

**How to Use the
Nine Essentials
of ABM NeuroMovement[®]
With Children**

**Discover Effective Ways
to Help Your Child
Become a Brilliant Learner**



Movement is the language of the brain. —Anat Baniel

What Is NeuroMovement®?

NeuroMovement® is a holistic approach to human functioning and action, based in the understanding that movement is the language of the brain. Movement provides information the brain needs to grow and organize itself. And, in return, the brain organizes all movement, thought, feelings, and action.

Movement includes not only movement of the body in space—the movement of the skeleton and muscles—but also the movement of thinking, emotion, and feelings. All action involves movement in all aspects of the self.

The Brain Is a Self-Organizing Information System

In NeuroMovement, the brain is understood to be a self-organizing information system with mind and body integrated at all times. It gets formed and apprenticed holistically through its experiences of all aspects of movement.

Children are born to be amazing learning machines—their brains growing and forming at a staggering rate of 1,800,000 new connections per second.

In early infancy, movements are random and involuntary for the most part, yet these experiences feed the brain with information it uses to form recognizable patterns and to organize and control all dimensions of movement.

The science of brain plasticity shows how, under the right conditions, the adult brain can also restructure itself in remarkable ways. Even the birth of new brain cells can occur in adults, as well as children, something believed impossible not too long ago.



From Fixing to Connecting

How Can We Help Children Grow Beyond Their Present Limitations?

When we learn that something is wrong, whatever it might be, the natural thing to do is to focus on the limitation, on what the child can't do, or on what s/he is doing wrong, and then we try to conquer, stop, or otherwise overcome it. We want to solve the problem, and fix the child so s/he will sit up, talk, read, write, relate to others, etc.

The desire to fix what is broken or malfunctioning is tremendously important and useful. There are times when fixing is exactly the right approach; for example, when doctors need to surgically repair a hole in the heart or when an antibiotic is used to combat an infection. When they're necessary and when appropriate treatment is available, those fixes need to be carried out.

At the same time, it is important to understand that fixing is simply one way of approaching problems. It has great limitations and can at times even be counterproductive.



Children Are Works In Progress With Remarkable Potential

Children are living, feeling, and experiencing beings; works in progress—growing and evolving; in the process of figuring out and continuously forming the abilities to move, think, understand themselves, and relate to the world around them.

At the center of all this unfolding potential of your child is that most remarkable of all organs, the brain. To make full use of the [brain's remarkable potentials](#), we need to make a shift in our thinking, away from the fixing paradigm. We need to know how to focus our attention on what we can do to awaken and strengthen the capacities of the child's brain to do its job well.

Making the Transition From Fixing to Connecting

To be truly helpful to the child with special needs, we need to back off from trying to make the child do what s/he can't do. We need to more fully recognize the fundamental role the child's brain plays in learning and refining new skills. The brain has the ability to figure itself out and, amazingly, to create successful solutions to problems.

No matter how much we may want to help, and no matter what our expertise, we are 100% dependent on the child's brain to make the necessary changes.

Get Your Child's Brain Working Brilliantly

The *Nine Essentials* of ABM NeuroMovement® are tools for you to feel, see, notice, and create. More importantly, they will increase your own capacity to connect with and work with your child, whatever his or her special needs may be.

The purpose of connecting with your child through the *Nine Essentials* is about providing your child with the greatest opportunity to develop real skills and a strong sense of self, to feel good about him / herself and to have the ability to continue to learn and grow, with a genuine sense of accomplishment and pride.

The *Nine Essentials* will get your child's brain working brilliantly.

Anat Baniel Method

The Nine Essentials of NeuroMovement®

- Movement with Attention
- Slow
- Variation
- Subtlety
- Enthusiasm
- Flexible Goals
- The Learning Switch
- Imagination and Dreams
- Awareness



The Nine Essentials of the Anat Baniel Method® (ABM)

Transform Your Child's Life Through NeuroMovement®

1 – Movement with Attention

Help your child bring attention to what s/he *feels* as s/he **moves**. Their brain will immediately start building billions of new neurological connections to help them change, learn, and transform.

2 – Slow

Slow way down to help your child learn new skills and overcome limitations. Fast they can only do what they already know. Slow stimulates the formation of rich new neural patterns.

3 – Variation

Introduce variation and playfulness into everything your child does. Your child's brain will get the information it needs to create new possibilities in movements, thoughts, and actions.

4 – Subtlety

Reduce the force with which you move, think, and act with your child. As your child develops greater sensitivity, this will enhance her/his brain's ability to perceive the finest of differences.

5 – Enthusiasm

Practice enthusiasm in your child's daily life. Enthusiasm tells your child's brain what is important, amplifying whatever that is and infusing it with energy to grow more.

6 – Flexible Goals

Know the goals for your child and **embrace all the unexpected steps, mis-steps, and re-routes** along the way. These are a rich source of valuable information for your child's brain.

7 – The Learning Switch

For the brain to properly do its job, the learning switch needs to be turned ON. **Help your child to expect to do, think, or learn something new** in each situation, even familiar ones.

8 – Imagination & Dreams

Help your child to imagine how to carry out tasks and **dream up as many possibilities** as s/he can. Imagination & dreams guide your child's brain to continue growing and developing.

9 – Awareness

Help your child to become aware of what s/he is doing, sensing, thinking, and experiencing **at any given moment**. When *awaring*, your child's brain is working at its highest level.

The Nine Essentials Wake Up Your Brain

The *Nine Essentials* form the core of the [NeuroMovement® approach of the Anat Baniel Method®](#).

Each of the *Nine Essentials* describes one of the brain's requirements for waking up and doing its job well. Each *Essential* helps the brain create new connections to overcome pain and limitation, thus reaching new levels of physical, emotional, and cognitive performance.

The *Nine Essentials* offer your child concrete, effective, and immediate ways to easily tap into the enormous potential of your child's brain.



The *Nine Essentials* Are Validated by Neuroscience

The *Nine Essentials* are validated by modern science's latest discoveries in the area of [brain plasticity](#)—the brain's ability to change and grow new neurological pathways and connections throughout life.

View the [research that supports the NeuroMovement principles of the *Nine Essentials*](#) of the Anat Baniel Method.



With the Essentials, the brain becomes a brilliant problem solver, leading to breakthroughs in movement, pain relief, and performance.

—Anat Baniel

A Paradigm Shift: How to Move From Fixing to Connecting with Your Child

It can be tempting to try to tackle your children's limitations by trying to "fix" them, be that by "stretching" tight muscles, by repeated behavioral conditioning, or by trying to get them to roll, sit, stand, walk, or talk when they can't do it.

However, the greatest potential for transformation is not in trying to make children do what they can't, but in finding ways to help each child's brain differentiate and spontaneously discover how to go beyond his or her limitations.

The first step is to stop trying to "fix" your child, to stop trying to have your child do what he or she cannot do.



If he could, he would; if she could, she would. Drilling, lots of repetitions, and constant prompting may be sincere and well-meaning attempts that often do help your child improve some. However, they also often create great limitations in how much progress your child will make in the long run.

Such repetitions and drilling deny the brain of what it needs most in order to learn and improve—new information, lots and lots of new information.

Moving away from trying to "fix" your child is not simple or easy to do. Trying to make your child do what other children can do when not challenged, is what most of us know to do. If we stop trying to "fix" the problems in our child, we may feel like we are neglecting him or her.

TRY THE FOLLOWING:

Take a few days and simply observe the moments and times when you are in the "fixing" mode with your child, be it around academic learning, behavioral issues, or anything else.

Don't rush to try and change what you normally do. Give yourself some time to become aware of your own feelings and actions that are associated with trying to help your child.

In addition, if you haven't read *Kids Beyond Limits*, I recommend that you read the 2nd chapter: *From Fixing to Connecting*. You can download this chapter free of charge at the following link: www.anatbanielmethod.com/signup. If you have read *Kids Beyond Limits*, I strongly recommend that you read Chapter Two again.

HOW DID THIS TIP WORK FOR YOU?

What did you notice about your child? What did you notice about yourself? We'd love to hear your feedback.

Please join our conversation on Facebook:

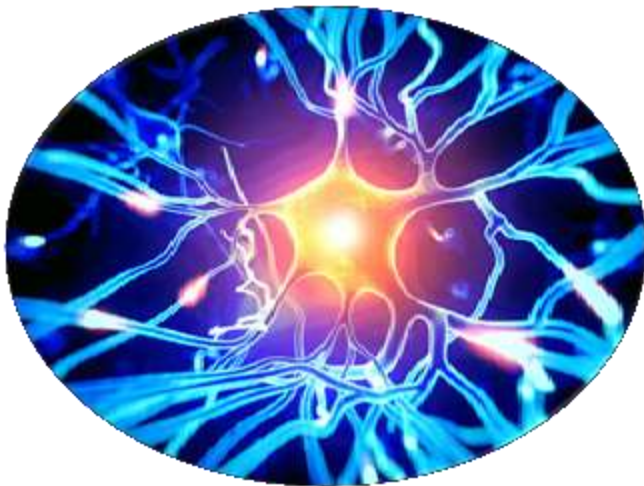
www.facebook.com/anatbanielmethod

When you feel that you are ready to make a change and move from fixing to connecting with your child, begin by using the *First Essential Movement With Attention*.

Essential I – Movement with Attention

Movement is Life. Movement helps the brain grow and form. The brain is organized through movement. In turn, it is the brain that organizes all movement: the movement of your child's body, your child's thinking, your child's feelings, and your child's emotions.

But movement alone is not enough. Automatic movement—movement done without attention—only grooves in the already existing patterns. In fact, research has shown that movement done automatically creates little or no new connections in the brain.



DID YOU KNOW?

When you bring attention to what you feel as you move, the brain immediately starts building billions of new neurological connections that usher in changes, learning, and transformation.

NeuroMovement Tip

1st Essential

**Movement With Attention:
Help your child wake up to life!**

NeuroMovement Tips – Movement with Attention:

What should your child pay attention to?

When your child moves—any movement will do—look to gently bring his attention to himself and to what he feels as he moves.

For example, you can touch his arm as he swings it, perhaps swing with it, and perhaps say “swinging, swinging...” while the movement is taking place. You can also slow the movement down a bit, then go a bit faster. Or you can touch his arm and then stop touching it while it moves.

You can bring this kind of attention to your child’s movements while you are feeding him, changing his diaper, bathing him, or playing with him. Remember that you are not trying to have your child pay attention to you. You are getting your child bring his attention to himself, to what he is feeling as he moves himself or is moved by you.

Bringing your child’s attention to his movements and actions in this way opens up possibilities for learning and transformation that would otherwise not be available for his brain.

