

Horses and Autism

At Miracles in Motion

What we focus on in the therapeutic riding classroom:

1. Progressive Structure
 2. Positive Reinforcement (Wearing a helmet leads to riding the horse, “First-Then” technique)
 3. Negative Reinforcement (“guided falls” if individual is apt to dismount during a ride to safely teach consequence)
 4. Sensory integration experiences, tactile stimulation
 5. Use of Visual and Verbal symbols (PECS “picture exchange communication system” and Visual Schedule may be used)
 6. Interaction with the horse is gentle, not forced, and easier for a connection to be made by the child
 7. Encourages speech for some individuals
 8. Skill building objectives
 9. Increases awareness of body position in space
 10. Motion of the horse is centering and engages individual “in the moment”
 11. Provides exercise
 12. Promotes success and independence
 13. Prepared transitions
 14. Use of gestures where necessary
 15. Review of child’s IEP and support through lesson goals and objectives
 16. Implement Routines and Patterns
 17. Use of music, chants, songs
 18. Rewards match individual’s personal interests
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