



*We rise by lifting others.*



## What Are Retained Primitive Reflexes?

Primitive reflexes are innate responses that develop in the brain stem before birth. These involuntary reflexes play a crucial role in a newborn's early development, assisting with vital functions such as positioning in the womb, birthing, breathing, feeding, urination, and the initiation of certain movements like crawling and standing. They also contribute to early stages of sensory development, including vision, and hearing, throughout the infant's first year. Typically, these reflexes should naturally integrate (disappear) by 12 months of age.

However, if the reflexes persist beyond the expected age, they are known as retained primitive reflexes. They may contribute to learning, behavioral, social, sensory, and overall health issues. In older children and adults, these retained reflexes may manifest in subtle, involuntary muscle movements that often go unnoticed without testing.

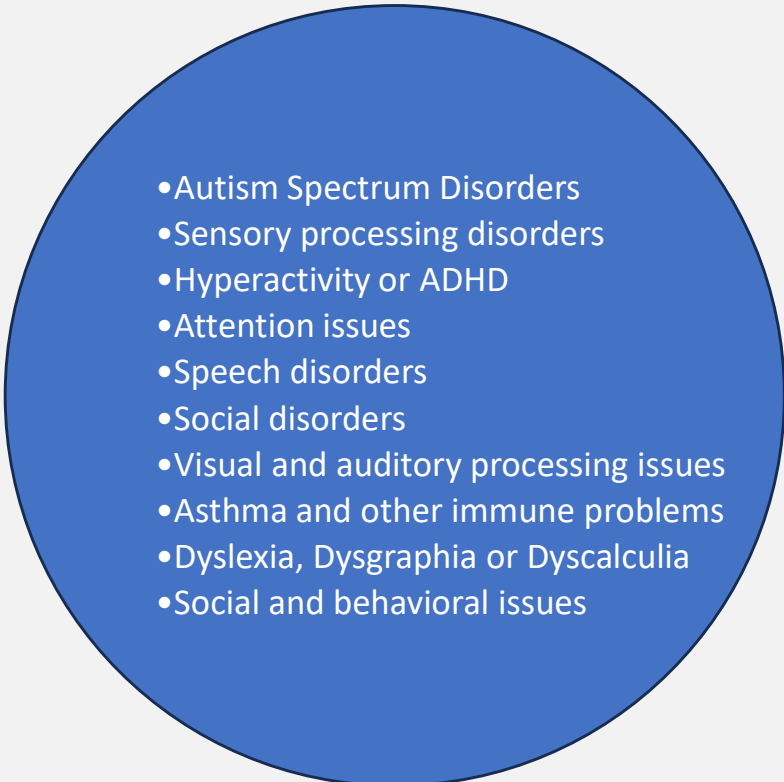
## What Can Be Done?

Primitive reflexes which persist beyond 12 months of age are known as retained primitive reflexes. There are simple exercises that aid in their integration. This process is called integrating primitive reflexes.

Once these reflexes are integrated, many learning disabilities, behavioral and sensory disorders, and health issues can be greatly improved. It is important to note, however, that these exercises are intended to complement, not replace, other strategies and modalities in the care and development of a child.

Every child is different. There is no rule or guarantee to the amount of improvement you may see. It is unique for each child. However, many case studies have shown measurable improvement in individuals after integration.

## Common When Primitive Reflexes Remain

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- Autism Spectrum Disorders
  - Sensory processing disorders
  - Hyperactivity or ADHD
  - Attention issues
  - Speech disorders
  - Social disorders
  - Visual and auditory processing issues
  - Asthma and other immune problems
  - Dyslexia, Dysgraphia or Dyscalculia
  - Social and behavioral issues

## What Specialists Know

Developmental specialists have noted a commonality among children with developmental delays and learning disabilities: They almost always have primitive reflexes that persist past their first year of life. They have found that children who integrate and suppress these reflexes often show improvement.

Furthermore, they know there is a correlation between motor, visual, auditory, and sensory development and retained reflexes.

## How Did This Happen?

Many individuals, both children and adults, may retain one or more primitive reflexes, despite having had a healthy upbringing. The persistence of these reflexes does not stem from a singular cause. However, research indicates some contributing factors. These may include traumatic births, prolonged periods in seaters or swings, induced labor, cesarian section births, lack of “tummy time”, genetic traits, underdevelopment, experiences of abuse, and brain injuries, just to name a few.

## What Can Be Done?

Primitive reflexes can be effectively integrated through targeted exercises. These exercises are designed to engage specific muscles and movements, thereby promoting motor development and control which, in turn, integrates the reflexes. This is best done with a trained professional. Frequency is important to integrating the reflexes. The professional will often use the exercises in the office and assign some to be done at home.

