Visual Perceptual Skills

During this month we will reinforce some of the visual perceptual skills necessary for proper alignment of letters and words, visual memory for sight words, proper letter formation, direction following, finding words on a word list and spelling. In total, there are 7 different visual perceptual skills. We are covering 4 of them this month. Excellent activities to supplement the ideas below include Train Chain™ by which are visual perceptual dominoes and Path Quest™ perceptual motor adventures. Both products provide activities to strengthen skills in all 7 visual perceptual areas.

Week 1 – Visual discrimination (The ability to recognize differences and similarities between shapes, objects and patterns). This skill is essential for:

• Letter alignment on lines
• Proofreading skills
• Attention to details
• Distinguishing between similar letters r, n, h, b, d or between math symbols and angles

Provide: Blocks
• Build two different towers and structures with blocks and have your students determine and fix the differences between the two – work in partners

• Start simple and move to more blocks with complex designs

Provide: What’s the Difference? activities
• There are many activity books in which two similar pictures are shown and the child is instructed to find the differences between the two similar pictures.

Provide: Proofreading activities
• Give a letter, word, sentence or paragraph with various age appropriate errors in letter formation, letter alignment, grammar and punctuation. Have your students proofread and find and fix all the mistakes
**Week 2 – Visual Memory** (The ability to remember visual information. To recall or reproduce what is seen after viewing it for a short period of time). This skill is essential for:

- Letter and number recognition
- Learning sight words
- Remembering directions
- Reading/reading comprehension
- Reproducing numbers, letters and shapes without looking at a model

**What’s Missing?**

Provide: 5 – 10 different items (small ball, clothespin, small car, block, crayon, glue stick, etc.) from the classroom. Start with 5 items in Kindergarten and increase the number as the kids learn the game and have success. Kids in 2nd grade may be able to play this game with more than 10 objects — follow your class’ lead!

Place the items on the table in a random manner. Encourage the kids to study the objects for approximately 10 seconds. Ask the kids to cover their eyes. Remove one object. Let the kids take turns identifying the missing object. Work with partners.

**Memory Drawing**

Provide: Blank paper and pencils or broken crayons as well as example drawings.

(Reinforce the pre-writing shapes from last month in the example drawings and also give the examples some details that are different than expected i.e. a smiley face with one circle eye and one cross eye or a house with one square window and a triangle door.) Drawings should have 3-6 elements for Kindergarten and 5 – 9 elements for 1st – 3rd grade.

Encourage the kids to look at the drawing for approximately 10 seconds and study the details. Cover the drawing and ask the kids to draw it themselves (Pencils should have a Grotto Grip® to encourage proper pencil grasp). Make it even more challenging by having the children do 10 jumping jacks or sing a song before they are allowed to copy the design). This will help develop working memory,

**Design copy**

Provide: Legos, popsicle sticks, blocks, Wikki Stix®, pipe cleaners

Create an image using one or a combination of the above items. Have your student look at the image for 10 seconds. Have your students try to create the same image from memory. Work in partners.

Creations should have 6-10 elements for Kindergarten and 11 – 15 elements for 1st – 3rd grade.
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**Week 3 – Visual Sequential Memory**
(The ability to remember a sequence of pictures, shapes, letters, or numbers. To recall or reproduce a sequence of visual information that is only seen for a short period of time.) This skill is essential for:

- Following multi-step directions
- Remembering the motor patterns for letter formation
- