

Educational Therapy:
Best for Helping Your Child with Special Needs to Overcome
All Difficulties with Learning

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Do you have a child with special needs? If so, perhaps you can relate to the following story:

John was a fourth grade student with learning disabilities. Here is what a typical day in the classroom looked like for him: He sat slouched back in his seat. Whenever the teacher spoke he couldn't follow her words. He daydreamed about his Xbox and his eyes would then roam to the blinking fluorescent lights on the ceiling. He could not find things he needed in his desk because it was filled with crumpled up papers.

The class began working on long division. John was unable to line up the numbers on the paper. He could not read his own writing, got the steps confused, and forgot his math facts. His palms got sweaty and he put his head down. Next, the class began to read a new book. John read very slowly to himself, had difficulty sounding out the words, lost his place, omitted words, and couldn't comprehend. He prayed that he would not get called on to answer a question about the story. After that, the teacher asked the students to write a paragraph about their favorite animal. John just stared at the paper. He couldn't think of what to write or where to start.

After experiencing many days such as the above, and getting mostly F's and D's on his report card, he felt very bad about himself. At that time his mother decided to bring him twice a week for Traditional Tutoring. The tutor worked very hard to help him with skills related to his grade-level work, such as homework assignments and preparing for tests. Unfortunately, no matter how much she repeated information, he still had difficulty processing and understanding much of it.

After some time, John's grades went from F's and D's to C's. However, as the work become more challenging, and when he had to learn something new or perform a new task, he got frustrated. He had to work twice as long and hard to get C's. He had very little time for fun and this frustrated him even further.

Why were John's difficulties still persisting in spite of the tutoring? This was because he didn't have mastery of earlier basic skills. The tutoring was only working on helping him to keep up with classes and building up his current skills. However, he had a lot of gaps in earlier skills, cognitive weaknesses, attention deficits, and poor executive functioning, which kept getting in the way of his learning. He could not understand or retain enough information to master skills. No matter how much tutoring John received, it did not get to the root of his learning problems, and he still had difficulties. He needed more intensive help to address all of his learning needs.

Does this sound like your situation with your child? If so, there are many options available for academic support. Most of them involve either one-on-one or small group tutoring. These are fine if your child has regular needs. However, they do not fully address the learning difficulties of your special needs child. A much better choice for your child with special needs or academic challenges is Educational Therapy.

The answer to helping your child overcome his learning difficulties lies in a combination of strengthening underlying skill areas, which include brain functioning, along with laying down a solid foundation of basic skills. That is how Educational Therapy addresses all of your child's

learning needs. With this intervention, he can become a confident learner, reach or exceed his current grade level, and even excel in school.

It is really critical for a child who has learning disabilities to get the right help. That is the way for him to overcome his learning disabilities, and not develop or remain with poor self-esteem, anxiety, and frustration.

EXAMINING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL TUTORING AND EDUCATIONAL THERAPY

These differences lie in the:

- Needs of the Child
- Training and Expertise of the Provider
- Materials Used
- Approaches Used
- Process Followed
- Skills Addressed
- Results Attained

Needs of the Child

Traditional Tutoring may be adequate for a child with regular or basic needs, provided he has no underlying weaknesses in learning. However, when a child has special needs, Educational Therapy is much better equipped to treat his learning deficits.

TRADITIONAL TUTORING	EDUCATIONAL THERAPY
<p>Used for the student with basic learning needs who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs a little extra help to keep up • Has specific needs in a subject area <p>And who does not have underlying weaknesses in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills • Motor skills . • Language skills • Social-emotional/ behavioral skills • Attention • Other areas impacting learning 	<p>Used for treating student with special learning needs due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-verbal learning disabilities • Learning disabilities • Writing difficulties (Dysgraphia) • Reading disabilities (Dyslexia) • Math disabilities (Dyscalculia) • Developmental delays . • Language delays • Language disabilities • School anxiety • Test anxiety • Attention deficit disorder • Learning delays • Traumatic brain injury • Physical handicaps • Social/emotional, behavioral issues • Poor social skills • School retention • Post traumatic stress • Poor organizational skills • Poor study skills • Other issues that impact learning • Autism • Low vision • Hearing impairment • Struggling learner • Poor social skills • School retention • Post traumatic stress

