes.

Our ears help develop depth perception.

Our ears help us verbally communicate by looking at others' faces and mouths.

Combined with vestibular/visual lock-on, a child may have very few opportunities to learn to communicate.

AUDITORY, LEARNING RHYTHM


The most important rhythm in life leads to the suck, swallow, breathe synchrony.

Rhythm and spaces between sounds are measured by the brain, and we eventually learn to put words to those spaces.

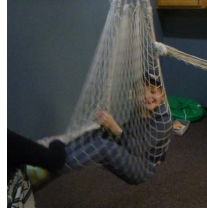
That is the beginning of time awareness and sequencing. An understanding of time is required to understand communication and the audible world.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

- Keep verbal communication limited and consistent.
- Sing a song to entrain rhythm and memory.
- Encourage singing and breathing.
- Use oral centering (I love Chewies and Z-vibes)
- Swing before the session, if available.



SWINGS I LIKE



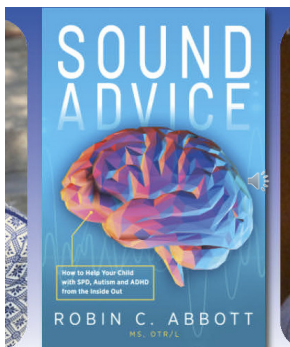
WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Most clinical pediatric occupational therapists will address the vestibular system in some fashion. Look for therapists trained in Astronaut Training (from Vital Links), as it is a regimented program that addresses visual function as well.

Auditory therapy works well to address the concerns listed in this presentation. There are many kinds available. Look for therapists certified in:

- Therapeutic Listening
- The Listening Program from Advanced Brain Technologies
- EASE CDs and audio programs
- Tomatis Method
- SAMONAS





YOU CAN ALWAYS BUY MY BOOK!

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www.booksoundadvice.com
 Available on Amazon