



The Connection Between Primitive Reflexes & my Students



Primitive reflexes are reflexes that are present during the earliest stages of life and aid in birth and survival, such as grasping and sucking. These reflexes help to connect various areas of the brain together that are vital in developing learning, behavioural, and communication skills later on. Once the brain grows in complexity, these reflexes are overridden and no longer present. Increasingly, children are retaining these reflexes, which severely impacts physical and emotional development. If the reflexes are retained, some of the most basic building blocks in the brain are not properly formed which leads to an imbalanced or an underdeveloped brain.

That's not the end of the story...

When your students go through the Primitive Reflex course, it takes them to step-by-step through specific and slow movements to re-mediate these reflexes. By repeating these movements, the brain rewires, and the unnecessary reflexes become dampened. This leads to the next progression of postural reflexes that are very important for learning. These affect how students move, how they experience their environment, and their capacity to sit upright while listening, reading, or writing. For example, students who are slumped over when trying to write, or who appear to have a weaker posture and core; may benefit from this course.



Below are some of the most common primitive reflexes and some of their possible associated characteristics:

Moro Reflex

This reflex is the earliest form of the “fight or flight” reflex, an involuntary reaction to threat that occurs when a baby is frightened or startled. When the Moro reflex is activated, a baby will throw their head back, extend their arms and legs out, and cry. When retained, it may lead to the following:

- Vestibular related problems such as poor balance and coordination
- Physical timidity
- Oculomotor and visual-perceptual problems
- Hypersensitivity to sudden noise, light or movement
- Poor stamina
- Dislike of change or surprise – poor adaptability
- Anxiety, especially anticipation anxiety
- Tense muscle tone
- Emotional and social immaturity

Palmar Reflex

This reflex allows a baby to grasp. When retained it can lead to the following:

- Poor fine motor skills and awkward use of hands
- Incorrect pencil grip and poor handwriting
- Poor posture when using hands
- Speech difficulties; the use of hands and movements with the mouth are connected
- Difficulty spelling or writing
- Child may make movements with the mouth when trying to write or draw



Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex

This reflex is demonstrated when a newborn turns its head to one side and the arm and leg on that side straighten. When this reflex is retained it can lead to the following:

- Poor balance
- Poor hand-eye coordination
- Difficulty crossing the midline
- Abnormal movement patterns when walking, marching, skipping, etc.
- Poor handwriting and expression of ideas on paper
- Difficulties with visual perception
- Poor visual tracking, leading to difficulties reading

Tonic Labyrinthine Reflex

This reflex involves the vestibular system – your main source of managing your balance and where you are in space. It is also closely connected to how your eyes move. When retained, this may lead to the following:

- Poor balance
- Poor hand-eye coordination
- Difficulty crossing the midline
- Abnormal movement patterns when walking, marching, skipping, etc.
- Poor handwriting and expression of ideas on paper
- Difficulties with visual perception
- Poor visual tracking, leading to difficulties reading

Symmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex

This reflex forms a bridge to creeping and crawling on hands and knees. When this reflex is retained, it may lead to the following:

- Poor posture
- Difficulty changing focus when shifting from blackboard to desk; eyes fatigue quickly
- A tendency to slump when sitting
- Slowness at copying tasks
- Attention difficulties