Training and Expertise of the Provider

The Educational Therapist has the training and expertise to help your child with special needs overcome all of his learning difficulties. Your child most likely has underlying learning difficulties and these difficulties are assessed and addressed by an Educational Therapist. The following chart shows the differences between a Traditional Tutor and an Educational Therapist:

TRADITIONAL TUTOR	EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST
Is often a college student or teacher	Is a specialist with advanced degree(s) in: Special education, Literacy, Reading, Psychology or Social work
Works part-time	Works full-time
Has no specific training and expertise to work with children and adults with special needs/ learning disabilities	Has extensive training, expertise, and experience to work with children and adults with special needs and all learning disabilities Training includes: . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic therapies • Sensory functioning • Cognitive skills (cognitive training) • Language skills • Academic coaching • Success training • Executive functioning skills • Attention deficit disorder • Social-emotional and behavioral skills
Teaches particular subject matter	Assesses, identifies, and addresses the special needs of students

Materials Used

The materials used in educational therapy are designed for the child with special needs. They are easy to understand, promote success and are highly motivating, specialized, and therapeutic. The chart below shows the types of materials used for Traditional Tutoring and Educational Therapy.

TRADITIONAL TUTORING	EDUCATIONAL THERAPY
<p>OFTEN USES: The student's own printed materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbooks • Worksheets • Class notes 	<p>USES The student's own materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbooks • Worksheets • Class notes <p>MAINLY USES A wide variety of materials and assistive tools that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage movement • Provide strategies • Build mastery and competence • Are research-based • Strengthen mental skills • Are highly motivating • Are multi-sensory <p>Such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3D objects • Props • Incentives • Brain boosters • Memory boosters • Pacing tools • Behavioral tools • Fluency tracking tools • Progress tracking tools • Time tracking devices • Graphic organizers • Assistive technology tools • Other learning materials related to sight, sound, hearing, and touch • Prompts • Toys • Cues • Games

Approaches Used

Traditional Tutoring focuses on skills that the student needs to keep up with current assignments, whereas Educational Therapy focuses on targeting and working on skills that the student is weak in. Also, Educational Therapy works on many more skills in greater depth. In addition, it gets to the root of a student's learning difficulties. The differences are outlined in more detail in the chart below.

TRADITIONAL TUTORING	EDUCATIONAL THERAPY
Location of Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student's home • Library • Student's school • Tutoring center 	Location of Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Office (mostly) • Student's School
Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-an-one • Group 	Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one (mostly) • Small group
Includes Academics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework help • Test prep • Skill-building 	Includes Academics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill-building • Test Prep • Study Skills • Homework Strategies • Reading Therapy • Math Therapy • Writing Therapy
Often Focuses On <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills needed to complete current tasks/assignments • Strengths and weaknesses • Attempting to keep up with classes (moving forward to new skills before mastery achieved) 	Focuses On Underlying Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Training • Academic Coaching • Success Training • Attention Enhancement • Sensory Enhancement
	Other Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting: in home or school • Parent Training • Teacher Training • Conference Presentation • Distance Learning

	<p>Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based • Intensive • Activity oriented • Multi-sensory (several senses together) • - student uses eyes, ears, and hands together with brain to learn • Individualized to meet needs of specific student • Inclusive of targeted/proven strategies for success • Wide ranging • Specialized • Designed to treat individual with special needs
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EDUCATIONAL THERAPY FOCUSES ON

- Strengthening targeted weak skills
- Identifying and working on earlier skills student is lacking first, then new skills
- Closing Learning Gaps
- Building skills to mastery
- Bringing skills to grade level or above
- Improving academic performance
- Bringing about high academic achievement
- Doing initial and ongoing assessment

Process Followed

Traditional Tutoring

Since Traditional Tutoring tends focus on academics, it usually follows a simple process of identifying the subject areas in which the student needs help, then the tutoring begins.

Educational Therapy

The process for Educational Therapy is very comprehensive. It includes doing an assessment to pinpoint a student's specific difficulties with learning and using it to set up an individualized plan.

The following is an outline of the process used for Educational Therapy:

1. The educational therapist will see your child to do an **intake**, **assessment** and **review** of any reports to determine his strengths and weaknesses. Additional assessment is not required, but may be recommended. If that is the case, the educational therapist may refer your child to an outside psychologist or other professional to do specific testing. The results of assessment will be

used to target areas of learning (weaknesses) for remediation. They will determine the combination of interventions that will be used for your child's therapy.

Benefits of Assessment:

- Can lead to the diagnosis of other learning disabilities, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Can identify areas of weakness that are interfering with the child's learning
- Can lead to more focused treatment plan and therapies for the child who is found to have learning disabilities

Assessment for learning disabilities or other special needs includes one or more of the following:

- Achievement Tests
 - Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test
 - Woodcock Johnson Test of Educational Achievement
- Standard Diagnostic Reading Tests .
 - Woodcock Reading Mastery Test
- Individual and Group Intelligence Tests, measure intellectual functioning
 - IQ Tests
- Neuropsychological Tests
 - Neuropsychological evaluation
 - Verbal comprehension skills
 - Visual spatial and visual motor abilities
 - Working memory capacities
 - Processing speed capabilities
- Teacher Observations
- Parent Observations
- Attention Deficits Assessments
- Psychoeducational Assessments
- Personality Tests
- Dyslexia Screeners
- Dyscalculia Screeners
- Work Samples
- Group Test Scores
- Individual Test Scores
- Language Assessments
- Memory Assessments
- Medical and Health Reports
- Motor Assessments
- Perceptual Assessment
- Social Development! Adjustment Assessments
- Learning Styles Assessments
- IRI;s (Individual Reading Inventories)
- IEPs

2. A **schedule** will be drawn up for the frequency of appointments. It is recommended that the

child with special needs attend educational therapy for a minimum of 90 minutes per week. A student must come frequently, regularly, and long enough develop all needed skills to a mastery and automatic level. Consistent and intense educational therapy will result in maximum gains.

3. Once a plan and a schedule are in place, your child is ready to begin educational therapy.

The Skills Addressed by Traditional Tutoring and Educational Therapy

Traditional Tutoring helps a student with basic needs by working on academics. For the child with special needs strengthening skills in all areas of learning is the key to solving his learning challenges. Educational Therapy helps the student with special needs by addressing all his learning difficulties. This includes working intensively on academics and underlying skill areas that support academics. This enables the student not only to learn basic skills but to retain them for successful use in the classroom.

Academic Skills

Educational Therapy pinpoints and addresses all weaknesses related to learning, whereas Traditional Tutoring tends to be more focused on skills needed to complete current assignments.

TRADITIONAL TUTORING	EDUCATIONAL THERAPY																																																												
<p>Works on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic skills related to current, on grade, class curriculum needed to complete current assignments :strengths and weaknesses • Developing academic skills generally, to complete current assignments or prepare for tests <p>Academic Skills Include</p> <p>Reading Math Writing Content areas</p>	<p>Works on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills targeted as weaknesses • Developing skills intensively and therapeutically to close gaps, gain mastery, and reach or surpass grade level <p>Academic Skills Include</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Reading</td> <td>Handwriting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sight word recognition</td> <td>Vocabulary</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Auditory processing</td> <td>Building</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phonic analysis</td> <td>synonyms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Structural analysis</td> <td>antonyms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reading decoding</td> <td>homonyms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blending</td> <td>affixes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accuracy</td> <td>content related</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fluency</td> <td>Usage</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Speed</td> <td>Content Areas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Auditory discrimination</td> <td>Study Skills</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oral reading</td> <td>note-taking</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contextual analysis</td> <td>test-preparation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Explicit comprehension</td> <td>test-taking</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Implicit comprehension</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spelling</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Sentences</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Paragraphs</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Grammar</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Tense</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Transcription</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Writing process</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Mechanics</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Parts of speech</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Word retrieval</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Word usage</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Math</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Performing operations</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Problem-solving</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Reading	Handwriting	Sight word recognition	Vocabulary	Auditory processing	Building	Phonic analysis	synonyms	Structural analysis	antonyms	Reading decoding	homonyms	Blending	affixes	Accuracy	content related	Fluency	Usage	Speed	Content Areas	Auditory discrimination	Study Skills	Oral reading	note-taking	Contextual analysis	test-preparation	Explicit comprehension	test-taking	Implicit comprehension		Spelling		Writing		Sentences		Paragraphs		Grammar		Tense		Transcription		Writing process		Mechanics		Parts of speech		Word retrieval		Word usage		Math		Performing operations		Problem-solving	
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Underlying Skill Areas