Try the *Movement with Attention Essential* on a daily basis and notice any changes in your connection with your child and in how your child moves.



Movement is life; without movement life is unthinkable.
—Dr. Moshé Feldenkrais

Essential 2 – Slow

Did you know that by going fast, your child can only do what she already knows?

Your child's brain has no choice but to go on automatic and use the most deeply ingrained, already existing patterns.

To learn and master new skills and overcome limitation, the first thing to do is have your child slow way down. *Slow* actually gets the brain's attention and stimulates the formation of rich new neural patterns.

Slow will get your child out of the automatic mode in her movements, speech, thoughts, and social interactions.

***SLOW* lets your child feel and experience life at a deeper, more profound level.**

Slow is an essential part of learning, regardless of whether we're an Einstein or a seriously challenged child with special needs.

Every time you take the time to slow down with your child, it gives you the opportunity to be present with her, letting her true reactions and capabilities inform you.



NeuroMovement Tip

2nd Essential

SLOW:

Take time to feel & experience
the dance of life with your child.

NeuroMovement Tips – Slow:

Slow for your child starts with you. You become the model of *Slow* for her, paving the way for her brain to follow. *Slow* is a skill that you and your child can develop together.

The “*Slow Game*” is a way for you and your child to go as slow as possible, whatever you are doing. It could be getting dressed, building a puzzle, playing with a ball, riding a tricycle, tying or buckling up shoes, doing a math problem, or any other activity.

A powerful way to wake up your child’s brain is to take a few minutes a day, a few times a day, to SLOW down whatever it is that you and your child are doing.

For example, if you’re building a puzzle with your child, you could say: “*Let’s see if I can put this piece in really slowly,*” and then proceed to do it. Then, you could say: “*Let’s see how slowly you can do it.*” If she moves fast, you can call her attention to it and even help her move slower by guiding her hand gently. Next time you move, do it fast on purpose so that your child has a chance to correct you and tell you to do it slowly.

Or you can say that you forgot to move slowly, and then do so.

You can slow down any activity with your child. This *Slow Game* is especially useful when your child is stuck or unable to perform. You can help her with *Slow*, even hold her close to you and gently guide her with your own body to slow down. When you do this, you can communicate with your child: “*You are okay as you are. You are doing fine. You are safe.*” When your child feels loved, accepted, and safe, her brain has the opportunity to turn into a powerful learning machine.

Slow amplifies your child’s experiences and intensifies what she feels. *Slow* gets the brain’s attention, increasing its activity and forming new patterns.

Try the *Slow Essential* on a daily basis, look for fine or more obvious changes in your child, as well as changes in your connection with your child.



Fast, we can only do what we already know. —Anat Baniel

Essential 3 – Variation

Variation is everywhere, and is more than just the spice of life. It’s a necessity for optimum health.

Variation provides your child’s brain with the richness of information it needs to create new possibilities in his movements, feelings, thoughts, and actions. It helps increase your child’s awareness and lifts him out of rigidity and being stuck.

By introducing *Variation* and playfulness into everything you do with your child, you will awaken all of your child’s senses.

New ideas occur and new possibilities will emerge in your child’s life.

NeuroMovement Tip

3rd Essential

Variation:

Enjoy abundant possibilities
with your child!

NeuroMovement Tips – Variation:

Brain research has shown that *Variation* increases synapses in the brain. *Variation* is essential for your child to continue to improve, for your child's brain to grow, and for your child to be fully alive.

This remarkable process of growth and development happens through the perception of something new, something different, something that stands out from the background and habitual in our bodies, minds, and our lives.

When we vary, we create differences. The brain thrives with variations. Variations create a flow of new information in the brain making it smarter and helping it become the brilliant brain it is built to be.

One of the easiest ways to integrate the *Variation Essential* is to do everyday activities with your child in a new or different way. For example, if he usually puts his sock on the left foot first, put it on the right one first. Vary the order of how he puts his clothing on. Put his clothing on fast, slow, etc.

Vary how he moves a toy: fast, slow, up, down, zigzag, with one hand, with both hands, etc.

Vary the sounds he makes. Follow his lead, imitate what he does, and then make the sound louder, softer, faster, slower. Ask him to do the same.



Another great way to create variations is to ask your child to do something in the “wrong” way, and then in another “wrong” way. Or you can model *Variation* for him: try to put his shirt on only his arms, put his shirt on backwards, try to put his shirt on his legs, put his shirt on fast or slow....make a game of it. This turns his experience into play, into discovery, and into recovery.

Learn about how to use [*Variation with writing skills in the Story of Ari.*](#)

Varying your child’s daily schedule is also a form of variation. Driving a different way to school or an appointment can be a form of variation. The possibilities for variation in life are everywhere. You can add this kind of variation to almost everything you do with your child.

And once children feel the freedom and playfulness associated with *Variation*, they become happier, more engaged and alert, and better learners.

Try the *Variation Essential* on a daily basis, notice any changes in your child, and also in your connection with your child.



Our only limitation is our belief that it is so.

