

What is the Arrowsmith Program?

The Arrowsmith Program is a classroom-based program that is founded on the principles of neuroplasticity and works to strengthen weak cognitive areas and connections that are the underlying causes of struggles in learning. The program is composed of cognitive exercises developed by Barbara Arrowsmith Young that strengthen weak cognitive areas and connections. Arrowsmith Toronto conducts ongoing teacher training and support, and remote monitoring of all student progress.

Is the program tailored to the student? How does it work?

The program is individualized for each student. Through a comprehensive Arrowsmith assessment we are able to identify the student's areas of cognitive strength and weakness, and based on these results, create a program tailored to each student.

When would one expect to see evidence of cognitive change? What kind of changes?

We can begin to see changes in students after 3-4 months of participation in the program. For example, if the student has a Motor Symbol Sequencing difficulty, where he/she has trouble learning motor plans for writing, work in this area quite often begins to improve hand writing after a few months of work. Others will experience improvements in their memory, understanding and attention to task. With more time in the program, students often exhibit behavioral changes, as their new cognitive abilities begin to increase confidence and social awareness.

Does the program address attention issues like ADD/ADHD?

Arrowsmith recognizes that ADD/ADHD can be the result of:

1 - A cognitive pile up, where there are several weak cognitive areas that often include weakness in executive functioning areas. And since ADD/ADHD diagnoses are based on observable behaviours, if a child cannot hold attention, carry out a task, is easily distracted, or has difficulty regulating their behaviours they are often labeled as having ADD/ADHD when in fact it is a result of weaknesses in a combination of cognitive areas. As students work through their Arrowsmith Programs they begin to strengthen these weak cognitive areas and the need for medication is often reduced or eliminated completely.

2 - A neurochemical imbalance at the subcortical level. Because this form of ADD/ADHD is at the neurotransmitter level it is independent of cognitive deficits and therefore cannot be addressed through the Arrowsmith Program.