The ability of a child to learn, adapt, and act depends on his development of underlying skill areas related to his state of being and brain/body function. such example is his ability to cope with new situations.

Although they may not always be apparent, underlying skills play a critical part in a student's academics.

These underlying skill areas include:

- Social/Emotional and Behavioral
- Attention and Focusing Skills
- Executive Functioning Skills
- Cognitive Skills
- Motor Skills
- Language Skills

If your child has a learning disability or other special needs, he may have one or more of these **underlying** skill areas. Difficulties in Underlying skill areas are the reason the special needs children have difficulties with academics because they:

- Make learning a struggle
- Prevent learning
- Impede academic performance

Underlying Skill Areas

If all underlying skill weaknesses are fully addressed, then the child can learn and perform to the best of his ability. The following chart shows how Traditional Tutoring and Educational Therapy deal with weaknesses in these underlying skills.

TRADITIONAL TUTORING	EDUCATIONAL THERAPY
Does NOT address UNDERLYING skill weaknesses	Does address and strengthen weaknesses in all of the above underlying skill areas that impact learning

All of these skill areas:

- Need to function well for the student to learn
- Need to function well together for the student to learn

Educational Therapy addresses underlying weaknesses through:

- A broad range of hands-on and Multi-sensory activities .Ample practice of strategies
- The use of research-based techniques drawn from different disciplines .
- Targeting skills student is weak in

What is accomplished by addressing these underlying areas with Educational Therapy?

- Weak skills are strengthened
- Causes of learning challenges are corrected
- Barriers that prevent learning and having access to learning are removed .Learning becomes easier and faster
- Comprehension is facilitated
- Academic success is achieved

Social/Emotional and Behavioral Skills

Social and Emotional skills are related to a child's ability to interact with others and to react inwardly to his surroundings. The development social and emotional skills impact his behavior. Behavioral skills include acting on and reacting outwardly to one's environment. Examples include personal responsibility and self-control.

Academic coaching and success training work together to address social-emotional needs and behavioral skills related to learning, as part of educational therapy. The therapist works with the student to fostering positive social, emotional, behavioral skills that lead to success in an educational environment. The purpose is to stimulate and motivate him towards his academic goals by providing structure, support and feedback. This is an individualized process that facilitates goal clarification and achievement.

Academic Coaching and Success Training Helps Your Child:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease anxiety • Overcome test anxiety • Overcome failure syndrome • Overcome low frustration tolerance • Develop greater social awareness • Overcome fear of speaking in class • Increase impulse control • Interact positively with people • Anticipate consequences of own behavior • Overcome school phobia • Overcome social phobia • Enhance self-esteem • Improve study habits • Complete tasks • Prioritize tasks • Make decisions • Keep track of assignments • Stay focused on tasks • Plan and anticipate • Organize thoughts and materials • Follow-through and complete tasks • Increase scholastic accomplishment • Struggle less • Enjoy educational experience more • Develop accountability and responsibility more fully • Manage time more efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve organization • Sustain motivation • Plan and schedule practices more efficiently • Develop proactive behaviors • Practice goal setting and goal clarification more regularly • Balance academic and social • Increase self knowledge of learning style • Implement healthier wellness habits • Develop self discipline • Eliminate fear of failure • Develop success skills for coping with ADD and other learning differences • Continue personal and academic growth • Move out of "comfort zone" • Renew excitement and curiosity for learning • Cope with unstructured situations • Cope with changes in routine • Regulate emotions • Demonstrate readiness to do tasks • Organize thoughts and activities • Manage time • Manage materials • Do planning
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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

Executive Functioning Skills are the cognitive process that regulates an individual's ability to perform necessary, daily tasks, at home and in school. Impairment of executive function is seen

in a range of disorders, including some pervasive developmental disorders, learning disabilities, and nonverbal learning disabilities.