— Dr. Moshé Feldenkrais

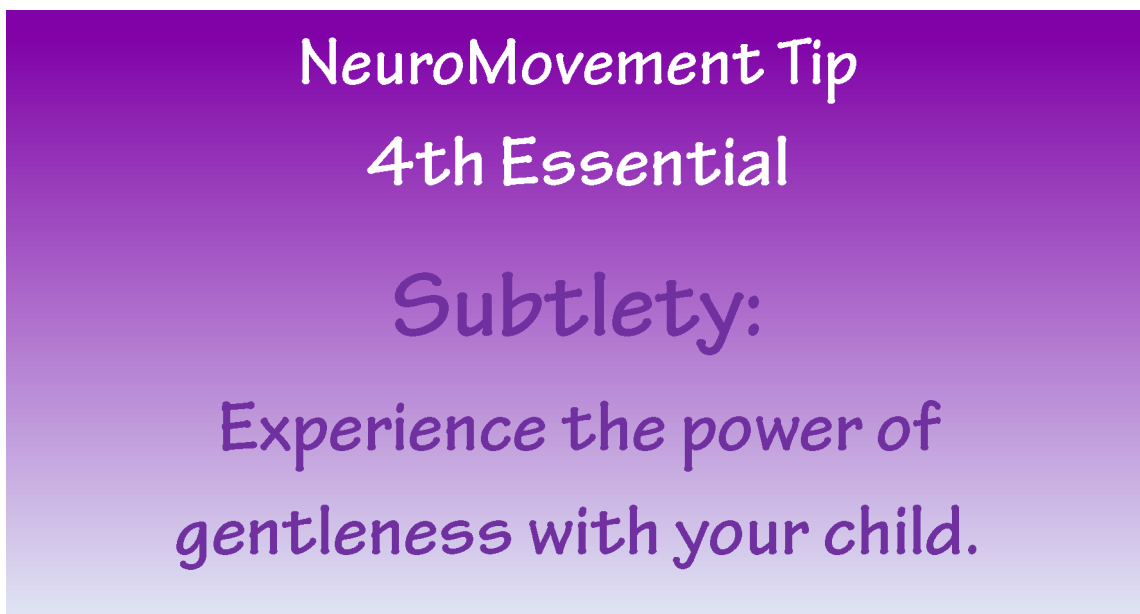
Essential 4 – Subtlety

The dictionary definition of *Subtlety* is the “ability to recognize and make very fine distinctions.” The brain’s ability to perceive fine differences is at the heart of its ability to generate new information for organizing new, more refined and exacting action and for overcoming limitations.

This is true whether this change involves your child learning to move her body, being able to improve her intellectual capacities, or changing and improving something in her emotional life.

To be most helpful to your child, whatever you do with her needs to foster and empower her own spontaneous ability to perceive differences. This is where *Subtlety* comes in.

The more *Subtlety* and gentleness you can bring to any action you do with your child, or that your child does herself, the more her brain will perceive differences and the more brilliant she will be at creating new solutions for overcoming her challenges.



NeuroMovement Tips – *Subtlety*:

If you are to be effective in helping your child, you need to turn your attention to yourself. This means bringing *Subtlety* to yourself—to your own actions, your own thinking, your own emotions, and your own movements.

When you bring greater *Subtlety* to yourself, you will increase *your* sensitivity and *ability* to feel. You will also increase your ability to *feel your child*, to perceive finer and finer changes in her body, in her movements, in her thinking, and in her emotions, as well as in her relationship to you, other people, and the world. You will have so much more information to work with, coming from your child and from within you. You will spontaneously find yourself more attuned to your child. And you will provide a model of greater *Subtlety*, which will also help your child's brain to perceive differences.

It is easiest for most people to learn to reduce excessive efforts in body movements. When you drive your car, for example, experiment with reducing the force you apply in your arms, hands, and fingers to move the steering wheel. Experiment with reducing force when you are washing dishes, getting dressed, exercising, etc.

Then, start using your emerging *Subtlety* skills with your child. With every movement you do with her, changing diapers, getting dressed, picking her up, or any other way you help your child move, use less and less force.

Combine this with slowing down (the *Slow Essential*), and you will witness your child's brain waking up even more and beginning to change.

You can also apply *Subtlety* in your emotional expressions. Look for opportunities to reduce the emotional intensity that you bring to any interaction you have with your child. You can do this through the gentle tone of your voice, the feelings of ease with which you approach your child, or by reducing the intensity of your expectations of your child at any given moment.

Any time you provide your child with a model of *Subtlety*, through your own thoughts, feelings, and actions, she will experience that *Subtlety* firsthand. Through you, your child will learn *Subtlety*, mirroring and integrating what you bring to her.

As you and your child get better at *Subtlety*, you will both feel more, and your child's brain will get better and better at perceiving differences. These perceived differences and felt differences are the information your child's brain will use to move beyond her present limitations.

Practice the *Subtlety Essential* on a daily basis, notice any changes in your child, and also in your connection with your child.



The brain generates new information through the perception of differences.

—Anat Baniel



Essential 5 – Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm tells your brain what is important to you, amplifying whatever that is, making it stand out, infusing it with energy to grow more. It is a powerful energy that lifts you up and inspires you and others.

Enthusiasm is self-generated; it is a skill you can develop, choose to do and become good at. Think of *Enthusiasm* as a skill that you can apply in the service of helping your child overcome his limitations. *Enthusiasm* as a skill is your ability and your willingness to acknowledge as important the smallest of changes in your child, and for you to experience joy, internally celebrating those events or actions.

Enthusiasm is not about paying compliments (*Great job!*). Nor is it about clapping your hands to applaud something your child has accomplished. Instead, it is about developing your ability to create and amplify your own internal experience of deep delight and appreciation for your child's tiniest changes and improvements.

