

Identifying Vision Skill Difficulties in Children

There are 8 visually related skill-sets.

1. Acuity

DEFINED: 20/20 on eye chart. Clear edges at near and far.

- Blurriness seeing up close
- Blurriness seeing in the distance

2. Accomodation:

DEFINED: Ability to adjust to near and far with stamina and flexibility; important for reading and writing, looking from blackboard to desk.

- Blurry or fuzzy when changing from close to far or vice versa
- Fatigue or discomfort especially with close work
- Comprehension drops (reading begins well, then drops off)
- Moves book or head to make it clear
- Avoids reading or close work
- Makes errors which seem careless
- Reading comprehension doesn't match intelligence; the more they read the worse the problem.

3. Eye Teaming:

DEFINED: Ability of the eyes to work together as a fine-tuned team; critical for reading and writing.

- Covers one eye
- Holds book or head to one side
- Adds or removes words
- Repeats letters when copying
- Difficulty aligning columns
- Complains of double vision

4. Eye Movements:

DEFINED: Smooth, even movements of the eyes; accurate movements to locate items visually; critical for reading and attention.

- Moves Head, not eyes
- Loses place easily
- Makes frequent errors reading, misses small words, endings or beginnings of words
- Uses finger to keep place reading
- Often labeled "attention problem"

5. Eye-Body Coordination:

DEFINED: Important for writing, drawing and sports

- Inaccurate spacing when drawing or writing
- Poor handwriting, outside lines when colouring
- Difficulty lining up columns
- Understands but has difficulty putting thoughts onto paper

6. Visual Memory

DEFINED: Ability to visualize or remember things; critical for spelling

- Difficulty learning to spell
- Can't picture in mind images of what has been read
- Difficulty recalling what they did that day or say on the way home
- Difficulty remembering where they were, to find place reading again
- Difficulty visualizing, imagining

7. Visual Perception:

DEFINED: Understanding and recognizing likes and differences of shapes, sizes and spacing.

- Difficulty learning to read
- labeled dyslexic
- 'b's and 'd's backwards, scrambles other letters or words
- Can't 'sound out' a word

8. Visual-Emotional Awareness:

DEFINED: Awareness of the stressors, emotions, mental strain and thoughts that effect visual acuity.

- Subjective discomfort with blur that is higher than the actual prescription
- Child has experienced an emotionally disturbing or subjectively overwhelming or confusing change in his/her life. eg. birth of sibling, sexual abuse, death of parent, move, divorce, beginning of school, that they have not had the necessary psychological or emotional support for.
- Blur is noticed or complained about more at certain times & in certain circumstances or with certain people.
- Child needs or wants glasses in certain circumstances and not in others
- Observable anxiety in tasks requiring the intake of information - a sense of feeling pressured or overwhelmed and unable to take in 'see' all the information at once.