Educational Therapy works on developing your child's executive functioning skills so he will improve his ability to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cope with unstructured situations . • Cope with changes in routine . • Regulate emotions • Demonstrate readiness to do tasks • Organize thoughts and activities • Manage time • Manage materials • Do planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete tasks • Prioritize tasks • Make decisions • Keep track of assignments • Stay focused on tasks • Plan and anticipate • Organize thoughts and materials • Follow-through and complete tasks
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ATTENTION AND FOCUS

Attention is the ability to concentrate mentally by observing or listening, attend to details, organize oneself, possessions, and time. When attention is directed on a particular thing or task at hand it is called **Focus**. Concentrating involves **avoiding distractions** over a period of time.

It is not always easy to concentrate because distraction is a reality of life. Many things can take our time and attention away from the things we need or want to participate in.

There are many sights and sounds in the classroom that can cause a child to be distracted. The average person gets distracted six to ten times every minute. The student who has attention deficits gets distracted even more frequently. Attention deficits are the inability of a person to attend and focus over a period of time (concentrate). They make the student less available for learning. They also slow down his learning and impede his accuracy and precision when performing tasks.

Educational Therapy develops your child's attention and focusing skills. It does this by providing him with strategies he can use to help him concentrate on important information and learning tasks, despite distractions.

Once he can attend, focus, and concentrate, he will be able to access learning and perform better in academics. As a result his skills related to academics will improve, including those below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Posture • Readiness • Personal awareness • Focus on details • Phonemic awareness • Reading comprehension • Avoidance of distractions • Reading decoding • Performance of calculations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving • Writing words, sentences, or paragraphs • Transcribing words and numbers • Visual tracking • Forming letters and numbers • Spacing of letters and numbers • Following oral and written directions • Noticing and locating details • Performance of many other tasks
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COGNITIVE SKILLS

Cognitive skills include a wide variety of abilities. These abilities are necessary for analyzing sounds and images, recalling information, making associations between different pieces of information, and maintaining focus on a given task. Cognitive skills are essential tools for learning and solving problems. They include:

- Sensory Functioning .
- Processing and Performance
- Memory Skills
- Thinking Skills

Sensory Functioning

Sensory functioning is the ability to detect information correctly from the senses.

The senses a child uses to learn in the classroom are:

- visual (eyes)
- auditory (ears)
- tactile (hands)

A student takes in a single piece of information or a sequence of information, through anyone or all of his senses. The senses need to be working well in order for a student to learn or perform tasks. If a child has impairment in anyone of his sensory areas, he may need a device to enhance it, such as a hearing aid. Children with learning disabilities or autism have difficulties with sensory integration. Sensory integration is the involuntary process by which a person uses information from his senses to put together a picture of his environment in his brain at each moment in time. The brain must organize all of these sensations if a person is to adapt, move, learn, and behave normally.

Educational Therapy Works on developing, stimulating, enhancing, and integrating your child's sensory functioning skills. As a result he will increase his ability, speed, and accuracy with detecting information through his:

- Skin (touch)
- Eyes (visual images) .
- Ears (sounds)

Processing and Perception

Processing is the ability to move incoming stimuli quickly from the senses (seeing, hearing, or touching) to the specific part of the brain, which handles that particular job. The senses act as pathways to move information to the brain.

Once information moves to the brain, Perception takes place. Perception is the ability to respond appropriately to incoming stimuli. It involves identifying, differentiating, organizing, interpreting, and putting meaning to what one sees, hears, or feels.

