

2026 Avanti Therapeutic Projects Symposium

Course B: Foundation for Optimal Function: Pediatric Primitive Reflex Integration

Sonia Story, M.S.

Friday February 27th, 2026; 8:30 a.m - 4:00 p.m. CST

Location: Live webinar via Zoom; on-demand via Thinkific for 45 days; recordings will be released within 1 week of the event.

6 Contact hours

Audience: OTs, SLPs, PTs, mental health professionals, educators, and interested others



Course Description:

A reflex is an automatic, innate movement pattern that assists us in our survival and development. In infancy, the innate reflex movements fuel brain growth and create the neuro-sensory-motor skills needed to progress to an upright, walking toddler. These same neuro-sensory-motor skills are the foundation for future learning, posture, strength, speech, and social-emotional skills. It is likely that a high majority of children and adults with learning challenges have unintegrated or incomplete reflexes that may cause mild to severe obstacles in functioning and in learning. Rhythmic and reflex integration movements promote calm, organized and mature neuro-sensory-motor foundations and can be used for all ages to address a wide range of functional challenges.

This course offers instruction for assessing and remediating innate rhythmic and primitive reflex movements that are retained or underdeveloped. Innate and integrative movements are combined to promote brain and sensory-motor function and the foundation for improved learning, speech, emotional-social skills, and physical balance, strength, stamina and coordination for all ages.

As a result of this training, Learners are prepared to recognize the presence of unintegrated (retained) primitive reflexes. Through specific movement and reflex integration protocols, participants will be able to assist in:

- a. Integrating reflex patterns.
- b. Promoting relaxation and readiness for learning.
- c. Building neuro-sensory-motor foundational skills that lead to improved physical, emotional and cognitive functioning.
- d. Attaining meaningful goals with greater ease.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Execute a 4 step Brain Tune up for calming
2. Recognize at least 3 ways to assess a client using rhythmic movements
3. Identify 3 principles important in applying innate rhythmic movements

2026 Avanti Therapeutic Projects Symposium

4. Identify the stimulus and movement pattern for each of 5 key primitive reflexes: Tonic Labyrinthine Reflex, Asymmetric Tonic Neck Reflex, Spinal Galant Reflex, Moro Reflex, and Symmetric Tonic Neck Reflex.
5. Practice rhythmic movements and reflex integration protocols for addressing 5 key primitive reflexes, thereby maturing the neuro-sensory-motor foundations for physical, emotional, and cognitive function.

	Course B: Agenda
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM CST	Welcome/Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to instructor, course, goals and objectives/adapt movement to your ability • What is neurodevelopmental movement? How does it differ from other forms of movement? Innate Rhythmic Movements, Primitive Reflexes Research & Case Studies. • Heart connection for optimal results
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM CST	Lab—2 Minute Brain Tune Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to facilitate Brain Tune up activities for children with challenges • Possible initial temporary uncomfortable responses to activities • What to do if someone is physically or emotionally triggered by movement
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM CST	Break
10:15 AM – 11:00 AM CST	Key Reflex for Balance—Tonic Labyrinthine Reflex (TLR) description & function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLR—how to assess and recognize lack of integration • Demo and Lab—Innate rhythmic movements and other activities for integrating TLR • Discussion, Research, and Case Studies
11:00 AM - 11:45 AM CST	Key Reflex for Coordination and Learning—Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex (ATNR) description & function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATNR—how to assess and recognize lack of integration • Demo and Lab— Innate rhythmic movements and other activities for integrating ATNR • Discussion, Research and Case Studies
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM CST	Lunch Break
**12:30 - 12:45 PM CST	** Optional: return early from lunch to hear about Camp Avanti (for campers and OTs)
12:45 PM - 1:30 PM CST	Key Reflex for Self-regulation & Supporting ATNR—Spinal Galant (SG) description & function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spinal Galant—how to assess and recognize lack of integration

2026 Avanti Therapeutic Projects Symposium

	Course B: Agenda
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demo and Lab— Innate rhythmic movements and other activities for integrating SG • Discussion, Research and Case Studies
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM CST	Key Reflex for Focus & Sensory Processing—Moro description & function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moro—how to assess and recognize lack of integration • Demo and Lab—Innate rhythmic movements and other activities for integrating Moro reflex • Discussion, Research and Case Studies
2:30 PM - 2:45 PM CST	Break
2:45 PM - 3:30 PM CST	Key Reflex for Visual Skills, Attention, & Learning—Symmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex description & function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STNR—how to assess and recognize lack of integration • Demo and Lab—Innate rhythmic movements and other activities for integrating STNR reflex • Discussion, Research
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM CST	Closing: Review, Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review stimulus and movement pattern of each primitive reflex • Evaluation • Where to Learn More
4:00 PM CST	Adjourn

Recommended Reading:

Is Primitive Reflex Integration Evidenced Based? by Sonia Story, M.S. at:
<https://moveplaythrive.com/evidence/research>

Goddard Blythe, S. (2023). Reflexes, movement, learning & behavior. Analysing and unblocking neuro-motor immaturity. Hawthorn Press.

Speaker Biography:

Sonia Story, M.S. has been teaching neurodevelopmental movements since 2006. She earned a Bachelor's degree in biology/psychology and a Master's degree in Movement Sciences. Sonia developed the Brain and Sensory Foundations course to provide comprehensive training in neurodevelopmental movements—combining innate rhythmic movements, play, primitive reflexes, and postural reflexes. She is the author of The Importance of Reflex Integration
[\[https://moveplaythrive.com/about/reflex-integration\]](https://moveplaythrive.com/about/reflex-integration) and articles

2026 Avanti Therapeutic Projects Symposium

[<https://moveplaythrive.com/evidence/research>], giving the rationale and evidence basis for using neurodevelopmental movements for helping with challenges such as ADHD, Sensory Processing Disorders, anxiety, emotional dysregulation, visual skill deficits, poor social skills, gross and fine motor delays and other neurodevelopmental and behavioral disorders. Sonia's work is featured in numerous podcasts, summits, and conferences, and in the books *Almost Autism: Recovering Children from Sensory Processing Disorder*; *Special Ed Mom Survival Guide*; *Family Health Revolution*; and *Same Journey, Different Paths—Stories of Auditory Processing Disorder*. Sonia's mission is to help children and families experience the profound benefits of neurodevelopmental and integrative movements for more functional and fulfilling lives.

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