**When you amplify the *Enthusiasm* you feel within yourself,
your child feels it, even if you say nothing.**

Your skillful *Enthusiasm* helps your child notice and feel changes—the differences—within himself, and the positive emotions your child feels coming from you tells his brain that these changes are important to notice and grove in.

NeuroMovement Tip
5th Essential
Enthusiasm:
Turn the small into the GREAT
with your child.

NeuroMovement Tips – *Enthusiasm*:

It is easy to get enthusiastic when your child has an obvious breakthrough such as saying his first word and taking his first step. Look for opportunities to experience small changes, rather than only when your child achieves a known developmental milestone. Every child goes through a multitude of these tiny, seemingly unimportant changes on his way to achieving the more obvious developmental stages.

Think of a daily chore that you dislike, perhaps washing the dishes, folding laundry, or grocery shopping. Just before you do one of these chores, call up a memory where you experienced *Enthusiasm*. Feel it as fully as you can—feel delight, satisfaction, appreciation, and any other positive feelings associated with the memory. Then, begin doing the chore and see how the experience of doing it changes when you can maintain the feelings of *Enthusiasm*. Try doing this exercise three times every day for two to three minutes at a time.

Then, once you can generate and keep generating *Enthusiasm* intentionally, begin applying it as you perceive the smallest of changes in your child. Remember that your *Enthusiasm* is experienced internally. Notice how your child responds to this change in you. Many children, at first, simply become happier, more expressive, and exuberant.

As you continue applying other *Essentials* and generating *Enthusiasm* in response to the smallest changes in your child, you will see him change in new and often surprising ways.

Practice the *Enthusiasm Essential* as you notice small changes in your child, and see how your connection with your child changes.



Essential 6 – Flexible Goals

Even before our children are born, we consciously or unconsciously have goals for them. These goals are based on assumptions that our child will be healthy and fully capable, that her constitution and makeup will be much like our own. The moment we learn otherwise, the moment we find out our child has special needs, our world is turned upside down. We start asking very different questions:

What will this diagnosis mean for my child's future? What goals should I set for her? What should I do if she isn't progressing? Which interventions are best for her? What can I expect for my child and what can I do to help her achieve those expectations?

Every child is unique, even when she shares the same diagnosis with thousands of others.

Your child can accomplish more, with less suffering, while you stay open to possibilities otherwise not available, by *holding your goals loosely*. *Holding your goals loosely* means that you approach the goals for your child with clear intent yet with a light touch, and lots of flexibility.

We are much more accustomed to try to help our child reach a goal *right now*, by the fastest, shortest route possible. We often believe that this is the only way to get there. When our child fails, we think we should focus on this goal even more, that for our child to attain this goal we should be even more tenacious, more disciplined, and more single-minded. Try harder. And if our child has not reached the goal set for her, we often revert to thinking that it's the child's special needs that prevent success or even that there's something wrong with us.

Yet, as you will discover, it's by holding goals loosely for your child—having a flexible attitude toward these goals—that you and she will begin having breakthroughs that would otherwise be impossible.



*Play leads to discovery, feeding our brains with information
to create new and unexpected possibilities.*

—Anat Baniel

One example of imposing a rigid goal is the practice called “*tummy time*.” This involves placing infants on their bellies before they are able to roll over onto their bellies by themselves. The claim for doing this is that it strengthens the infant’s body and accelerates her ability to achieve certain milestones. However, studies have actually shown that this is not always the case. [Learn why we do not recommend tummy time.](#)

NeuroMovement Tip
6th Essential
Flexible Goals:
Embrace mistakes and
be playful with your child.

NeuroMovement Tips – Flexible Goals:

Your child’s experience of success plays a critical role in her ability to change and grow.

When a child takes any action—small or large, intentional or unintentional—and gets an outcome that she finds pleasurable and interesting, that’s the experience of success.

For example, when a baby grabs Mom’s hair and pulls on it unintentionally, Mom says: “Ouch!” The child is surprised and delighted with the sounds she produced. When she experiences such a success, her brain is more inclined to reinforce whatever patterns led to that success. Her brain lights up. The child *wakes up*, becomes more alive, and learns better and faster.

Success feels good. It empowers the child. Success breeds success. The child with special needs requires lots and lots of small successes for her brain to wake up and figure out unique solutions to her condition. If asked to do what is way beyond her present capabilities, her brain can’t figure it out; she will actually be stopped from learning that skill.

Having *Flexible Goals* means always moving around those edges of present ability where the experience of success—and change—are most accessible to your child.

To be more flexible with the goals you have for your child, try the following:

Focus on the process, not the goal. Remember that no one, not even the healthiest child, reaches any new milestone by simply jumping to that point or solely by practicing that activity. Rather, we achieve new goals *through a process*. Whenever you find yourself pushing your child to achieve the desired goal, stop what you are doing. Take a deep breath, and look away from the goal to allow your child's needed process to take place.

Wonder what your child will do next. When you are using any of the *Nine Essentials* with your child, *wonder* what she will do next. Wonder how your child is going to react. Wonder what small or large changes may occur. When you allow yourself to wonder, you create space for that which you couldn't have known to be part of the solution. You keep the field of possibilities wide open for your child.



Play with your child. Let your path with your child be playful. Learn to *meander* with your child, spontaneously taking different directions in what might seem to you to be a waste of time. Keep the importance of aimless activity and randomness in mind, being always attuned with your child and guided by her responses.

