

Adam*

Adam at 13 years old was experiencing learning and social challenges in school. In the history assessment phase, his father reports that he always lined up blocks of the same color in a straight line. As a child, Adam enjoyed walking in the park, being on the swing, and riding a low-to-the-ground tricycle, but systematically avoided jumping from high to low surfaces. He often needed physical contact and assistance when descending in any play activity. When Adam



started going to school, his teachers observed he could not keep still in his chair. Adam would walk around the classroom listlessly. When asked to sit in the chair he would shake his knee nervously. When asked to refrain from shaking his knee, Adam would start to slouch and eventually slide off his chair. His school-based Occupational Therapist has noted that he has poor bilateral motor coordination. Adam has lost popularity among his peers, because he constantly bumps into them and steps on their toes without meaning to. Adam was noted to yell “MOVE!!!” when he walked behind someone or someone walked in front of him. Adam talked incessantly without thought content and tugged or draped himself over his parent, because doing so fulfills the need for the vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation.

The Vestibular system works by perceiving the appropriate stimuli from the external environment. It is important for balance, coordination, and provides a sense of where our body is in space as well as muscle tone. Our body’s joints, muscles, skin, especially the joints of the vertebral column, the neck, the shoulders, the hips, and the knees, is a direct pathway to the vestibular system. When there are problems in processing the vestibular sensory input, disorganization occurs and is exhibited in the child’s behavior. The child may be labeled as “clumsy”, “lazy” and as a child who “refuses to grow up.”

At The Dan Center, Adam received a comprehensive assessment on his sensory channels, sensory defensiveness and sensory integration. Adam also received an individualized sensory diet of sensory integrative activities with focus on processing the sensation of his body movement and position in space to improve his distance and depth perception. An individualized listening program was likewise designed for Adam using the appropriate auditory training program to help him tune into the high frequencies of his own voice in order to bring it under his own awareness and control.

In 12-15 months, Adam showed consistent, regular improvement in behavior, volume awareness and modulation. He was no longer bumping into people or stepping on their toes. Reactive verbalizations of “MOVE!!!” when someone was in his path was greatly reduced. The teacher reported that Adam was no longer walking listlessly in the classroom, and was able to sit still and not fall off his chair.

Given the latency of auditory training with sensory integration at 15 years old, Adam continues to benefit from auditory training and well as Occupational Therapy with a sensory diet of sensory integrative activities in school, at home, and in the community.

*Name changed for privacy