

# Frequently Asked Questions about S.M.A.R.T. and other programs

## **S.M.A.R.T. Questions:**

### ***What is S.M.A.R.T.?***

S.M.A.R.T. (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training) is a program that prepares your child's brain and body for learning by incorporating movements that increase brain function into the classroom.

### ***What are the advantages of S.M.A.R.T. as compared to other programs described as "brain based" or that incorporate activity with academics?***

There are a number of programs out there designed to enhance learning through movement. We know that movement anchors learning and the S.M.A.R.T. program is designed specifically to address readiness issues through purposeful activities that provide stimulation to the brain stem. Today, most curriculums assume that basic automatic functions of the brain operate at an efficient level. This means that a child has no difficulty with such tasks as moving his or her eyes across a page while reading or adjusting focus when peering back and forth between the board and his or her desk. For many young children, these skills – directed by the brain stem - are not yet fully developed. This means that the brain cortex – where higher thinking skills like comprehension and analysis take place – must pause and do the work of the brain stem. S.M.A.R.T. activities help to stimulate the brain stem in order to allow it to do its automatic work and free up the brain cortex to do its important job of learning!

### ***If my child is doing fine in school, why should he or she need do S.M.A.R.T activities?***

Ongoing brain stimulation is important in primary grades because a young child's brain is still plastic. S.M.A.R.T. data shows that during early years, program activities help ALL children improve. Those who are reading at or beyond grade level increase their abilities through S.M.A.R.T.

### ***Does it cost more for my child to do S.M.A.R.T.?***

S.M.A.R.T. is no additional cost to parents. School districts and teaching staff have already invested their time and funds so that your child's teachers are trained in the program.

### ***How can I learn more about S.M.A.R.T.?***

Parents can go to the Minnesota Learning Resource Center (MLRC) website at [www.themlrc.org](http://www.themlrc.org) to learn more about the MLRC, the program's history, view reports, and subscribe to the e-newsletters.

### ***Can I do S.M.A.R.T. Activities with my child at home?***

YES! We strongly encourage activities that are done in the classroom to also be done at home. Teachers can copy S.M.A.R.T. Curriculum Guide pages and create a packet for parents to take home (or the guide is available for purchase via the website at [www.themlrc.org](http://www.themlrc.org) for \$40). You may also ask your child which S.M.A.R.T. activities he or she enjoys. Chances are they would be more than happy to demonstrate! There are a variety of activities, all of which can be done in various settings.... in the home, outside in the yard or at a park, waiting in line.....and even some, such as auditory activities, in the car.

***What can I do at home to help my child learn spelling words?***

Two examples of S.M.A.R.T. activities found in the Curriculum Guide are Airplane Writing and Rainbow Tracing. Kids love both and it makes homework time more fun for the parents too!

***My child skipped the creeping stage—will there be a problem at some point?***

While we cannot answer specifically for your child, we do know that every developmental step is important. For that reason, S.M.A.R.T. incorporates lots of creeping and crawling activities into the program to address any delays that may result.

***What about incorporating S.M.A.R.T. activities into an IEP?***

It's quite common for S.M.A.R.T. trained school specialists to incorporate activities into their time with a child.

***How long does it take to start seeing results in the classroom?***

We know that 80 hours of stimulation over the course of a school year, which breaks down to approximately 30 minutes per day, is important to see gains; however, many teachers and parents report progress in a child's ability to pay attention, follow directions, and improve academic and social skills well before 80 hours.

**Vision Questions:**

***What is Basic Vision?***

The purpose of the Basic Vision activity is to stimulate the most basic visual function, the pupillary reflex, and encourage focusing and visualization. It requires a dark room, a 75-100 watt light bulb, and a trouble light of corresponding wattage. The light is alternately turned on for one second and off for five.

***Are there any harmful affects associated with Basic Vision, like seizures?***

All of our S.M.A.R.T. vision activities used in classrooms have been directed and approved by our on-staff Developmental Optometrists. We have not had, nor heard of, any incidence of a seizure caused by Basic Vision. Generally, seizures are induced by a more rapidly flashing light, such as a strobe light. If there is any risk of a seizure-prone child having a problem, please err on the side of caution and wait until a parent or physician has cleared the student.

## **Audio Visual Entrainment (AVE) Questions:**

### ***What is AVE?***

Audio Visual Entrainment, also called AVE or Light and Sound, exposes the visual channel to pulsating lights and auditory channel to rhythmic beats or tones. Through the light and sound experience, Audio Visual Entrainment exposes the brain to useful patterns for enhancement and allows the brain to be more accessible to the person. Audio Visual Entrainment can help one reach a state of deep relaxation as a means for stress reduction and self-improvement. Much like a person can be lulled into serenity by the flickering firelight of a campfire, AVE entrains the person to adapt into a relaxed and focused state of being. AVE has been recognized in many schools districts as a useful tool for academic enhancement especially for students with learning challenges. The AVE device is not only portable, but also can be conveniently done in the privacy of your home.

### ***What specific issues does AVE address?***

AVE is a brain exercise and training program designed to modulate a variety of issues, such as improving attention, impulsivity, behavior, bed-wetting, teeth grinding, headaches, anxiety, and depression. This technology is often used across a population for a variety of reasons—many professional athletes and corporate executives use AVE as a “peak performance” tool to help regulate brain activity at an optimal level and improve wellness.

### ***Does AVE cure my child’s problems, or must he or she continue sessions on an ongoing basis?***

Depending on the child and individual situation, AVE has been shown to permanently cure a number of issues; while in other cases, a maintenance program is best for long-term results.