

COOL KIDS PROGRAMME

For Secondary School Students

An exercise programme to enhance children's learning by improving co-ordination, motor development, organisational skills and concentration

FOREWORD

Cool Kids was developed by Joy High after years of experience as an occupational therapist working with children and giving advice to parents and teachers. Joy was approached by a number of primary schools to draw up a teacher-friendly exercise programme to support underachievers in school. Wolverhampton LEA supported the introduction of the programme in schools across the borough in 2003. The use of Cool Kids expanded from junior school underachievers to encompass nursery and reception classes, infants, junior and high school students. The programme has also been flexible enough to be used successfully in special schools and units.

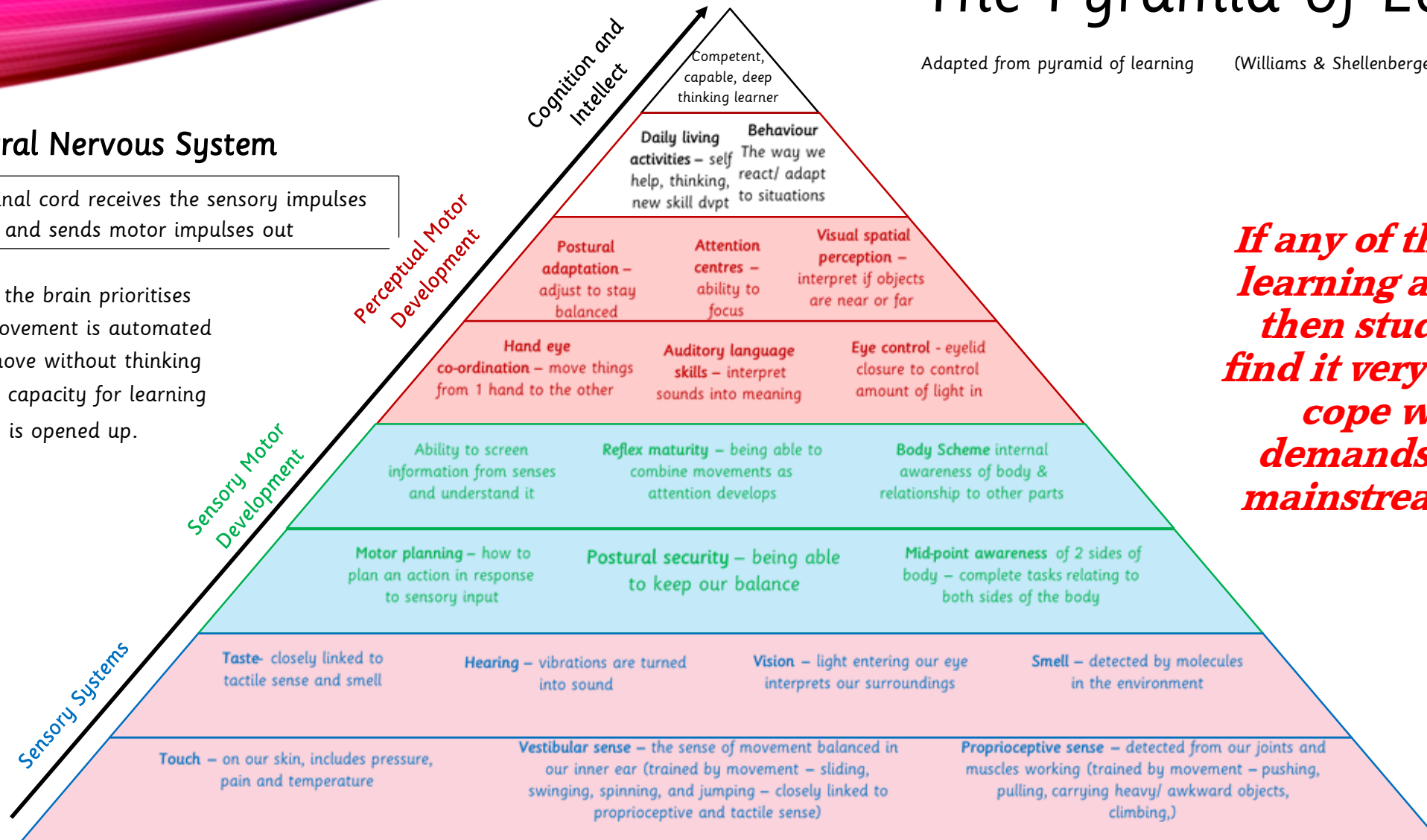
The Pyramid of Learning

Adapted from pyramid of learning (Williams & Shellenberger (1996))

Central Nervous System

The brain and spinal cord receives the sensory impulses interprets and sends motor impulses out

In the early years the brain prioritises movement. When movement is automated (so the child can move without thinking about it) the brains capacity for learning and thinking is opened up.



If any of the levels of learning are not met then students will find it very difficult to cope with the demands within a mainstream setting.

WHY COOL KIDS?

