

Behavioral Resources And Institute for Neuropsychological Services

the BRAINS Express

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- The Advertisers presented throughout this issue have generously supported children and families in Michigan by providing support to the BRAINS Foundation.

Edited by: Rochelle Manor, PhD & Michael Wolff, PsyD



**Rene' Manker
Physical Therapist
& Anat Baniel
Method
Practitioner**

My favorite part of my job is hearing what parents describe as “little miracles” or changes they have noted after they began the Anat Baniel Method of Feldenkrais Therapy (ABM) work. There are so many, but I have selected a few to represent a variety of diagnoses:

“ My son looked at me for the first time, when I said good morning to him.” ~ parent of a 4 year old with autism.

“The spasticity in his calves has all but disappeared! We used to have to massage his calves everyday.”
~ parent of a 4 year-old with cerebral palsy.

“My daughter opened her Christmas presents for the first time.”~ parent of a 13 year-old with cerebral palsy.

“It really takes the edge off of my anxiety.”~ an 18 year-old with Asperger’s.

“My son is experimenting with new movements and positions, and is beginning to imitate words and develop a sense of humor and mischief.”~ parent of a 5 year-old with multiple impairments

“It is unusual to see him sit in one place, let alone lie on the table for 45 minutes!”~ parent of a child with ADHD.

I am excited to bring ABM to West Michigan. I have spent the last 3 years studying the Anat Baniel Method (ABM) and have developed a passion for the work. I have seen children of all ages make remarkable changes. While I do work with adults, my primary focus is with children. What I love about ABM is that it feels good, and gets better and faster outcomes than most other approaches I have used over my 25 years as a Physical Therapist.

It can be effective with everyone from infants to the elderly to improve function, movement, balance, posture, coordination, kinesthetic awareness and proprioception, as well as decrease pain. It is also used with high performers such as Olympic athletes and musicians. ABM is based on the pioneering work of Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais, Anat Baniel’s teacher, mentor and colleague.



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What is the Anat Baniel Method?

This method is supported by 30-years of research on neuroplasticity in the brain by neuroscientists such as Dr. Michael Merzenich. In this work, we create conditions for the brain to generate new neural connections and pathways. Through gentle movement and the readiness of the brain to sense them, we help the child become aware of how one body part can move in relation to another.

We work in positions that are easy and feel safe for the child so that his brain is available for learning. For example, we may simulate standing by having the child experience her feet in as many ways possible without being upright on them. At the same time, we work with the pelvis, spine, ribcage and head so that the feet and ankles feel connected to the rest of the body.

This experience helps to remap the image of the body in the brain allowing them to build new ways to be comfortable with movement almost immediately. The child's has new self-reference. When they senses themselves better, they can relate to

the rest of the world more purposefully. And as the brain reorganizes itself in relation to the new low intensity information it is perceiving, other parts of the brain are activated, resulting in changes in overall development.

Who Can Benefit from the Anat Baniel Method?

Some of the many conditions that can be helped with the Anat Baniel Method include: Cerebral Palsy, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Genetic Disorders, Developmental Delays, ADD and Learning Disabilities, Scoliosis, and Sensory Processing Disorders.

In general, the children love this approach to learning. I have seen amazing changes in infants to adults using ABM whether they exhibit mild or major delays in development. Some of the benefits one can expect to see are:

- Calmness with improved mood
- Better sleep
- Increased alertness & awareness of their surroundings

Functional changes that have been seen as children continue the work include:

- More effortless movements, better range of motion
- Better balance

- Improved ability to move, crawl, walk, run, jump, grasp, reach
- Greater problem-solving skills
- Improved speech

How ABM Works:

The Anat Baniel Method (ABM) uses an awareness based educational/healing model in working with children and adults. This work is based on the brain's remarkable capacity to learn and re-organize itself. A healthy newborn's brain does what it is designed to do- make sense out of the nonsense and to create order in the disorder presented to it. We begin to understand and organize our world as

babies through our sensory and motor experiences accessed through millions of random movements. It is through these spontaneous actions that a baby learns how to relate to things like-**gravity**.

Movement is a sort of "universal language."

The baby's brain maps the movement experiences that are felt. Essentially,



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we “learn our experiences” and if not progressing because of a trauma, malformation, brain injury, or congenital disorder, then key sensory motor skills are poorly integrated, resulting in overall disorganization.

When a child has a condition such as cerebral palsy, autism, or a genetic disorder, their brain still has to find a way to re-create connections. Many well intended therapists often focus on a child’s limitations and try to get them to do what they should be doing based on developmental stage or age. A child in this situation is learning what it is they **cannot** do. For example, if a child cannot get to sitting, then they are not ready to sit yet, but they can learn the components of sitting in other positions.



With the ABM, a child is never forced or placed into a position. The method does not rely on adaptive or mechanical devices that limit movement. Rather than focus on the limitations and try to directly fix the problem on a muscular, skeletal, or joint level, ABM calls upon the center of all learning – the brain.

Through gentle movement and touch, the brain is engaged and learning occurs, hence each session is called a “movement lesson.” As such, learning is organic and lasting instead of reliant upon adaptive or mechanical devices. The method allows children to achieve their fullest potential rather than impose on their neurological system something it has not yet learned.

I find that many children, such as those with sensory and/or motor issues, ADHD, dyspraxia, Asperger’s, and or learning disabilities have anxiety because of how they perceive the world a little differently than their peers. They are often caught in a state of “fight or flight.” This work can help them reorganize themselves in relation to the gravitational field, helping them sense themselves more accurately. It offers them the opportunity to perceive a different state of calmness, allowing their brain to choose where it wants to live. The brain learns from perceiving differences.

Is Treatment Covered by Insurance?

Sometimes. It depends on the diagnosis, insurance carrier, and medical necessity. Insurance may or may not cover some of the cost of treatment if the practitioner is also a Physical Therapist. Please call B.R.A.I.N.S. with questions. A prescription from the physician for Physical Therapy may be required.

Anat Baniel is coming to Kalamazoo to present a 2-day workshop on working with children November 13 and 14, 2010. Visit www.Geibmovementandwellness.com, click on upcoming events.

For More Information regarding the Anat Baniel Method:

Baniel, A. 2009. *Move Into Life*. New York: Harmony Books.

Doidge, N. 2007. *The Brain That Changes Itself*. New York: Viking.

Feldenkrais, M. 1990. *Awareness Through Movement*. New York: Harper-Collins.

www.anatbanielmethod.com ~Click on You-Tube to view Keri Fleury, from Holland speaking about her son, Logan’s, success with ABM.
www.onthebrain.com



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BRAINS HOSTED FREE CHILDREN'S CLINIC

May 1st, 2010 was a busy day at BRAINS! Eight certified Anat Baniel Method (SM) practitioners from all over Michigan, and one from Ohio, gathered together to introduce the work of the Anat Baniel Method (SM) of Feldenkrais Therapy for their special needs child free of charge.



Approximately 30 children, ages 1-15 years old, were seen throughout the day. The energy in the room was awesome! Each child was able to experience this cutting edge gentle hands-on approach.

The following Mastery Trained Practitioners for Children volunteered their time, enthusiasm, and talents: Suellen Bartel from Bay City, Ray Burns from Saginaw, Matt Evans and Deena Weisberg from South-

Charley's

1600 E. Beltline Ave. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

field, Amy and Carl Geib from Kalamazoo, Jon Martinez from Antwerp Ohio, and Rene' Manker from Grand Rapids.

For more information on this method contact Rene' Manker at B.R.A.I.N.S. at 365-3385 or go to: www.anatbanielmethod.com



Using the Summer Wisely:

**Rochelle Manor,
PhD**

Warm temperatures, sunshine, summer vacation, the end of the school year is exciting for most. But if your child struggled and is ending this school year with poor grades, is facing summer school, retention, or special placement, this summer is an excellent time to figure out how to make next school year better.

Often, children suffer from attention, learning, or other struggles for years before the challenges are identified. While some children are able to compensate with hard work gets them through early elementary, the intensity of the work in late elementary, middle, or high school finally catches up.

- *It's a battle to get him to do his homework.*
- *She melts down every time she has to write.*
- *My child lies about having homework, just to avoid doing it.*

- *She seems to know the material when I ask her, but then fails tests.*
- *The teacher said he's capable, but is just lazy.*

ADHD, learning or mood disorders, and other problems are not always recognized by teachers, parents or others, until there is a behavioral problem or your child grades drop.

Parents/others can help to understand what is causing the struggle(s). Neuropsychological, Psychological, or Learning Disability evaluations offer a unique way of measuring a child's attention, auditory, visual, and learning skills. Sometimes, a formal diagnosis of ADD, Mood Disorder like depression or anxiety, or a Learning Disability is identified, but more importantly, we can help you understand the types of strategies that will be most effective.



Summer is a great time for relaxing at the pool or beach, but also use the time wisely to prepare for ways to help over the summer and to try to ensure the next school year will start on a better track.

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Social Thinking- Being a Part of the Group!

Melissa Baehre,
CCC-SLP

At lunchtime, Adam is talking excitedly about his birthday, but no one is listening! The other children are talking to neighbors. No one had any idea that Adam was talking, and he didn't notice they weren't listening.

At recess, a group of children were planning their roles for a game of make-believe superheroes. Sarah approached the group and began telling the kids about her mom's new job. The kids looked at her and ran off to play. Sarah wasn't included.

This group will focus on how to be a part of a group. Students will learn to differentiate between expected and unexpected peer behaviors, the effects they have on others, using their eyes to determine what others are seeing and thinking, and to use body language to communicate.

