

## Developmental Kinesiology Kinesiological integration of early childhood reflexes

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The baby is born with reflexes and reactions. They belong to his "first equipment". They are planned in our genetic code and proceed in a special order. The normal development is dependent on the building up and impairing of reflexes. The special stages of the reflex activities helps the medical doctor to recognize the degree of ripeness of the brain.

The reflexes are dominated by subcortical cores. In getting older most of the reflexes are impaired, and higher parts of the brain take over. Others especially the ones which influence the vestibular system stay or arise and help us during our whole life.

During therapy the main interest in reflexes is whether they are impaired or not. In our work we are more interested in the living of the reflexes and reactions.

Why do they exist?

And what are our possibilities in kinesiology to integrate the early childhood reflexes?

The healthy child does not come completely passive and helpless to this world. It is provided with abilities that help it to survive, such as breathing and the beating of the heart. In addition to this it has the sense organs and reflexes that support the baby in its growth. These abilities that the child has when it is born, can only unfold in a supporting environment, because the development of the child proceeds "reactively". Besides feeding, it needs warmth, body contact, a smile, love and stimulation (see ref. 3, p 45-46)

It is like a bunch of flowers. We get a little present: the flowers can only unfold their beauty, when we know how to handle them, and they have a beauty completely independent of us. The baby needs providing and has abilities to "convince" the adult to be busy with its needs so that it gets enough stimulation for the development of the nervous system. The baby is not completely helpless. It is competent.

We think that the child makes special experiences with each reflex. They are mainly connected with the senses: the child is all ear, all eye, all movement. Each reflex procures kinesthetic, tactile, and vestibular experiences for the child. Again and again the child is governed by automatic movement patterns. Again and again it has sensory experiences that help it to learn how the body feels in doing special movements, how heavy the head is, how the relation is between the various parts of the body, etc.

The development of the child underlies complex cycles, and the reflexes are a very important part of it.

We can't miss them in our development:

- They give us a feeling of the movement and prepare for complex movements.
- They help us in the development of the sense organs and help us to survive (e.g., suck reflex).
- They serve the development of the brain with its complex connections.

**We conclude** that it is very important to alive the reflexes, to integrate and sometimes impair them. Only when they are free from charges and compensation, we can reach and feel competence as adults.

**What does this mean?**

"Living" means that the child experiences the reflex on the level of the senses and the movement during the stage where nature has planned it.

"Integration" means, that these experiences left marks in the brain and that they were connected to other experiences.

"Impaired" means that higher developed parts of the brain can stop the reflex activity and

therefore the voluntary movement can develop.

"Charges" can emerge when one or several of those aspects are disturbed in their sequence.

"Compensation" is a reaction of the body, to make up for deficiency in order to reach the next developmental stage.

"Competence" means that the integration of the reflex frees you for self-determinate action.

What happens, if you don't have this experience?

What happens, when we learn only insufficiently to impair special reflex reactions?

What happens, when we got dependent on old reflex patterns under stress?

Here are two examples:

As adults we often have problems with grasping and letting go, in the literal and transferred meaning. We suppose that this has something to do with the grasping reflex that is lived insufficiently during childhood and therefore often poorly integrated and compensated.

Children who have problems with reading and writing often have difficulty in crossing the midline. This can have a connection to the insufficient impaired ATNR

Kinesiology gives us the opportunity to help the body to integrate the reflexes even after the early childhood development. We use the 14 TFH-muscles as indicator for the effects of a non-integrated reflex on the body.

Procedure:

1. 14 muscle balance.

2. Activating of the reflex by a movement similar to the early childhood reflex.
3. Test of the 14 TFH- muscles.
4. Stress test on "living", "integrated", "impaired", "charges", "compensation", and "competence".
5. Balance
  - Touch for Health
  - The reflex movement
  - The senses that belong to the reflex
  - Hand modes
  - Other systems.
6. Re-test the weak TFH-muscles, the words, the movement of the reflex, and the initial problem.

The ideas that we have presented in this paper are part of our kinesiological work for early childhood development. We feel that human development is a process for the whole life. It started in early childhood and gets more liveliness when we respect these experiences.

## References

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