- We feel that sharing advice and principles quickly is more important than having to wait for referrals as this can be timely. The sooner intervention can be put in place, the better. The advantage of Cool Kids is that its there and ready to go straight away.
- Six components of fitness related to motor skills were identified: **1.** Agility **2.** Balance **3.** Co ordination **4.** Spatial Awareness **5.** Cardio **6.** Core. We felt that these skills underpin the new programme.
- Sensory processing friendly approach – Secondary schools are often challenging environments for young people. There can be pressure on staff that means they don't have time to think about these issues, Reduced TA's may also cause difficulties in who delivers the programme
- Chill and chat – enables students to bond and build rapport prior to introducing physical activity.
- Changing staff perceptions – how do we identify students? Staff consultation? Assessment document? Tick list? Behaviours to look for? Students just labelled 'naughty' or 'disruptive'.
- Training needs – enable staff to connect to fine and gross motor skills – handwriting, swinging on chairs, performing in team games.

THE PROGRAMME IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES

- **Body awareness**
- **Developmental sequences to put the foundations of movement into place**
- **Praxis** – The ability to create a plan for how to interact with the environment, to carry out the plan and correct the plan as appropriate to achieve the desired outcome.
- **Proprioception** – In muscles, joints and connective tissues there are receptors called proprioceptors. They provide the brain with information related to the position of limbs, the position of the body in space, the contraction and stretch of muscles, and the force and effort required within an activity.
- **Bilateral and sequencing** – bilateral activities involve both sides of the body and both sides of the brain. You need good bilateral integration for everyday tasks.
- **Modulation**

The programme works on the foundations of gross motor development which under lies and under pins fine motor development and the ability to pay attention. It offers the opportunities for the under achievers to practice foundation skills before they take part in exercise programmes with the rest of the school

COOL KIDS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

- **Introductory notes**

- Please use these notes as lesson plans. They form a structured course which takes the students through the stages of development. Do not be afraid to repeat activities from previous sessions.
- Please do not underestimate the assessment. Schools who do the assessments are able to see student's progress and this re-iterates the importance of this routine.
- Lots of schools use music for their Cool Kids sessions and find it helps the students with their sense of timing and hence co-ordination. Music can also help to keep sessions fun thereby holding students attention for longer.
- Relaxation is easily skipped through to move the students on to their next lesson. Please give them time to relax fully. Lots of students need relaxation strategies to help them when they get stressed or cross, to help them to calm themselves down. Many schools use relaxing music for this part of the session.
- Please feel free to contact the Gem Centre if you need any more ideas, support, training or more Cool Kids information for Schools. Email Rosalind.Roscoe@nhs.net or sue.nelson2@nhs.net.
- Or for additional secondary Cool Kids information contact Lindsay Watson via email LWatson@lawnswoodcampus.co.uk or Helen O'Brien-Coleman via email ho@theroyal.school.

INTRODUCTION

- Before the programme is due to start ensure you have parental consent (use example letter provided) and you have spoke to students that have been identified to participate in the programme
- Student, parental and class teacher assessment sheets
- SESSION 1 – Assessment (Scoring system sheet, assessment sheet and key skills assessment)
- Plans 1 – 6 to follow after initial assessment
- SI Extra Programme – Boxercise
- Plans A –M – can follow each plan or choose a plan depending on area of need

IMPORTANT!!! LEARN TO LAUGH

This builds resilience in later life. Having fun is key to the whole programme!!

SESSION ONE - ASSESSMENT[®]

- **Assess the students:**

- If permission and able to 'Consider recording the assessment process as the best way to record the baseline and to look at future change.
- It may be easier to have a small number of students each day to get a good picture of their ability and behaviour (No more than 10/12 students)
- 15 to 30 minutes a session is ideal. First thing in the morning is always best.
- A need for continuity (ensure students are aware of days, times etc)
- All students to complete the Cool Kids assessment sheet which aims to test students key skills. This can be completed over time or during the practical activity sessions with another member of staff.
- Complete movement assessment sheet (use the Cool Kids scoring system to support your judgement), note how they move and give them a mark out of 5 and make notes on whether they move easily, need to watch others before moving, asymmetry, arousal levels (having fun or wildly excited?), ability to sort out the space needed for a task and how well they follow instructions.
- Assessment activities include rolling, commando crawling, reverse crawling, holding the stork position, jumping, reverse jumping, hopping, crab crawling, and relaxation.

SI EXTRA

The main treatment approach for sensory processing and motor planning is activity... and lots of it!

- For younger children, who present with these difficulties, providing a variety of play opportunities is pretty easy. However, older children are more difficult to engage in activity as they are more limited as they get older they are no longer interested in playing over the park or going to soft play areas, playing on swings etc.
- Children who have sensory processing and or motor planning difficulties often tend to avoid activity especially at school due to low self-esteem, fear of failing and embarrassment. This indeed will not be helping their sensory and motor development and will inevitably continue to struggle later on in life which may impact their ability to learn to drive, complete work related tasks and so on.
- SI Extra is a fantastic activity which is age appropriate and current. It requires concentration and listening, motor planning and sequencing, proprioceptive awareness, perception, vestibular feedback, balance, coordination, multi-tasking, physical fitness and stamina.
- By using an age appropriate activity graded for therapeutic benefit that is fun and feeds the sensory system in a safe and comfortable environment we can increase confidence and motivation to continue with similar activities.

