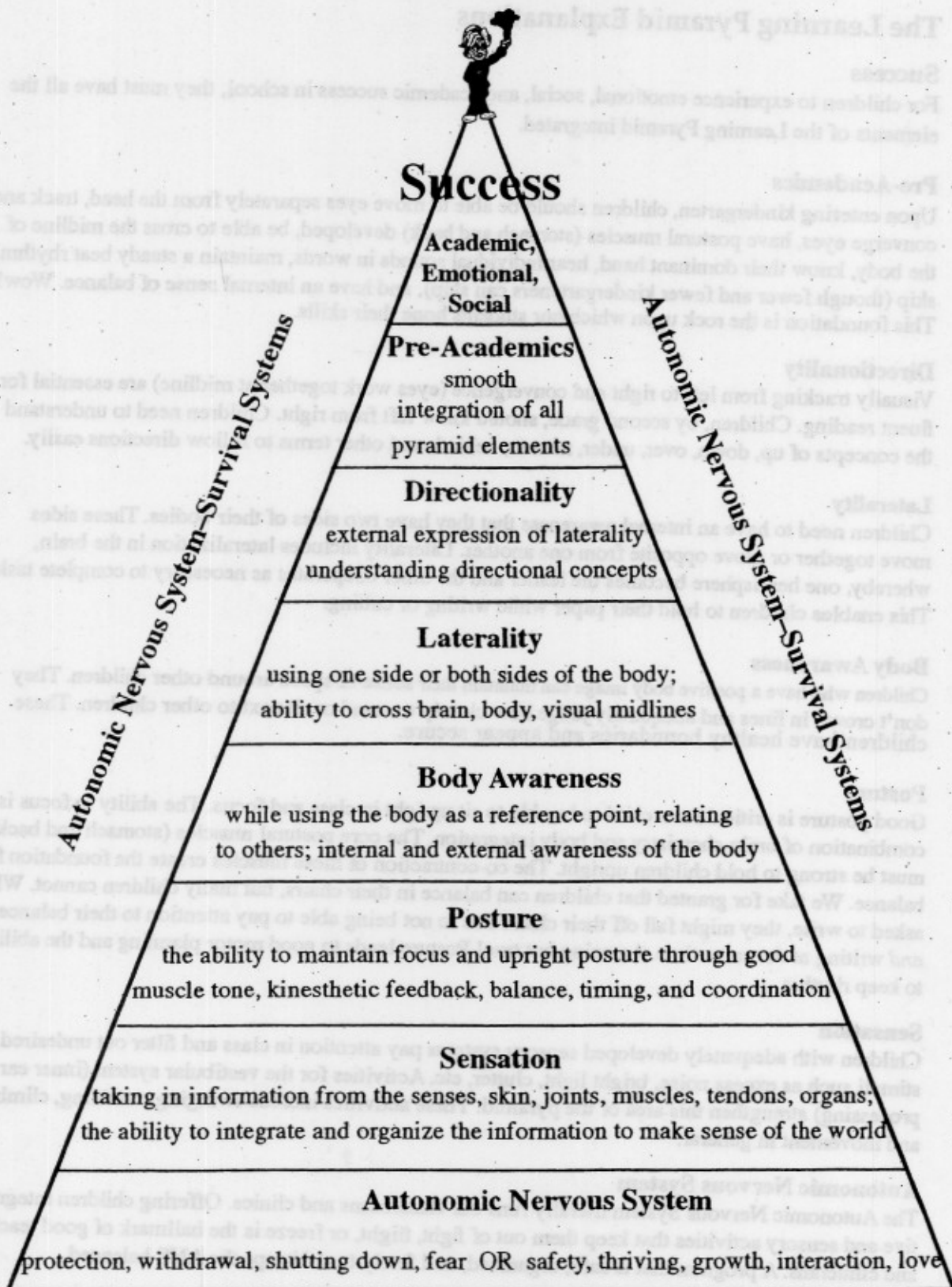


The Modified Learning Pyramid



The Learning Pyramid Explanations

Success

For children to experience emotional, social, and academic success in school, they must have all the elements of the Learning Pyramid integrated.

Pre-Academics

Upon entering kindergarten, children should be able to move eyes separately from the head, track and converge eyes, have postural muscles (stomach and back) developed, be able to cross the midline of the body, know their dominant hand, hear individual sounds in words, maintain a steady beat rhythm, skip (though fewer and fewer kindergarteners can skip), and have an internal sense of balance. Wow! This foundation is the rock upon which our students hone their skills.

Directionality

Visually tracking from left to right and convergence (eyes work together at midline) are essential for fluent reading. Children, by second grade, should know left from right. Children need to understand the concepts of up, down, over, under, next to, behind, and other terms to follow directions easily.

Laterality

Children need to have an internal awareness that they have two sides of their bodies. These sides move together or move opposite from one another. Laterality includes lateralization in the brain, whereby, one hemisphere becomes the leader and the other cooperates as necessary to complete tasks. This enables children to hold their paper while writing or cutting.

Body Awareness

Children who have a positive body image can maintain their sense of space around other children. They don't crowd in lines and adequately judge how closely to stand or sit next to other children. These children have healthy boundaries and appear secure.

Posture

Good posture is critical for a child to be able to sit upright in class and focus. The ability to focus is a combination of brain chemistry and body integration. The core postural muscles (stomach and back) must be strong to hold children upright. The co-contraction of these muscles create the foundation for balance. We take for granted that children can balance in their chairs, but many children cannot. When asked to write, they might fall off their chairs due to not being able to pay attention to their balance *and* writing at the same time. Amazing but true! Posture leads to good motor planning and the ability to keep rhythm.

Sensation

Children with adequately developed sensory systems pay attention in class and filter out undesired stimuli such as excess noise, bright light, clutter, etc. Activities for the vestibular system (inner ear processing) strengthen this area of the pyramid. These activities include swinging, tumbling, climbing, and movement in general.

Autonomic Nervous System

The Autonomic Nervous System literally runs our classrooms and clinics. Offering children integrative and sensory activities that keep them out of fight, flight, or freeze is the hallmark of good teachers and clinicians. A program that is safe, organized, and finely tuned keeps the ANS balanced.