

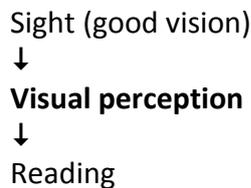
Schools Therapy Resource Pack

Section 6b –
Visual perception

Introduction

Visual perception enables a child to recognise and understand a visual stimulus e.g. a shape or colour; it gives meaning to what is seen. There is a link between sensory processing (see Section 6a) and aspects of cognitive skills.

This can be thought of in three stages, for example:-



Visual perception can be broken down into a number of skills which are important in the classroom but also in everyday life:-

- ability to spot details in a complex background (figure-ground skill) helps to pick out the right number in a number square but also to spot the 'green man' lit up at the crossing
- recognising which way round a figure is placed (position in space) helps avoid letter reversals but also to follow direction signs
- being able to relate figures to each other (spatial relations) helps learn about shapes and patterns but also to move around without bumping into things

All visual perceptual skills rely on visual acuity and to some extent on motor skills (whether postural control, eye fixation/tracking or hand/eye coordination). It is therefore helpful to consider whether underlying difficulties may be contributing to problems with visual perception. (Refer to other sections as appropriate).

Activities to improve visual perception for the younger child (see also Pre-writing Activities in Handwriting Section):-

- The Achieving Body Control (ABC) programme
- Copying games (Follow my Leader, Simon Says)
- Inset puzzles, simple jig-saws and construction
- Identify objects/shapes by feel as well as sight
- Match and sort objects, colours, shapes
- Join the dots to make an object/shape
- Looking games : I-Spy, 'Find one that's the same/different'
- Copy simple shapes/patterns
- Follow simple mazes
- For learning to recognise and copy shapes, letters and numbers, use a multi-sensory approach: combine looking, movement, touch, speech and music (singing)

For the older child, strategies for visual perception link to different aspects of learning:-

Reading, writing

- Make sure the child sits facing the board
- Enlarge worksheets, thereby enlarging print
- Colour or highlight key information on the board or on a page
- Use a ruler or finger to highlight text (see Resource List for 'line tracker')
- Exclude unnecessary detail on worksheets
- Provide partially completed worksheets
- Provide a paper copy of work that is on the board
- Trace shapes, numbers and letters with a finger before drawing
- Use lined paper for writing (try raised lines – see Resource List)

Spatial organisation and copying

- Use a grid method to copy drawings (place an acetate grid over the drawing to be copied)
- Provide pre-drawn tables, graphs and pie charts to fill in
- Reinforce spatial concepts e.g. under, over, in front, behind, left, right,
- Colour margins: green for 'start' and red for 'stop'
- Use stickers to indicate where to start on the paper
- Trial spacers between words: index finger, penny, ice lolly stick
- Provide a cue sheet with sample layout
- Plan picture content before drawing
- Use stencils to draw shapes

Construction

- Help child recognise the relationship between 2D and 3D by placing an actual cube with a picture of a cube
- Show child a completed sample to demonstrate finished object and use as model
- Provide partially completed object for completion
- Work in 'parallel' with LSA / teacher / a buddy when constructing object
- Practise following simple visual/verbal instructions to make an object
- Use tick list for steps in process

Numeracy

- Use graph paper for setting out maths calculations
- Use coloured columns for tens/ones(units)
- Fold paper to indicate columns
- Provide a cue sheet with example of calculation required
- Use concrete examples to demonstrate length, depth, height etc.
- Continue to use visual / concrete representation to teach concepts e.g. fractions