PROGRESSION

- After 4 -5 wks of students following the programme reassess the students. Follow similar format to that of session one, the initial assessment, to gauge improvement in students. Some schools have also asked the parents, children and class teachers if they have noticed any changes since the start of the programme (use assessments sheets).
- **Any sessions after the re-assessment can be student led.**
- Encourage the students to choose their favourite activities, remember to use music.
- Allow plenty of practice for any activity that they still find challenging
- Work through the development of skipping and ball catching/throwing
- Include any games that students enjoy or that you know would help them develop their motor skills.

Cool Kids Games and Activities

Whilst assessing the students it is important to play lots of games so the group can get to know each other and the staff can establish a relationship with the group.

Games include: hand to eye co-ordination ball games, alphabet arms, times tables in turns, ball games, dances like hokey cokey, cha cha slide, YMCA. You can tailor individual or groups activities towards their abilities and varying equipment throughout the programme.

Parachute games are especially good students can play Simon says, place swap, cat and mouse, passing balls around the edge of the parachute clockwise/anticlockwise.

Introduce relaxation at the start of the week starting with lying still for 1 minute completely flat on the floor and gradually progressing to 5 minutes relaxation of lying completely still.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

All students are monitored for academic progress. The best way to show the change made by students doing the Cool Kids programme by using these standard measures of development in comparing children on the Cool Kids programme with their peers who are not on the programme. Teachers are asked to predict the progress that a specific student may make in their academic year. This prediction could be compared to actual progress to see if the Cool Kids programme has had an impact.

Any of the above must take into account other initiatives within the school that may have had an impact on the academic development of the children.

There will be value in separating results of children with motor difficulties from those who purely behavioural difficulties

• BEHAVIOURAL ASSESSMENT

Change could be identified by means of:

- Feedback from staff, parents and the students
- Informal recording of behaviour

Consider offering the programme to students with communication difficulties

LISTENING AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Some students may have difficulties with listening and language developments

This may be due to difficulties with arousal levels and concentration or language difficulties.

The student may have difficulty understanding instructions or may take a while to process information

Activities to improve listening and language skills

- Multi sensory learning opportunities are implicit in movement sessions. While the student is moving – he/she is receiving **proprioception**, **tactile** (through touch and experience of texture, temperature, shape and weight) and **vestibular input** (if not meaningful to their brains they may resist movement and avoid certain activities). This is good time for auditory and visual learning to occur.
- Make use of opportunities for encouraging listening and speeding up reactions to commands.

GENERAL RULES FOR COOL KIDS SESSIONS

- Encourage plenty of big free movements: movement that offers heavy work
- Use a general movement activity at the beginning of the session
- Don't worry too much at first about students knowing their left from right
- Encourage students to experiment with movement without criticism and not too much competition with others
- Don't spend too much time correcting the students – about developing their skills
- Trust students to know what they need. Help them to add their ideas into the exercise programme
- Use the opportunities to developing listening and other language skills
- Use the programme as a guide, but tailor it to your group
- Don't hurry through the programme
- Try to listen to your particular group of students. They can set the pace to suit themselves
- **REMEMBER THERE ARE NO FIXED RULES:** experiment and share your problems
- Use music
- Develop your own names for the games
- Students and staff should have fun!!

SENSORY TOOL KIT / SENSORY SNACK BOX

- Stilts
- cup and ball
- skipping ropes
- large exercise bands
- beach balls
- pogo sticks / ankle skips
- various balls (sizes, colour, shape, textures)
- space hoppers
- exercise balls
- wobble cushion/discs
- hula hoops
- Tunnels
- Blind Folds
- Parachute
- feathers
- quoits
- rope
- play dough
- egg timers
- balance boards
- stepping stones/coloured spots
- bean bags
- agility ladders
- spinning plates

COOL KIDS GAMES¹⁶

- boot camp style exercises
- circuits
- playground games (bull dog, Mr wolf, hopscotch)
- video game
- party games
- mirror image work
- Simon says
- throwing and catching games
- parachute games
- , hand eye coordination
- relaxation and mindfulness, skipping games
- no hands stand up
- Zumba
- dance sacks
- crab football,
- games from the cube (balls into or out of a bucket, electric buzzer game)
- memory game (equipment – tray with small items on),
- Kung Fu punctuation
- go noodle
- cosmic kids games that involve students getting into order (shoe sizes, DOB etc)

SUGGESTED MUSIC

- Cha cha slide
- Hokey cokey
- YMCA
- 'oops upside your head'
- Superman
- Agadoo
- Gangnam style
- The ketchup song
- Lets all do the conga
- Wig wam bam
- Y Viva Espana
- The locomotion
- I am the music man!
- Simon says
- The birdie song
- Let's twist again
- Baby shark
- Floss dance

USEFUL MATERIALS

- Primary Cool Kids Programme
- Sensory Circuits
- Fine motor skills programme
- Visual perception skills
- Cool Characters programme
- Sensory ladders