Types of Processing and Perception involved in learning are:

- Visual
- Tactile
- Auditory

It is common for students with special needs to have difficulty in one or more areas of processing and perception. Moreover, it is especially common for a student with Special Needs to find activities that require auditory processing and perception, most challenging. That is why such a student may have learning difficulties in a traditional classroom setting, where much information is presented verbally rather than visually.

Educational Therapy works on developing your child's visual, auditory, and tactile Processing, and visual, auditory, and tactile Perception. As a result he will increase his ability, speed, and accuracy with:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing tasks • Handwriting skills • Recalling written information • Locating information • Copying written information • Detecting differences • Noticing similarities • Completing words and sentences with missing information • Visually tracking • Accessing and comprehending visual information • Answering inference questions • Understanding and applying verb tenses, plurals, etc. • Watching and listening • Listening and copying at the same time • Discriminating between different shapes, letters, and numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquiring, understanding, and using spoken language. • Sounding out words • Discriminating between sounds • Attending to auditory stimuli • Filling in the gaps when words are missing in conversations or text • Retaining or recalling auditory experiences or directions • Putting the correct letter with sound for spelling • Understanding auditory instruction • Comprehending and understanding with reading • Following instructions • Holding two or more concepts in relationship to each other • Identifying and verbalizing concepts • Classifying or categorizing concepts • Producing grammatically correct language
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Memory Skills

Memory is the mental capacity of storing, retaining and retrieving information taken in through the senses. Once information is processed and perceived it goes to Memory. How fast it gets there depends on processing speed. Information is stored to the memory the way in which it is perceived. If perception is not accurate, then memory will not be accurate. Part of the work done in educational therapy is to help the child unlearn any misperceived information and relearn it correctly. For instance, if a child perceived the spelling of a word incorrectly, then that incorrectly spelled word will be etched in his memory. In educational therapy he will unlearn the incorrect spelling. Then he will learn the correct spelling, so that he will store it correctly in his mind.

Educational Therapy works on developing all the areas of your child's memory. They are closely related to learning and academic performance. These areas include:

- **Working memory:** Storing, retaining, and accessing Information for current use
- **Short-term memory:** Storing, retaining, and accessing information for limited time
- **Long-term memory:** Storing, retaining, and accessing information for a long time
- **Auditory memory:** Through hearing
- **Visual memory:** Through seeing
- **Tactile memory:** Through touching

Thinking Skills

Thinking skills include thinking in ways to be able to comprehend information, form reasoned judgments and solve problems.

Educational Therapy works on developing your child's Thinking Skills, so he can perform tasks involving these different areas:

- deductive reasoning
- analytical thinking
- logical thinking
- evaluative thinking
- critical thinking .
- creative thinking

Motor Skills

Motor skills are a learned sequence of movements that combine to produce a smooth, efficient action in order to master a particular task. The development of motor skills occurs in the motor cortex of the brain. This is the region of the cerebral cortex that controls voluntary muscle groups.

Types of Motor Skills

Gross Motor

Refers to movements that involve large muscle groups and are generally more broad and energetic than fine motor movements. These may include walking, kicking, jumping, and climbing stairs. Children with neurological problems, developmental delays, or disabilities that affect movement may receive physical therapy to help with gross motor skills, or may need modifications or assistive technology to keep up with mobility or athletics in spite of these delays.

Fine Motor

Refers to movements that require a high degree of control and precision. These may include drawing shapes, writing, cutting with a scissors, putting puzzles together. Children with neurological problems, developmental delays may have difficulties with fine motor skills.

Graphomotor:

Skills specifically relating to the muscular movements used or required in writing. Educational Therapy works on building your child's motor skills in these areas:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving • Ability to assess and adapt to surroundings • Muscle-memory • Motor coordination • Motor-control • Motor-recall • Ability to make judgments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body awareness • Movement awareness • Spatial awareness • Ability to make predictions • Timing • Reaction to directions • Ability to write clearly and legibly
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If your child has a lot of difficulty with motor skills, he may require Physical Therapy,

Occupational Therapy, modifications and/or Assistive Technology, along with Educational Therapy.

Language Skills

Language skills are the child's ability to understand and use language. They involve the combining of cognitive skills of knowledge and understanding, with practice in language use, generally consisting of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Most activities in the classroom require the use of language skills.

Children who have Dyslexia, Learning Disabilities, Language Delays, Language Disabilities, and/or learning disabilities may have difficulty with reading, spelling, writing, and problem-solving in Math, because of undeveloped language skills.

If your child has a lot of difficulty with language skills, he may require Language Therapy, Speech Therapy, modifications and/or Assistive Technology, along with Educational Therapy.

Educational Therapy works on building your child's language skills, which improves his academics. It develops language skills in these areas:

Language Components:

- Sounds
- Word construction
- Vocabulary-building
- Word retrieval
- Language Rules
- Grammatical Rules
- Word Usage

Language Modalities:

Receptive Language Skills

- Listening
- Reading
- Listening with reading

Expressive Language Skills

- Speaking
- Writing
- Speaking with writing

Pragmatic Language Skills

- Listening with speaking
- Reading with writing

If your child has a lot of difficulty with language skills, he may require Language Therapy, along with Educational Therapy.

Results Attained with Educational Therapy

It is important for a child to continue with Educational Therapy on a regular basis. This will ensure that all of his educational needs are addressed. As a result, his skills will keep improving, and his learning difficulties will be resolved.

With Educational Therapy you can expect the following results for your child with special needs:

- Fast progress
- Dramatic results in all subject areas
- Significant improvement of grades
- Significant increase in confidence
- Significant increase in self-esteem
- Faster completion of work/homework
- Permanent results
- Treatment of underlying problems with learning (skill areas strengthened)
- Attainment of mastery skills in academics
- Elimination of learning disabilities
- Development of strong performance skills
- Reaching of highest potential
- Increased ability to master new academic information
- On grade level skills in all subject areas
- Strong possibility of skills exceeding grade level
- Closing of gaps in learning

CONCLUSION

John's academic difficulties were resolved when his mother took him for Educational Therapy. Soon, his skills reached grade level. He went from struggling to get C's to easily getting B's and A's. Soon after that, some of John's skills were above grade level. He was no longer struggling; in fact, his schoolwork was becoming easy for him. He even raised his hand to come up to the board in class.

How did that happen? It happened because the Educational Therapy evaluated and addressed all of John's underlying cognitive, attention, executive functioning, and social-emotional and

behavioral issues, in addition to his academic needs. When these skills were strengthened, they no longer interfered with John's learning. He was then able to achieve in school.

Learning disabilities do not need to prevent your special needs child from learning and performing to his potential. With educational therapy on a regular basis he will be able to develop mastery level skills and to achieve permanent academic success.

In my Educational Therapy practice I use all of the approaches mentioned in this article. As a result I see students with special needs, even those who face severe challenges, improve their academic abilities dramatically. Many students who attend sessions consistently, advance two or three grade levels in their ability to do reading, writing, and math, in just a short period of time. In addition, I often see the students who continue with Educational Therapy over time, develop skills that exceed their grade level!

Melissa Katz is an educational therapist located in New Hyde Park, NY. She has been in private practice over fifteen years. Her academy training includes Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Reading in addition to multi-sensory writing, skill-building, and multi-sensory math. She does reading therapy, educational therapy, teacher and parent training, conference presentation and consulting in Long Island and NYC.

She has created and uses The **TOP SMARTS** Approach for Educational Therapy, Melissa Katz ©2011 and The **Kinesthetic Way 2 Reading Mastery: A Multi-Sensory and Cognitive Reading Approach and Program**, Melissa Katz ©2011. Her other articles include: "Orton-Gillingham: From Dyslexia to Reading Mastery and Success in Math for the Child with ADHD."

If you are in NYC or Long Island NY and your child or someone you know is struggling with learning disabilities, MK Educational Therapy can provide intervention to meet all of his or her learning needs.

For more information

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