Let go of the outcomes. *Do not try to control the outcomes with your child.* When we try to control the outcome, things begin to go awry. Your child's brain needs freedom to create and integrate billions of bits of information; this is how we form the new. At best, your efforts to control limit your child and diminish the opportunities for new possibilities.

Cherish your connection. Have what is happening in the here and now with your child guide you to what you do next. This will give your child's heart and mind what it needs from you to be able to better overcome her limitations—to be *seen* by you, to *feel the connection* between the two of you. You will both feel empowered through this focus.

Embrace mistakes. Allow your child—and yourself—the room to make lots of mistakes. Do not worry about doing the *Essentials right*. Don't worry about your child doing things *right*. Don't even worry about doing *Flexible Goals right*. Mistakes create a treasure trove of information from which your child's brain (and yours) can discover ways to achieve different goals. The greater and more challenging the goal, the more room your child needs for mistakes, self-correction, and self-discovery.

Use the *Flexible Goals Essential* and see what kinds of changes happen with your child.



Essential 7 – The Learning Switch

The brain is either in a learning mode—the *Learning Switch* is on—or not. Healthy young children have their *Learning Switch* on and the dial turned on “high.” Their eyes are bright, their movement lithe, and they are full of energy.

Repetition, drill, and everyday stresses, as well as habitual patterns of thought, exercise, and emotions, all tend to turn the *Learning Switch* off. The same happens when a child has special challenges.

For the brain to properly do its job, the *Learning Switch* needs to be on.

Focusing narrowly on the specific area of your child’s problems or limitations is a normal and natural response. However, there is one big problem with that. When we do so, *we stop seeing the whole child*. The full scope of the child, with his rich internal experiences and complexity, tends to elude us—and we ourselves tend to get grooved in, in limited ways. (Our own *Learning Switch* gets turned off.)

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One of the first signs that our brains are rigidly using the same, existing patterns is boredom.

—Anat Baniel

When you open up and widen your focus so that you are seeing your child beyond his limitations, you turn your own *Learning Switch* back on. You will discover things about your child that you didn't notice before. You will discover new possibilities for interacting and helping your child. Suddenly new opportunities useful to your child will present themselves to you. This process turns on your own *Learning Switch*, as well as turning on your child's *Learning Switch*.

NeuroMovement Tip
7th Essential
The Learning Switch:
Bring in the NEW
with your child.

NeuroMovement Tips – The Learning Switch:

How do you turn your child's *Learning Switch* on?

Learn to recognize when your child's *Learning Switch* is turned on. Some parents describe this as the impression that a "veil has lifted." Your child's eyes get brighter, and he moves them as he follows what you are doing. He becomes more animated, more vocal, and begins to move more. He participates in whatever you are doing with him, even if in the most minimal ways. He smiles, laughs, or indicates he is happy in other ways. Maybe you notice that he is curious and interested, more aware of what is going on within him and around him.

Turn on your own *Learning Switch*. To be able to help your child turn on his *Learning Switch*, you first need to have your own *Learning Switch* turned on.



Imagine a room or other space in which you have the image of a luminous switch you can turn on at any time you wish. Give this switch a color and shape that pleases you. In your mind's eye, see your brain lighting up, humming along, ready to create new ideas and possibilities for you in your interactions with your child.

The more you do this, the easier it gets until it will be second nature to you.

When you bring yourself into the here and now, you have turned your *Learning Switch* on. Once you have done this, pay attention. Get interested and notice what is going on with your child. Attune yourself with him so that you can provide him with the conditions and the ever-changing input he needs to thrive.

Look to help your child turn on his *Learning Switch*. Find out what interests your child. It could be certain sounds, colors, shapes, games, activities or certain foods.

Use the other *Essentials: Movement with Attention, Slow, Subtlety, Enthusiasm, Flexible Goals, Imagination & Dreams, and Awareness* with your child. Combining any of the *Essentials* with something your child likes is almost certain to turn on his *Learning Switch*.

One parent discovered that her child, who was on the autism spectrum, loved to touch and feel colorful fabric ribbons. She collected a wide variety of little strips of colorful fabric and used *Variation* to help her daughter's brain differentiate, using colors and tactile sensations of the fabric in creative ways.

Safety, connecting with a parent, playfulness, joy, comfort, acceptance, and love all help turn your child's *Learning Switch* on.

Get curious about your child. Always observe how your child is being affected emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Know that everything your child is thinking, feeling, sensing, seeing, and hearing when his *Learning Switch* is turned on is in the service of his growth and development. Whenever his *Learning Switch* is on, he will be making new discoveries that will be meaningful to him.

Practice turning on your own *Learning Switch*, help your child to turn on his *Learning Switch*, and see what happens!

Essential 8 – Imagination & Dreams

We can think of imagination as a treasure trove for your child's future. The creative powers associated with imagination are intensely alive and active in healthy children. They are essential as the child reaches out into the world, developing new skills and abilities and discovering seemingly endless new possibilities.

When a child has special needs, her spontaneous inclination to imagine and dream may be fully or partially stopped. This can happen due to the challenges, and sometimes, the pain that takes up all of her attention as she simply tries to cope and survive.

It is of the utmost importance that we try and wake up her capacity for imagination, to give her access to this treasure trove that all healthy children can rely on for their learning and development. Through *Imagination and Dreams*, your child's brain upgrades itself to its highest level of functioning where it is more able and likely to find solutions for overcoming her limitations.



I like nonsense. It wakes up the brain cells.

