

Checklist for Visual Perceptual Processing problems

What is visual perception

Visual perception is our ability to process and organise visual information from the environment. This requires the integration of all the body's sensory experiences including sight, sound, touch, smell, balance and movement. Most children can integrate these senses by the time they start school. A child or young person with even mild visual-perceptual difficulties may struggle with learning in the classroom and possibly other areas of life.

A child or young person with visual perceptual problems may be able to easily read an eye chart (acuity) but have difficulty organising and making sense of visual information. It has been estimated that around 40% of people with specific learning difficulties also have subtle visual problems, as do some people who have no specific learning difficulties.

There are many symptoms that may indicate problems with visual perceptual processing. Some of these are observable, while others are discovered through testing, so this checklist will focus on observable signs of perceptual difficulties in different visual areas. These have been collated from various checklists that are referenced on page 2. A separate assessment can subsequently be given to the pupils by a professional to identify visual-perceptual challenges that are not possible to observe.

What are the signs of visual perceptual processing problems?



Children or Young People with visual problems may:

Signs of visual perception problems	Checklist
Demonstrate difficulty putting together age-appropriate puzzles.	
Have crossed or drifting eyes past six months of age.	
Have difficulty moving eyes together or individually.	
Demonstrate short attention span and perseveration.	
Tire easily when reading.	
Lose concentration and become distracted easily when reading.	
Become fidgety and restless when reading.	
Get headaches or brow-aches when reading.	
Be reluctant to read	
Lose their place when reading.	
Re-read or skip text/lines when reading.	
Omit, substitute, repeat or confuse similar words	
Close or cover one eye when reading.	

Signs of visual perception problems	Checklist
Prefer dim light to bright light for reading.	
Use a marker or finger to keep their place when reading	
Have their difficulties increase the longer they read.	
Focus on 'rivers of white' between words, not the words themselves.	
Struggle to comprehend what they have read.	
Squint, rub or have watery eyes when reading/writing/copying from the board.	
Demonstrate difficulty discriminating between certain letters or numbers.	
Read/write letters or numbers (e.g. b/d, p/q, u/n, 3) back to front or inverses numbers (e.g. 17 for 71) beyond a chronological age of 7 or 8.	
Have difficulty with sizing, spacing or copying written words.	
Exhibit poor handwriting and artwork.	
May misspell words frequently and may be inconsistent with this even after practice.	
Give correct answers when a teacher asks verbally but can't put answers down on paper.	
Exhibit poor performances in tests.	
Appear brighter than test scores indicate.	
Have poor perception of space and time.	
Confuse left/right directions.	
Have poor posture during writing/reading assignments.	
Exhibit poor motor coordination.	
Frequently trip, stumble, bump into things, have trouble skipping/jumping.	
Have eye-hand coordination problems e.g. shoe tying, buttons, in certain sports.	
Struggle to explain contents of a picture or categorise pictures.	
Need auditory cues and clues.	
Report visual difficulties, e.g. blurred/double vision, eye strain, paper 'glaring', print moving/shimmering/flashing, finding certain patterns uncomfortable to look at, disliking fluorescent lighting.	
Demonstrate difficulty finding things, such as matching socks in a drawer.	

CYP with suspected visual-perceptual difficulties should be referred to an appropriate professional, e.g. Orthoptist, Optometrist or Ophthalmologist in the context of a comprehensive assessment of vision.

References

- [How to carry out a screening for visual perception problems](#)
- [Guidelines for identifying visual perception problems in school-age children](#)
- [Visual perceptual processing disorder checklist](#)