

Case Study – 7 Year Old Girl with Dyspraxia

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Dyspraxia:

Symptoms can include being not adventurous, not crawling, running awkwardly, tripping over thin air, can't cope with noisy situations:

EEG Neurofeedback Training for Dyspraxia

Our daughter Laura was not diagnosed with dyspraxia until she was eleven. She had often puzzled us in infancy. She was not adventurous, didn't crawl, ran awkwardly, tripped over thin air, couldn't cope with noisy situations. However we received assurances from health professionals and so pressed on with bringing her up with her sister, younger by 19 months. There came a point however, in her eighth year, when her peculiarities could no longer be explained as those of any young child. Her peers in school began to notice that there were differences between her and them. The first signs of bullying appeared, and after our move to West Sussex this increased, along with verbal abuse. It was to continue, despite a change of primary school, for several years, and into secondary school.

After diagnosis, Laura received a lot of support from the high quality community child health team in Chichester, mainly in the form of counselling and coping strategies, particularly on the social side. We ourselves supplied educational support in the absence of anything very practical from the local authority or individual schools. What we desperately wanted of course was a treatment for her dyspraxia.

In the autumn of 1996 a local speech therapist suggested we contact Dr. Surinder Kaur, a psychologist using the latest techniques from America in EEG neurofeedback. The technique is non-invasive. In non-technical terms the patient is linked to a machine whilst looking at a computer monitor. The monitor shows a variety of puzzles and games. In order to make progress in the game, the patient must think in a certain way. This means that the activity of each of the three main brain waves must be proportionately enhanced or depressed. The machine to which the patient is linked measures this relative activity. If it is what is required, it allows the game to proceed; if the brain wave activity is not appropriate, it slows progress or stops the game altogether. In this way the different parts of the brain are trained to perform in a normal and effective way, and to link up with each other.

Dr. Kaur, although already treating a range of disorders and disabilities, was very keen to work with people with dyspraxia. We wanted to improve Laura's self-esteem and confidence so that she could develop rewarding social relationships, especially at school. We wanted to improve her concentration and attention particularly to enable her to cope better with the education process. We wanted to improve her self-organisation and perceptions, not least to lighten the load on her close and supportive family.

Laura's treatment, supported by the child health team and by her fundholding general practice, started in April 1997. ***She had two sessions a week for ten weeks.*** We set up some broad headings under which to score progress in accomplishing the objectives. From session to session we gave a score out of 10 for each heading. To derive a score,

we watched carefully between each session of treatment for any change in the following specifics:-

- how friendly she was with other people, and they with her
- her ability to assert herself
- her ability to retaliate to/cope with aggressive and bullying behaviour
- her ability to pick up signals from other people
- handwriting - precision and amount
- organising thoughts, planning, and feeling confident about the day ahead
- maths -finding them easier and getting more done in a fixed time
- self organisation for homework and tests
- degree of reliance on mum and sister
- clearer ideas, and expression of them
- tolerance of change in plans and arrangements
- number of queries about what was happening in the plots of TV programmes
- ability to find her way round town
- short term memory
- physical coordination

This was of course subjective, but we were careful not to let ourselves get carried away. ***The marks over the first 20 sessions showed a strong and steady upward trend.*** Laura was then reviewed by the local child psychologist and the GP. Impressed by the changes they saw in her, they agreed 15 more sessions. The trend continued until every score was 10 out of 10. The treatment had produced huge improvements in Laura. In 35 sessions her dyspraxia had been remediated. Our objectives achieved, we see today a very different Laura to the one we knew a year ago. She is focussed, organised, bright, witty, giggly and perceptive. Her schoolwork, particularly maths, is much better, and she is getting high marks.

These improvements are undoubtedly "sticking". She has recently started a new school and, at last on a level playing field with other children, is rapidly developing sound and fruitful social relationships. Indeed we feel that her intellect and personality are gaining full and free expression. Laura's brain has got better.

Dr Kaur is based at St. Albans.

Text written by Susan and Andrew E (Laura's parents) as sent to the Dyspraxia Association, Hitchin

Update December 21 1997

Dear Dr Kaur,

Just a note from me wishing you and your family happy Christmas, and new year. I'm really looking forward to the 25th, we've already got some presents under the tree, so I'm very excited.

I still go riding every Saturday and school is still going well academically and socially.

I hope to see you soon maybe.

Love from Laura



Dear Dr Kaur,

i'm writing to say hi, and to show you a photocopy of the awards I got this term at school. I've really enjoyed school since Westergate and i'm looking forward to Year 10.



I've been seeing a lot of friends from school recently, and friends who I've know since Primary.



I'm going to a friend's house now to sleep over, she's called Nonnid and she's 14 like me.



Her parents adopted her when she was six, when she lived in Thailand. She's a really good friend, and I'll hopefully be



seeing her later in the holiday's. I hope you have a good holiday, best wishes to and Nicky,

love from
Laura xx

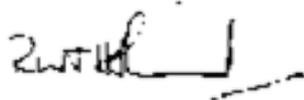


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Westergate Community
College*

*Highest Academic Achievement
in
English
Science
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1997/98

Laura



Headteacher

July 1998

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Headteacher

July 1998