

Our Mission

To promote joy of learning through rhythmic integrative movement and advocate for its recognition as the bedrock of learning.

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Where's the Research?

Joy of Learning launched in October 2010 as a vehicle to connect and inform. Through connection we share our experiences, support our collective efforts, and highlight research on learning, specifically how we learn and the obstacles to effective learning. **We inform you on the science-backed primacy of rhythm, vision tracking, and self-regulating behavior (premises of Bal-A-Vis-X).** As classroom teachers, therapists, and parents we adapt BAVX principles into our situations because it distills the research into nuggets of effective and efficient action. We can do this. Learners can do this. And we see and feel the difference it makes in our lives. It confirms what science continues to discover about learning. We are not statisticians. We report what we experience. So when we're asked: *Where's the research?*—it's in universities and research institutes and revealed in science magazines and publications. In this issue, we take a second look at **inter-limb coordination** and **anxiety and children** and relate to both.



Interlimb Coordination (Condensed from April 2014 issue)

Excerpt from **Interlimb Coordination**, Early Childhood Research & Practice (ecrp), Vol 11, #2: 2009. Authors C Gabbard, EdD, et al.

Early childhood is a period of landmark significance for motor development. Motor skills developed between the ages of 4 & 10 provide the foundation upon which more complex motor programs are formed. Early assessment of motor skills enables specialists to provide intervention, when indicated, at a young age, when plasticity of the nervous system is high. Early motor behavior plays an important role in social, emotional, and later academic-related activities, suggesting that both motor and cognitive performance share a common brain structure. In other words, movement experiences are essential for cognitive developmental change.

Interlimb Coordination involves sequential and simultaneous use of both sides of the body with a high degree of rhythmicity and timing. Categories are:

- 1) **Bimanual Coordination**: Action between both arms or legs requiring smooth communication between the brain's two hemispheres.
- 2) **Hands/Feet Coordination**: The simultaneous coupling of upper and lower limbs on the same (homolateral) or opposite (contralateral) side of the body.





(cont'd) Interlimb Coordination

Rhythmic coordination of opposite hand and foot requires more complex sequencing.

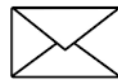
Educators may be familiar with gross-motor skill development; however, the subcategory of interlimb coordination demands greater attention than it typically receives. These motor activities demand a high level of rhythmicity and synchrony between the hands and feet. **Research suggests that interlimb coordination is linked to daily life skills, complex movement behaviors, and school performance.** Authors Gabbard, Bobbio & Cacola strongly suggest that teachers include gross-motor, physical fitness, and interlimb coordination skills as part of their comprehensive movement programs.

Each rhythmic repetition of a BAVX pattern applies the interlimb coordination research presented above. Initiating the patterns from each side of the body builds and strengthens neural connections between both hemispheres of the brain. BAVX encourages growth in personal and social competence, responsibility, and confidence. Any academic progress or performance is a by-product.

Snapshots at jasonlove.com



"Fascinating. The rats choose chocolate 9 times out of 10, but they always feel guilty about it later."



**To Meg Baldwin
BAVX Trainer, Kansas**

Meg, I am an occupational therapy practitioner who works at the behavioral school in North Kansas City. I work predominantly with children on the autism spectrum. Students range from high functioning to highly impaired motor skills/non verbal. Just wanted to share how it went today with my clients. The results were cra-z-y.

My high functioning students picked up on the (BAVX) patterns at almost the same pace as my non-verbal, more impaired students. We stuck with just bags, one-on-one. I understood the benefit of this from a gross motor/fine motor/visual motor clinical perspective throughout the BAVX training, but thought I would have to modify it quite a bit for my caseload. I opted to stick with it, just as was taught.

I was truly blown away by how my students reacted. Some children have experienced severe trauma and are specifically placed in this school because they are too aggressive to be in a typical school. Every single one of them got frustrated. Really frustrated in some cases. But only one became aggressive (briefly). Every one worked through their frustration and achieved success with the activity we were doing.

Although I suspect most of my students struggle with anxiety, only one has a clinical diagnosis. I taught her the trauma-informed BAVX (TIB) pattern with breathing and she loved it! She literally said: 'I like that. It helps me know where my body is.'

Thank you so much for your patience and guidance. All of us at Kidz First have fully bought into this as a therapy tool.

**–Kristin D'Augustine
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant.**





Balance & Childhood Anxiety (Condensed from April 2013 issue)

Excerpt from *Improve Balance, Relieve Childhood Anxiety*, by Dr. R. Nauert, www.psychcentral.com, 2009

With the increasing numbers of children diagnosed with anxiety disorders, researchers at Tel Aviv University (TAU) investigated the anxiety-balance connection in young children and discovered not only that a link exists between anxiety and balance but that something can be done about it before it becomes an anxiety issue. **While not all children with anxiety have balance problems, all children with balance problems exhibit symptoms of anxiety.**

Anxiety has a significant impact on children's personal and academic well-being. Dr. Bart's team found that with early assessment, children with balance issues can undergo a simple course of physical treatment that can resolve anxiety issues.

Dr. Bart's work offers new hope for normal social and emotional development for children with both balance and anxiety disorders. Her team tracked children 5-7 years old who had been diagnosed with both balance and anxiety problems to see how treatment would affect each disorder. After a 12-week sensory-motor intervention, children improved their balance skills and reduced anxiety to normal levels. As balance and anxiety issues improved, children's self-esteem also increased.

Treating the Mind Through the Body

Dr. Bart explained: *You can't treat children with anxiety in a cognitive way because of their immaturity and lack of operational thinking. Working with the body appears to be the answer.* Treatment focused on children using equipment to experience their environment and move in space. By working with their bodies, children could work through their emotional issues, including anxiety.

'Young children with anxiety should first be assessed for balance issues to see if that is the source of the problem,' says Dr. Bart. 'We can now treat these children because we have a better understanding of the relation between these disorders.'

Balance is a 3-legged tripod of systems: **Vision**, **Vestibular Apparatus (body's gyroscope)**, and **Proprioception (joint sensations)**. If any one leg is compromised, imbalance and anxiety manifest. Most BAVX patterns require focal vision (eyes on the object); controlled manipulation of objects and body position (technique); and crossing visual, auditory, and physical midlines. BAVX uses prolonged sensory-motor stimulation through rhythmic, contralateral patterns executed at an unhurried pace to promote flow of mental energy with the goal of brain and body integration. BAVX patterns remediate vision tracking deficiency, mitigate the impact of balance issues, and promote hand-eye-foot coordination.



ONE WORD: Spotlight on Mr U Fruitland Middle School, Fruitland, ID

Staff honored Mr U's mastery use of BAVX with students. Doug Uyeki, paraprofessional, writes:

My 'One Word' is **understanding**. I believe the quality of any relationship can be determined by the understanding exhibited by both parties. To be truly engaged with students, teachers require insight, perception, and comprehension. The same is required of students to take full advantage of the learning experience. Mature, healthy educators can bring about the kind of learning environment today's students desire and deserve.

Understanding will never run out even in the most difficult and trying times. It is the gift that reciprocates when the look in a child's eyes says, 'You are taking the time to know my needs and are willing to expend the energy to meet them.'

Surely, every one of us can relate to the need for understanding when student engagement is the ultimate goal. When a culture of understanding is present throughout a school system, performance, growth, and accomplishment are its by-products.

I believe that all of the meaningful relationships in our lives are rooted in our ability to embrace understanding as the key that unlocks the door to the achievement of our potential as a human race.