

Visual Perceptual Skills

How They Affect Children

What is visual perception? It's a person's ability to process and make sense of visual information in the environment around them.

A child can have 20/20 vision and still have problems with visual perception. Children can still struggle with putting shapes or symbols together, remembering them, or recognizing that a shape is still the same regardless of its size even with 20/20 vision.



Visual perceptual difficulties can cause children to struggle in areas of school. Children can struggle with recognizing letters when reading, aligning math problems correctly, visualizing words in order to spell them, or discriminating among visual stimuli to attend only to the task at hand.

Some signs that your child may be struggling with visual perceptual skills:

- Your child becomes tired easily.
- They squint, rub, or have watery eyes when copying words from a board.
- They lose their place when reading.
- They complain of double vision and/or headaches.
- They have crossed or drifting eyes after 6 months of age.
- They have difficulty moving their eyes in synchrony.
- They confuse similar words.
- They have difficulty with sizing or spacing while copying words.
- They struggle with hand-eye coordination

A multifaceted approach can be used to help your child learn. Teachers and parents can take a multisensory approach to help children learn letters, shapes, and numbers. Learning environments can be altered to decrease visual distractions and increase attention.

Suggestion: Talk with an occupational therapist and vision specialist to assess your child's visual perceptual skills and discuss what their individual needs are.

Resource:

Case-Smith, J. (2005). *Occupational therapy for children* (5th ed.). Maryland Heights: Mosby/Elsevier.

