

Allied Health Media

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## **Hippotherapy: A Tool To Achieve Occupational Therapy Treatment Goals**

Promoting...visual perceptual and fine-motor skills..... sensory processing, emotional health, social skills, communication skills and overall learning



## **Learning Objectives**

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Describe the differences between equine assisted therapies, therapeutic riding and hippotherapy.
- Identify attributes that are required of a horse suitable for use in hippotherapy.
- Describe why and how occupational therapists use the horse as a treatment tool to improve bilateral coordination, functional hand skills and sensory processing.

## Horses...not hippos-

“Hippo” means horse in Greek



## Learning the Lingo

- Animal-Assisted Therapies (AAT)
  - Equine- Assisted Therapies (EAT)
    - Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP)
    - Therapeutic Riding (TR)
    - Hippotherapy (HPOT)

## Organizations

**Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.)**, formerly called

NARHA- North American Riding for the Handicapped Association

- Organization for therapeutic riding instructors

Some are be OT, PT or SLP

**•AHA- American Hippotherapy Association**

- Organization for registered therapists who do hippotherapy

All are OT, PT or SLP

## Hippotherapy

A physical, occupational and SLP treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement as part of an integrated intervention program to achieve functional outcomes. It is a medical treatment strategy that promotes neurophysiologic change.





## More Information

Website home page:

[http://  
www.barbarasmithoccupationaltherapist  
.com/](http://www.barbarasmithoccupationaltherapist.com/)

Other domain name to same page:

- RecyclingOT.com

Blogs:

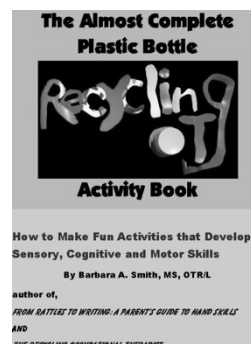
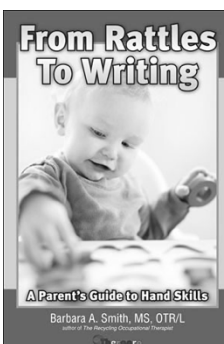
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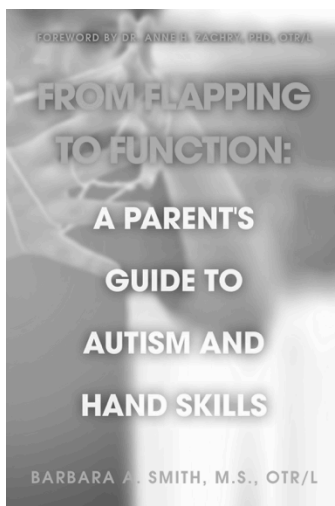


## A bit about me.....

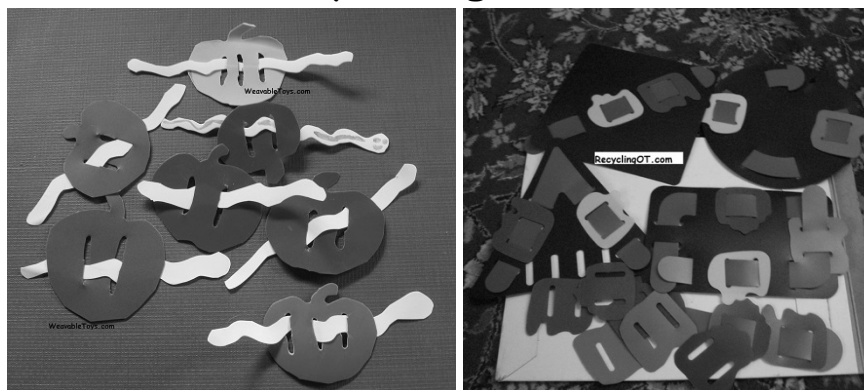
OT, author and presenter



## From Flapping to Function A Parent's Guide to Autism and Hand Skills



## Toy Designer.....



[WeavableToys.com](http://WeavableToys.com)

## Why Hippotherapy?

The horse provides:

- Multidimensional movement, which is variable, rhythmic and repetitive and similar to the human gait.

- Anterior/superior
- Lateral
- Rotation



## What is special about the horse's gait?

A horse walks a rate of 110-120 beats per minute, provides over 3,000 opportunities for a child to accommodate his or her pelvis during a 30 minute therapy session.



## Promoting Motor Skills

### Hippotherapy:

- Builds strength
- Develops balance
- Normalizes muscle tone
- Increases Range-Of-Motion



## Weight bearing

- On one or both sides



## Body Awareness and Engagement

- Right/left side coordination
- Motor planning-sequencing and rhythm
- Respiratory control
- Sensory integration
- Attention/focus
- Persistence at tasks
- Endurance



## OTs love also using the horse as a therapeutic tool to.....

promote:

- Visual perceptual skills
- Daily Living skills
- Eye-Hand coordination
- Decrease sensory defensiveness



## As well as .....

- Communication skills
- Social/emotional health
- Self-esteem



## Types of graded therapeutic sensory Input

- Varying positions while stationary, then moving (slow...fast)



## Prone/head inversion

- While stationary, then dynamic



## Prone activities

- Bilateral hand use and deep pressure input



## Prone activities

- shoulder, neck, oculomotor strengthening



## Positioning devices

To assist sitting, weight bearing on forearms or hands  
prone

- Boppy pillows
- Bolsters
- Cushions





## Fine motor activities

Video  
one



## Vary speeds to control sensory input

- Slow
- Fast trots
- Half halts  
go/stop/go



## Up and down movement

- Posting: feet are in stirrups
- During walk or trot
- Hands may or be supported on handle, horse or hold reins



## Heavy Pressure Tactile Stimulation

- Prone and supine for full body tactile input



## Full body Proprioceptive and Tactile Input

- On Forearms/hands
- Facing FW, SW, BW, prone and supine



## Vaulting is....

Vaulting-gymnastics on the horse  
Builds postural control/motor planning



## Assuming and Holding quadruped Positions

- Facing forwards or backwards
- Grasping handle assists



## From quadruped to kneeling

- working on postural control



## Activities while kneeling

- Giving high 5/ using toys



## Flexing hips and knees

- One leg flexed, other hanging



### Stand to squat sequences

- Balance, sequencing, bilateral coordination, strengthening, motor planning, following directions...



### FM Activities while Standing on a dynamic surface !

- Horse may stand or walk....



## Body awareness to Follow directions/ imitate

- Arms out like airplane
- Pat the mane
- Touch your toes



## Body awareness to Follow directions/ imitate

Weighted or vibrating objects to increase body awareness



## Simple reaching activities

### Develop:

- Body Awareness
- Postural Control
- Balance
- Grasp/release



## Reaching Activities

### Promote:

- CML
- Trunk rotation
- Eye-hand coordination
- Bilateral hand use





## Bilateral Reaching

### Sensory rings

- Socks or tights
- Plastic bags
- Vary size



## Sensory stimulation/hand Skills

### Video two



## Visual perceptual activities: Scanning, matching, puzzles

- Sequencing to pull reins/whoa/ puzzle



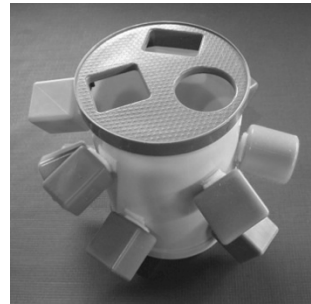
## Adding vibration to insertion activity

- Inserting objects into openings



## Pulling Velcro provides resistance sensory input

- Vibration is optional



## Variety of Sensory reinforcement

Video  
three



## Adapting for Hemiplegia

Handle to  
help  
stabilize  
work



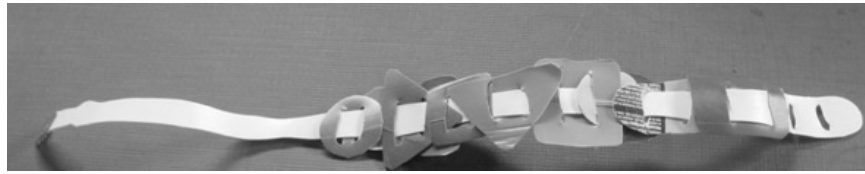
## Lacing boards and stringing

Enlarge for success



## Sequencing Shapes

Similar to buckling-grade with size and number of shapes “buckled” onto plastic strip.



## Manipulating fasteners

Opening  
Buckle,  
snaps  
Buttons,  
zipper



## Manipulating Clothing Fasteners

### ADLs



## Developing ADL Skills

- Hanging up straps, gait belt/tack
- Brushing horse



## Independence!!!

Go  
Stop  
Steering  
Mounting  
dismounting



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## The End

