



Qigong Sensory Training: An Overview for Parents

Why Use Qigong Massage for Children with Autism?

With the current openness in the West to treatments used in the East, and in search of gentle, non-invasive treatment approaches for young children with autism, we asked the question, "What does Chinese Medicine have to offer for sensory impairment and autism?" This led us to begin researching an intervention for sensory impairment from a branch of Chinese Medicine known as Qigong (pronounced "chee-gong") massage.

What is Qigong Massage?

In China, Qigong massage has been used for over 3000 years to treat medical conditions and improve health. Chinese medicine, including acupuncture and massage, is based on an understanding of the body that is quite different from that in the West. Both illness and health are understood in terms of the flow of energy or "qi" through the network of energy channels (meridians) in our body. Over the millennia, effective treatment of illness has been developed using this energetic model and Westerners are often surprised to learn that in China, a wide variety of children's illnesses, ranging from constipation to asthma, are treated non-invasively with massage.

Qigong massage is different from ordinary massage in that it is based on understanding the channels and points and the flow of energy through them. The parent component of the Qigong massage intervention is very important as parent

touch is considered by Chinese Medicine to be the most nurturing for the child by virtue of the parent-child bond.

Chinese Medicine and Autism

Children with autism suffer severe developmental delays, problem behaviors and often have sensory problems. In varying degrees they lack the ability to learn. Natural learning occurs, in part, as a result of children being aware of their surrounding and imitating behaviors.

Children with autism are often unaware of their environment and have difficulty learning. Chinese medicine believes that autism is caused by a blockage in the sensory channels so that the child is not able to properly take in information about the world around them.

Can Qigong Massage Help?

The goal of Qigong Sensory Training therapy is to clear the blocks to the senses so that children with autism become more aware and begin to learn. Preliminary studies have shown that qigong massage:

- Decreases sensory, sleep and digestive problems
- Increases living skills such as toilet training and teeth brushing
- Decreases autistic behaviors
- Increases social skills and language

For More Information

Visit Qigong Sensory Training Institute's website at www.qsti.org or send an e-mail to info@qsti.org.