



What To Expect

CHANGES & TIMELINES

Parents and patients always ask, “What changes can we expect — and when?”

Of course, it’s hard to make accurate predictions. However, our team often sees a consistent progression of changes. There are **three major types of changes** we observe. It’s critical that parents know what to expect, because:

- Early changes may seem subtle — or may be missed.
- Other changes may not seem positive but actually are, and you should be aware before they happen.
- Some of the changes may bring about additional challenges, even when they are positive in nature, for both parents and teachers/therapists. Knowing about and explaining these changes may help before negative behaviors arise.

Remember this mantra:

“Change is good, even when it doesn’t look good.”

The only way to change your child’s behavior and function is to change their brain in a positive way. We want to bring out their true potential! When you start noticing changes, celebrate the fact that your child’s brain is changing. There are typically three ways your child’s brain and behaviors may change:

1 They start to feel and connect more with bodily sensations.

2 As one side of the brain grows, behaviors, feelings and emotions start to emerge.

3 As new parts of the brain develop, others may temporarily regress.

FOLLOW-UP

In our experience, regular communication makes all the difference in the program’s outcome. We will periodically complete reevaluations and follow-up testing to measure improvements, as well as when treatment is complete and the goal has been reached. For most patients, we reevaluate every 12 weeks; if you are traveling long distances, we recommend every six months. If you have additional questions on what to expect through the process, please contact us.

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See reverse
for detailed
descriptions of
each stage.

Descriptions of Each Stage



1 BODILY SENSATIONS

Most of our patients are disconnected from their bodies, especially with right hemisphere delays. Forming in the womb through the first three years, the right hemisphere is responsible for the development of attachment, first to parents and then to others. It is also responsible for nonverbal communication. Babies need to feel basic sensations to communicate their needs in a nonverbal way (pain, hunger, thirst, fatigue, time for changing, etc.). Many, if not all, of the children we work with experience reduced or nearly absent sensation. For example, they may feel hunger and thirst at greatly reduced or atypical levels.

One of the first changes we typically notice is in eating patterns. Some children may start feeling hungry and eating more food than usual. This is a positive change, as we want them to feel their bodies and sensations — and they feel hungry, which they have never experienced. Other children may stop eating as much and recognize when they are full. As your child starts to connect with their bodies they may go through a phase where they feel “uncomfortable in their own skin” this is a good thing, and should change quickly.

2 FEELINGS, EMOTIONS + FUNCTIONS

As one side of the brain grows, new behaviors, feelings and emotions arise. While these are positive changes, they may not appear that way. The right side of the brain regulates what we call negative emotions. Once children start to feel and connect with their bodies, they become self-aware and experience what is known as body ownership. As a result, they begin to feel right-brain emotions like fear, sadness, shame, guilt, embarrassment and rejection.

As parents, our natural instinct is to protect our children from negative emotions. But these emotions are critical for social development, to empathize and get along with others, and to learn right from wrong. Emotions from the left brain may also start to emerge, like joy, anger and pride. Children may exhibit signs of anger, become aggressive or appear oppositional. As they develop agency, they become more independent in their feelings and actions. They may start to voice their opinion, laugh more or even seem giddy at times — again, all good signs!

3 CHANGES IN THE BRAIN

As the brain changes and new areas start to grow, it may steal energy, blood flow and resources temporarily from other lower areas of the brain. This can lead to regression of certain functions and the return of more immature behaviors.

While it may seem scary, this is typical in child development. As I describe in my book, *Reconnected Kids*, there are eight growth spurts in children in the first five years. As the brain develops new skills, it may temporarily lose older skills. Children may start wetting the bed or themselves, playing with old toys, or engaging in older stims or behaviors. Again, this may appear negative but is another good sign the brain is changing. When the brain starts to grow in a positive way, we start to achieve better balance between the hemispheres. A key point to remember: If you notice what seems like negative behaviors or functions at the same time as you notice obviously positive behaviors and functions, it is a sure sign that both of these are good. Once the brain stabilizes, regressive behaviors will subside or old skills come back stronger than ever. This process lasts about two to four weeks, so hang in there!