—Dr. Seuss

A close relative of imagination is daydreaming. Children daydream a lot. Daydreaming allows them to explore endless possibilities in the safety of their own minds. However, many of us have been raised to believe that daydreaming is a waste of time, that it is unproductive. Research shows that just the opposite is the case. Your child's brain comes to life—*it lights up*—when she daydreams.

DID YOU KNOW?

While we are daydreaming, a wide variety of regions in the brain light up: those associated with impulse control, judgement, language, memory, motor function, problem solving, socialization, spontaneity, and the processing of sensory information.



Your child's learning process is a creative one, one that constantly draws on the powers of *Imagination and Dreams*. Everything she learns is imagined and invented within her own brain, formulated from within herself and from scratch. Nothing we might attempt to teach her becomes fully useful to her until this process takes place within her. And daydreaming is a huge part of her ability to do just that.

NeuroMovement Tip
8th Essential
Imagination & Dreams:
Help your child to
discover new possibilities!

NeuroMovement Tips – Imagination & Dreams:

The following tools will help you bring the powerful *Essential of Imagination and Dreams* into your child's daily life.

Play with your child. Play is one of the most common ways to activate a child's imagination. So much of what we do with our children, and what we ask them to do, is very serious and structured. It is usually even more so with a child who has special needs, particularly when she is receiving therapy and extra tutoring. Any opportunity to turn these activities into a game filled with imagination makes these activities more fun and effective. It brings levity, joy, and interest to the experience your child is having. By doing so, your child will become more engaged. This will actually upgrade the organizational capabilities of your child's brain and wake up its creative powers.

Co-imagine with your child. Your child may be limited in her ability to imagine at this time. Begin introducing imaginary ideas and suggestions as you are interacting with her. Look for any signs that she is trying to join in. If your child can talk, listen to her very carefully, and integrate what she suggests into the image, story, or game that you are creating. Don't worry if it doesn't make sense. If your child cannot talk or express herself very well yet, and you see she is trying to participate, ask her yes or no questions, lots of questions. Wait for her response and integrate her choice into your co-created imagery.

Take a co-daydream break. Next time you are with your child and she is a bit stuck or resistant to what you are trying to have her do, stop and take a daydreaming break. You can say to her: “Okay, let’s take a break here [from doing homework] and think of somewhere you would like to be right now.”

After she tells you, embellish a bit. Bring in more details, even imaginary beings and things beyond the real. Then ask your child to describe what she would be doing if she was there right now. You can introduce movement and music to the daydream. Perhaps sing a song or introduce a dance move or some other kind of movement.

Notice how your child comes to life.

Use storytelling with your child. Storytelling is one of the ultimate ways to imagine and daydream. Encourage your child to tell you her own stories, her daydreams.

You can even write them down and read them back to her on another day. Perform—play act—the dreams, or portions of the dreams and stories.

Wherever your child has limitations, work around them with imagination. You can your child can make believe anything. Become animated in your expression; this will wake up your child’s brain to create new connections and possibilities.

The more you work with *Imagination and Dreams*, the more you and your child will find yourselves inventing your own ways of bringing this *Essential* into your lives. You know your child best. Go for it. Have fun on the road to discovering new possibilities.



Use the *Imagination & Dreams Essential* to help your child’s brain create new information and patterns, and observe what changes take place.

Essential 9 – Awareness

The role of *Awareness* in our child's life, and in our own, becomes clearer when we think of *Awareness* as an action. *Awareness* is not a thing or a state of being or something we possess. *Awareness*, like movement, is something we do. Just as you might say, "I'm walking or cooking or playing with my child," I propose that we learn to say, "I'm *awaring*," or my child is *awaring* at this moment, or not. Once you start thinking of *Awareness* as an active verb, you can learn to recognize when your child is doing it—awaring or not.

When your child is *awaring*, he is drawing on the transformational capacities of his amazing brain. *Awareness* catapults your child's brain to higher and more potent capacities of organization and creation. By *awaring*, he gets better at that which he *awares*: his movements, thoughts, feelings, and actions. He transforms in ways that often seem miraculous.

**Awaring allows your child's brain to make a quantum leap
from where he presently is to his next level of abilities.**

Your child is *awaring* whenever he observes himself in action and realizes what he is doing, realizes that he could continue doing what he is doing, do it differently, change what he is doing, or stop altogether. He can begin *awaring* long before he has language. *Awaring*, like any other skill, is subject to growth and evolution. Over time, as your child applies his *awaring* capacities more and more, he will get better at it, and this improved ability to *aware* can help him greatly in overcoming his challenges.

NeuroMovement Tip
9th Essential
Awareness:
Help your child to be
fully alive and present.

NeuroMovement Tips – Awareness:

You cannot overestimate the power of *your child's own awaring* to transform him in quantum leaps. And never underestimate the importance of your own awaring in helping your child's brain do its own awaring. The following tools can help both you and your child awaken this remarkable and necessary human capability:

Awaring begins with you. To be able to help your child develop and more fully benefit from his awaring, you first have to develop and bring into intentional use your own awaring. We all aware spontaneously from time to time, in our daily lives. Perhaps we get up in the morning and notice that our back is feeling stiff. Then, we may link that stiffness to moving a heavy chair the day before. After *awaring* this for a moment, we realize: "I'm always thinking that I've got to do everything myself." Then we realize that the next time we have the option to act in a new way—we could ask for help.

