

# Superbrain Yoga Pilot Study – Phoenix, Northern New Jersey

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On October 3rd 2005, together with Raina Koterba, OTR/L, we started a Superbrain Yoga pilot study for children at the Phoenix Center in northern New Jersey. The group is composed of nine severely autistic children, ranging between the ages of 14 and 16. The *Sensory Profile*, a standardized test measuring the proper integration, regulation, and modulation of each of the sensory systems, was administered to each of the children and will be tested again in June. These children have a variety of issues, including minimal communication, self-abusive behaviors, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, hyperactivity, inattention and cognitive delays. They do the Superbrain Yoga almost everyday, depending on the erratic state of the classroom. The children complete the exercise for a total of 21 times a day, one session only. Secondary to the cognitive and emotional level of the students, most required hand-to-hand manual guidance. After three weeks the majority of the students were now able to complete the Superbrain Yoga with minimal assistance from the therapist and teacher, some however still have difficulties.

The preliminary findings at the Phoenix Center are quite astounding in relation to the progress of a severely autistic child.

They are as follows:

## THE FIRST WEEK:

- Children who are displaying severe hyperactivity (unable to keep feet or hands still for longer than 15 seconds), are calm for 15 to 20 minutes following the exercise with minimal extraneous movements. They appear calm, focused and can attend to work.
- Children who are consistently yelling or engaging in vocalizations (approximately one every 2-5 minutes), are quiet for about 20 minutes with minimal vocalizations. They also appear very calm, focused and ready to attend to the task at hand.

## THE SECOND TO THIRD WEEK:

- Sensory input (extreme vestibular and proprioception) seem to have little effect on some of these children, however, after engaging in the Superbrain Yoga, the children are able to register the sensory input in a more appropriate manner.

- The teacher has observed, that when they are able to engage in the Superbrain Yoga in the morning (approximately 9:30), the children are calmer and quieter during their daily activities. The effects seem to wear off by lunch (11:45). It has been recommended by the therapist to engage in the exercise a second time, however this has not taken place yet.

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