

Table 1: Summary of studies into the impact of massage on children with special educational needs

Author	Date	Participants	Type/duration of massage	Adult input	Control measures	Main outcomes
Field et al	1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 children with autism Around 4.5 years old Similar in ability, behavioural traits and economic background Specialist school setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific massage protocol including moderate pressure and smooth stroking movements to the head and neck, arms and hands, torso, and legs and feet 15 minutes twice weekly for four weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massage administered by volunteer student Assessed by teachers and graduates blinded to the group assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touch control group experienced 1-1 attention sitting on the lap of an adult with their arms around them whilst completing an activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both groups showed less aversion to touch Touch therapy group also reduced stereotypic behaviour Touch therapy group less likely to respond to insignificant sounds following the massage programme
Escalona et al	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 children, 3-6 years old Autism specialist school Similar in language and behaviour adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents were asked to massage or read a specific story to their child before bedtime One-month period, 15 minute protocol just prior to bedtime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents trained by a massage therapist to use massage procedure Reports from school, blinded to groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control parents read a specific story to their child before bedtime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents of the massage group reported a decrease in hyperactivity, restless-impulsive behaviours as well as positive effects on attentiveness and emotional state Reports from the school on massage group saw an improvement in attentiveness, on task behaviour, decrease in stereotypical and repetitive behaviours
Field et al	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 male adolescents (mean age: 14.5) with ADHD Predominantly middle socioeconomic background Various ethnicities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained therapists Teachers, blind to the groupings, assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 minute massage over 10 consecutive days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-massage group had relaxation therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants self-reported feeling happier Teachers identified the massage group only as being less fidgety, spending more time on task and less hyperactive
Khilnani et al	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 young people with ADHD (7-18) Similar economic background Various ethnicities/gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained therapists Teachers, blind to the groupings, assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received 20 minutes of massage twice weekly over a monthly period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Randomly assigned to a massage group or a wait control group (who were asked to relax for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reported feeling happier Teachers noted reduced hyperactivity Reduction in anxious-passive behaviours

					20 minutes)	
Hernandez-Reif et al	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Down's Syndrome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained massage therapist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received two 30 minute weekly massage sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touch control group experienced 1-1 attention sitting on the lap of an adult with their arms around them whilst completing an activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both groups showed social development attributed to benefits of 1-1 attention Massage group showed greater fine and gross motor motion Study argues this would potentially lead to increased self-esteem