

## Trafford Children's Therapy Service

### VISUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS - GENERAL

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**What is it?** Visual Perception is the ability to focus visually and to make fine discriminations in visual images.

**Why is it important?** Good visual perception is an important skill, especially for school success. Children need good visual perception to discriminate well, copy text accurately, develop visual memory of things observed, develop good eye-hand co-ordination and integrate visual information while using other senses in order to perform tasks like recognising fine differences in an image.

**Visual perception is a complex process and includes:**

**Visual discrimination:-**

The ability to match exact characteristics of two shapes when one of the shapes is among similar shapes. It is noticing similarities/differences between shapes, objects and symbols. Visual discrimination is interpreting differences between objects observed e.g. b versus d

**Visual form constancy:-**

This skill involves an ability to recognise the dominant features of a shape/figure regardless of size, shading, texture or position. Visual form constancy enables us to see a form and be able to find that form even though the form may be smaller, larger, rotated, reversed, and/or partially hidden. It enables us to realise that objects possess various properties such as size, shape and position. As we begin to explore objects as babies this skill develops along with eye-hand co-ordination.

E.g.: Identifying a car as a car even though it is partially obscured



**Visual Closure:-**

Is the ability to determine, whether an image can be identified among incomplete images that are similar to the original but may have something missing. Visual closure is the ability to complete an incomplete image e.g. a dot-to-dot picture or a puzzle. Visual closure enables a child to identify an exact figure from one that is only partially visible. It also enables us to integrate parts of an object/figure into a whole. This skill requires a grasp of 'form constancy'.

E.g.

- Writing at speed
- Closing letters when forming them
- Seeing letters individually within a word
- Understand that visual forms, or parts, of a letter join to make a whole.
- Completing jigsaws

**Visual spatial relationships:-**

Visual spatial relationships are the ability to perceive the position in space of two or more objects in relation to one's body in space, and in relation to each other. Position in space is the ability to perceive the spatial orientation of an object and/or line of print. Position in space enables us to discriminate between reversals and rotations of figures. It involves spatial relations concepts. Such as letter reversals and substitution; b/d, f/t/j. These letters have similar forms and must be distinguished by their spatial positioning.

Knowing where one is in relation to an object e.g. front, behind, above, below, left, and right. This skill is a prerequisite to understanding 'position in space'. Difficulties with spatial awareness can be combined with poor body image (knowing and being aware of parts of their body) and show difficulties in the following areas;

- Knowing where an object is in relation to one's self
- Hesitant with movements
- Reaching for the handle of a mug
- Approaching and moving through a doorway
- Judging distance/height such as negotiating steps, pouring from containers.
- Grasping numerical concepts and maths skills
- Difficulty with directional words such as; in, out, up, down, left and right.
- Poor spacing between words and letters
- Letter sizing
- Organising work area
- Writing on the line

**Visual Sequential memory:-**

This skill enables us to remember and recall a visual image of objects seen, the order or sequence of objects, letters or numbers, and then be able to find this shape/object from a series of similar ones. This skill is necessary for remembering and recalling visual information and plays a key role in learning. It involves a clear knowledge of what is seen, storage and retention of visual information and its ready retrieval.

E.g.:

- Learning letters and numbers
- Copying, especially from the blackboard
- Following instructions and locating items
- Sequencing of letters for spelling
- Remembering words that make up sentences
- Remembering numbers for phone numbers
- Reading
- Remembering a string of instructions
- Determine a logical order

**Visual Figure ground:-**

Visual figure-ground distinction is the ability to maintain visual attention on an object whilst other stimuli form the background (i.e. finding an object amongst many). Figure ground is important for attending to tasks / instructions, finding objects (e.g. items in drawers). It is a skill that is needed when scanning.

A child who cannot distinguish figure from background usually finds it difficult to concentrate on one thing only. Surrounding noises and activity easily distracts them. At school they may appear inattentive. Work may be messy e.g. when asked to rule a line, the line seldom stops

where it should but continues on up the side of the book. e.g. selecting a blue pencil among many or focusing on a particular word among others.

E.g.

- Children with these difficulties may appear inattentive and disorganised
- Difficulty finding a place on a page
- Copying from the blackboard
- Difficulty working in a crowded space
- Finding a jigsaw piece from a collection
- Seeing a traffic islands on a busy street
- Finding the ruler in your desk
- Seeing an object on a cluttered table

### **Visual Motor Integration**

The combining of visual perceptual information to plan and complete a motor output or simply integrating visual input with motor output. Children may have difficulty with this even though their perceptual and motor skills are adequately developed. It is the integration and combination of the two which is difficult. It is the ability of the eyes and the hands to work together. Children may have delayed visual perceptual and/or motor skills which also results in poor visual motor integration.

E.g.

- Catching and throwing a ball, eye-hand coordination
- Copy recognised shapes
- Cutting, Drawing, writing