Social Thinking-Let's Talk! Group 2

Nolan had a great weekend and couldn't wait to share the news at school. During snack time, Nolan asked Danny about his weekend, but before he could answer, he filled Danny in about his soccer game. Nolan described how cold and rainy it was outside and how the field was all muddy. Nolan didn't fall this

time, but once last year, he was playing a game in the mud and everyone was covered! He hoped to be able to go the pool or beach this summer. Nolan never did find out how Danny's weekend went.

This group is for children who understand how to be a part of a group, and are ready to work on how to start and sustain a conversation as a basis for developing relationships. Students will learn ideas for beginning a conversation, how to ask questions to show interest in others, how to handle interruptions and avoid making them and how to remember what they learn about others.

Please call if you are interested, we are in the process of determining how many groups to establish and what ages will be involved. Optimally, 3-4 students will be in each group. The plan is to offer the groups over 6-weeks July 21st through August 25th in preparation for returning to school



Play With A Purpose

Carrie Zinser, LMSW

Early Childhood Specialist

Is your toddler or preschooler:

- Having frequent "meltdowns"
- Difficult to console
- Hard to understand
- Always on the go

Play With A Purpose uses play to teach self-awareness, self-control and

communication skills within a small group context. Classes will be held on Friday's from June 18-August 13 (No class on July 2)
9:00-10:00a Ages 2-3
10:15-10:30a Ages 4-6

Friendship Group

Does your 6-8 year old have difficulty with:

- Interacting and getting along with peers
- Conversational turn-taking
- Reading non-verbal cues
- Problem solving in a social situation

Friendship Group uses a small group format to identify and practice basic social and communication skills. Classes will be held on Tuesday's

The minimum number of participants is three with a maximum of four to ensure more specialized intervention
1:00-2:00p Girls Group
2:30-3:30p Boys Group
\$35 per session



Social Group for Girls

Katherine Bennett,
Ph.D.

Focus on self-esteem, friendships, family relationships, body image, boys, school, moods/thoughts/feelings, texting, etc.

Ages 11-16

Tuesdays 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

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Additional Groups

Call for more details or to reserve a place in one of our groups!
616-365-8920

Autism Spectrum Disorder Parent Support Group—Free

2nd Saturday of Every Month

Adolescents to Adults 10a-12:00p

Younger Children 11a-12:00p

Social Awareness Group A & B

Adolescent to Young Adult Males

Tuesday Nights 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Tom Denczek, LMSW

Social Awareness Group

Ages 12-14

Thursdays 5:00 PM—6:00 PM

Brad Bridges, LMSW

unique international publication that represents a new genre in the field of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). As the one and only MA-GAJOURNAL®, *ASQ*'s mission is to serve as the information leader and bridge between the research and general autism communities. Its aim is to bring its readers the high-interest articles they want AND the reader-friendly, cutting-edge science news they need. With its well-respected and extraordinarily knowledgeable editors and its world-renowned advisory board, *ASQ* is your one-stop, gold-standard resource to keep family members, professionals, and people on the spectrum up-to-date and on the same page!

<http://www.asquarterly.com/>

Art and Design of Ferris State University in 2009 and 2010. Kendall Youth Continuing Studies program is one of the largest in the area, serving around 1500 youth and offering more than 300 classes and day camps annually. Come to this reception to learn more about the program or just to meet some of the artists and instructors!

Call Brenda Sipe, 616.451.2787, ext. 1139 for more information about any of the classes or day camps.



Liane Holliday Willey, Ed.D.

Shonda Schilling, author of the *The Best Kind of Different*, and wife of retired pitching star, Curt Schilling, speaks candidly about her family's journey with Asperger syndrome and how she was able to reconcile the public drama of the 2007 Red Sox World Series victory with the private drama of her son's diagnosis in the current edition of *Autism Spectrum Quarterly*, an outstanding and highly



Kendall College Art Reception at BRAINS:

Art reception July 14, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Works exhibited are created by artists between the ages of 6 and 17 who are part of the youth summer program at Kendall College of

Summer Programs at EnCourage Institute

June 21 - July 30 (6 weeks) and August 2 - 26 (4 weeks)
at both EnCourage Locations

- **Reading, Writing and Math Clinics** for K-12 graders; all abilities
- **Specialized Tutoring / Educational Therapy** (individualized)
- **High School Credit Recovery** (starts June 7 or TBA) - work with certified teachers to (re)learn high school class content
- **Back to School Session** (August 2-26) Reading, Writing, Math review - start the school year ready to learn

also offering year-round: **The P.L.A.Y Project®**
(early autism intervention)

*EnCourage Institute is a Licensed Agency for



Two Locations:

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Main Clinic:
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Suite D
Grandville, MI 49418

EnCourage Institute's
Learning Center at BRAINS
3351 Eagle Run Dr. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

(616) 530-2224

For more information visit: www.encourageinstitute.com