You can go beyond this spontaneous awaring and begin to bring your intentionality to this action. You may choose to aware while you're standing in the line at the supermarket. You may aware that you are feeling rushed and that you are standing too close to the person in front of you in a futile attempt to accelerate the process.



Everyday activities and events provide endless opportunities for awaring. As you become more skillful at awaring, gradually apply it to more complex, more emotionally and cognitively demanding situations, such as when you try to do something new and challenging that you have never done before.

As you feel you are getting good at awaring, you are ready to bring these skills into your interactions with your child.

Awaring with your child. In the beginning, choose a situation or activity that is low stress for you and your child. For example, this may be watching a video together. From time to time, observe him instead of the movie. What can you become aware of in him? Perhaps you become aware of some change in his posture whenever he is absorbed in the movie. Or maybe you become aware of facial expressions that you have seen on his face at other times when he is happy or sad or frightened.

Then shift your attention and observe yourself. See if you can become aware of what you feel at this moment, and what thoughts you may have. *What do you desire at this moment? How is your own body organized? Are you comfortable? Are you sitting close to your child? Do you like the closeness?*

After a few days of practicing awaring with your child in low impact situations, begin awaring in situations and interactions with your child that are more challenging. This may be during a home therapy session or while you are helping your child with schoolwork or handling your child's challenging behavior on the playground. Before you do anything with your child, stop and become aware of what you are feeling. *Are you confused? Are you feeling that you are in charge? Are you calm? Frightened? Overwhelmed? Tired? Hopeful? Hopeless? Are you feeling love for your child at this moment? What are you thinking? What do you need at this moment?*

Don't censor yourself. There is no right or wrong here. *You are focusing on awaring; there is only what is.* Become aware of what it is you are driven to do, if anything. All this should take only a moment or two of your time. Think of your awaring as a quick, internal scan.

Awaring like this will pull you away from your own automatic reactions and actions, and give you more freedom to choose what to do and to come up with new creative ideas as to how to be and what to do with your child.

Answer the question: *Who am I doing it for?* Once you aware with your child, shift your awaring to your child. What do you see over there? Decide what it is you want to do with your child next, including the possibility of leaving him alone and just continuing to observe him.

Before you proceed, ask yourself: *Who am I going to do this for? Is it for my child, or is it for me? Or is it for both of us?*

So often parents find that the action they were about to take with their child, with the best of intentions and believing it's for their child, realize, after awaring that it's not the case. Often we take actions to reduce our own anxiety. Or we may be following the dictates of an authority figure we feel we dare don't question. Maybe we do what we do because we believe that it is in the best interest of our child without confirming that it is so. And sometimes we are simply on automatic pilot.

No matter what you decide to do, the sheer fact that you are awaring gives you more freedom and more choices about what you do or don't do with your child. Your own awaring will help elevate your child's potentials and move him to aware himself, helping his brain to be able to more successfully solve his challenges.

Awaring and making choices about what you are awaring awakens the brain in amazing ways. At such times, differentiation is highly active. It is like turning on a light to reveal and create new possibilities and new combinations in the brain that can lead to remarkable transformations for your child.

Use Awareness to help both you and your child become present in the moment, and observe the transformational changes that take place.



“There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it’s going to be a butterfly.”
—Buckminster Fuller

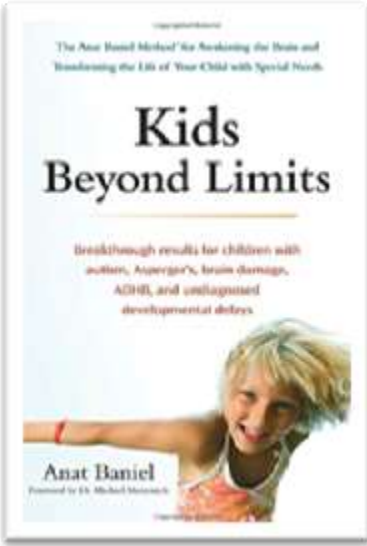


NOTE: This eBook contains excerpts taken from [Kids Beyond Limits](#).

There are many more tips and examples in this book on how to use the *9 Essentials* with your child. We highly recommend that you get a copy and learn more.

Look for an ABM NeuroMovement® for Children with Special Needs Practitioner in your area: www.anatbanielmethod.com/search.

Read the story of a parent who used the *9 Essentials* with his daughter:
www.anatbanielmethod.com/5-year-old-russian-girl-with-cerebral-palsy.



Learn more about *Kids Beyond Limits*:

www.anatbanielmethod.com/kids-beyond-limits



Kids Beyond Limits has been translated into Turkish.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.dogankitap.com.tr/kitap/Sinirlarini+Aşan+Çocuklar-2110>

We invite you to download the first couple of chapters for free:

www.anatbanielmethod.com/contact-us/sign-up-for-news.

You can also ask your local library to get a copy. If you need assistance in locating a copy, please contact us at staff@anatbanielmethod.com.

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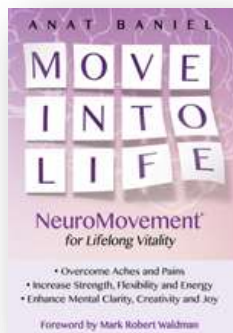
The greatest potential for transformation is not in trying to make children do what they can't, but in finding ways to help each child's brain differentiate and spontaneously discover how to go beyond his or her limitations.

—Anat Baniel

Discover the Ways to Benefit with NeuroMovement
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