

BODY AWARENESS TRAINING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

As a somatic educator, I have worked with children with a broad range of needs—from children with ADD or ADHD, high functioning autism, or Asperger's Syndrome; to children with physical coordination issues; to children who were victims of abuse; and to children who needed better skills in conflict avoidance or communication. Body awareness education offers an effective resource which complements traditional approaches. Generally a brief series of lessons is enough to significantly improve children's skills in such areas as physical coordination, relaxation, impulse control, and mental focusing.

In **PRIVATE BODY AWARENESS SESSIONS**, I teach a three step process. It starts with physical self-awareness, moves on to self-regulation, and culminates in application of new skills to daily tasks and situations. I begin by showing children how to notice the details of their posture, breathing, and movement. Once children can feel what they are doing as they do it, I show them how to relax their breathing and muscles and achieve a balanced, stable posture and manner of moving. This new body state is the foundation for the development of physical and mental focus and efficiency as well as calmness, confidence and self-esteem. Next, we practice using this new awareness in

the various tasks that have been problems, from sitting still and studying, to speaking appropriately, to improving performance in sports, to learning more appropriate social behavior. Private sessions in body awareness training offer a quiet, low-stress teaching situation and allow the teaching to be individualized and paced according to the child's needs.

Once they have learned somatic self-awareness and self-regulation, many children will be ready for and enjoy **AIKIDO TRAINING**, whether in private sessions or group classes. Aikido is a non-violent Japanese martial art, and it offers a more complex movement context in which to practice using the body awareness skills. To be perfectly clear, the key learning for children with special needs takes place in the body awareness sessions. Without prior development of body awareness skills as a foundation, Aikido would be much less helpful.

Aikido defense techniques consist of joint locks and throws and are based on going along with the attack to control it. I use Aikido games as well as formal self-defense techniques to create a fun-filled learning situation. The practice of coordination, relaxation and concentration helps children improve their performance in everything from sports or music to homework or paying attention in school. Of course, Aikido is also a lot of fun.

Group classes offer a valuable social situation in which to practice using body awareness and self-regulation. Through non-competitive, cooperative martial art

training, children learn how to pay attention in a social situation, get along with others, develop self-confidence, and resolve conflicts appropriately.

For more information on my work with children, see the paper "Body Awareness Training for Children with Attention Problems" on my website.

PAUL LINDEN, Ph.D.



is a specialist in body awareness education, the developer of Being In Movement® mindbody training, and co-founder of the Columbus Center

for Movement Studies. He holds a Ph.D. in Physical Education, a sixth degree black belt in Aikido and a first degree black belt in Karate, and he is an instructor of the Feldenkrais Method® of somatic education. He has extensive experience teaching people such as musicians, athletes, pregnant women, adult survivors of child abuse, children with attention disorders, and business persons. He is the author of:

- *Comfort at Your Computer.*
- *Winning is Healing: Body Awareness and Empowerment for Abuse Survivors.*
- *Feeling Aikido: Body Awareness Training as a Foundation for Aikido.*
- *Teaching Children Embodied Peacemaking.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

(614) 262-3355 or 263-1111.
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www.being-in-movement.com

SCHEDULING

Private sessions are scheduled by appointment. Please call 614-262-3355 or 263-1111.

Payment is by cash or check at the time of the lesson, on a sliding scale from \$65 to \$85 per 50 minute session.

Aikido classes for children ages 7 to 13 are Tuesday 5-6 pm and Saturday 9-10 am.

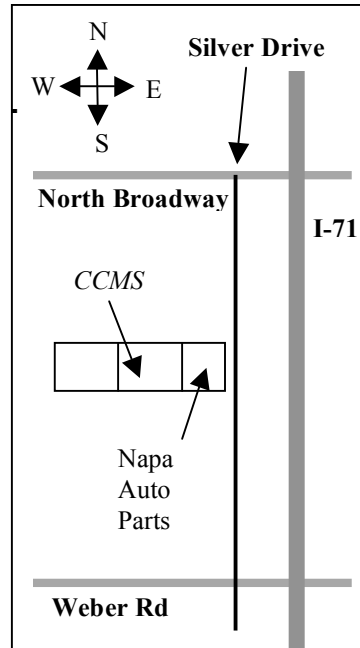
The monthly fee is \$45, and there are no contracts. Family rates are available.

Presentations about this teaching method or *small group classes* can be scheduled by request.

LOCATION

Columbus Center for
Movement Studies
3003 Silver Drive,
Columbus, OH 43224

In Clintonville, by I-71 and North Broadway. On Silver Drive, which runs alongside of I-71.



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