

Angelman syndrome (AS)

Equine Therapy/Hippotherapy

Specially trained physical, occupational and speech therapists use this medical treatment for clients who have movement dysfunction. Historically, the therapeutic benefits of the horse were recognized as early as 460 BC. The use of the horse as therapy evolved throughout Europe, the United States and Canada.

Read more here: [How Can Equine Therapy Benefit My Child with Angelman Syndrome?](#)

Read more on New Zealand Riding For The Disabled Association (NZRDA) [here](#).

Hippotherapy uses activities on the horse that are meaningful to the client. Treatment takes place in a controlled environment where graded sensory input can elicit appropriate adaptive responses from the client. This approach is not about teaching specific riding skills (that is therapeutic riding) but rather a foundation is established to improve neurological function and sensory processing. This foundation can then be generalized to a wide range of daily activities.

- The horse's walk provides sensory input through movement which is variable, rhythmic and repetitive.
- The resultant movement responses in the client are similar to human movement patterns of the pelvis while walking.
- The variability of the horse's gait enables the therapist to grade the degree of sensory input to the client, then use this movement in combination with other clinical treatments to achieve desired results.
- Clients respond enthusiastically to this enjoyable learning experience in a natural setting.

Physically, hippotherapy can improve balance, posture, mobility and function. It may also affect psychological, cognitive, behavioral and communication functions for clients of all ages. For those children with AS who enjoy being around horses, therapeutic riding is another activity option that is sure to help improve confidence, overall fitness and general wellbeing.