



Get S.M.A.R.T.!

Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training

S.M.A.R.T. is a curriculum of the Minnesota Learning Resource Center (MLRC), the teacher-training institute of A Chance To Grow, a nonprofit agency that helps children with learning challenges, developmental delays, and brain injuries reach their highest potential.

The S.M.A.R.T. Curriculum is an innovative multi-sensory learning approach that develops and enhances the physiological and neurological readiness skills that young students need to succeed in school today. It focuses on brain stimulation through movement and trains the brain stem to perform automatic functions necessary for reading. Children who develop mature readiness skills through S.M.A.R.T. activities have shown an increased attention span, ability to focus, and improved reading scores.

Compatible with any curriculum, S.M.A.R.T. activities provide multi-sensory stimulation, which exercises the brain and prepares it for reading in a way that traditional classroom instruction does not. Most students who struggle with reading have difficulties with comprehension. This is because their brain cortex, which controls conscious motor activity and higher levels of functioning (such as comprehension), is working overtime to carry out responsibilities that the brain stem, which regulates unconscious motor activity, has not been trained to handle yet. In order for the brain cortex to process material, the brain stem must be able to perform its own tasks, such as move the eyes from left to right across a page, adjust visual focus between the desk and board, and sound out letters to form words. This is a common problem (lacking readiness skills) that often goes undiagnosed, especially in low-income families. Professional therapists have specifically designed S.M.A.R.T. activities to train the brain stem and correct this issue.

The S.M.A.R.T. Curriculum helps *all* children—those who struggle and those already at, or beyond, grade level—develop naturally in their early years. It integrates fun and challenging activities into the classroom that increase the brain's learning capacity and prepare it for reading. Schools that used S.M.A.R.T. in the past have successfully helped children advance, and in the process, saved money through less referrals for costly Title I and special education services. S.M.A.R.T. is a fun, healthy program that transforms the classroom into a playful atmosphere, enhances readiness skills in children, and allows them to reach their full potential.