

Seven Visual Abilities for Learning

1. 20/20 Acuity

The ability to temporarily see tiny letters at 20 feet. If the child lacks 20/20 acuity, it is likely that glasses will be prescribed.

2. Accommodation

The ability to maintain clear vision at all distances. Accommodation problems include:

- Has poor reading comprehension
- Avoids reading
- Blinks excessively while reading
- Has frequent headaches or rubs eyes when reading
- Complains that things are blurry even though child's acuity is 20/20
- Moves books or their head closer and further away to 'clear the image'
- Makes careless errors when reading or copying from the chalkboard/whiteboard

3. Eye Teaming Ability

The ability to coordinate the two eyes together so that they both point at precisely the same object. Eye teaming problems include:

- Child covers or closes one eye – rests head in palm of hand which 'just happens' to cover an eye
- Holds books to one side or turns their head to one side when reading
- Adds or removes parts from words
- Repeats letters in words when copying from the chalkboard
- Fails to align the columns of numbers correctly when performing math problems

4. Eye Movement Ability

This includes moving the eyes from point to point, following a moving object with the eyes, or holding the eyes stationary. Eye movement problems include:

- Moves head rather than eyes when reading
- Frequently loses their place or skips lines
- Alters or misses the beginning and ending of words – 'small' words are skipped
- Child needs a finger to keep their place
- Child is labeled as having a problem with 'attention'

5. Visual Perception

The ability to compare and understand things which are seen. Visual perception problems include:

- Not learning how to read on schedule
- Having difficulty in kindergarten
- Having problems recognizing letters or numbers after completing kindergarten
- Still writes b's and d's backwards past the end of first grade
- Frequently confuses similar beginnings and endings of words
- Recognizes the sounds of individual letters but cannot break words down into syllables

6. Eye-Hand Coordination

The ability to use the eyes to guide the hands. Eye-hand coordination problems include:

- Poor handwriting
- Difficulty spacing their words and keeping them on the line when writing
- Avoids coloring, drawing or maze-tracking activities – outside the lines when coloring
- Has difficulty keeping the columns lined up when writing math problems
- Has difficulty getting their thoughts down on paper

7. Visual Imagery Ability

The ability to 'see pictures in the mind'. There are two separate categories:

- Visual memory is the ability to retrieve or remember a picture of what has been seen in the past.
- Visualization is the ability to form new pictures in your mind. Visual imagery ability problems include:
 - Persistent difficulty in learning to spell
 - Fails to recognize the same word in the next line
 - Fails to 'picture in their mind' what they are reading
 - Has difficulty recalling what they did during the day
 - Loses their place during reading or homework and then has difficulty finding their place

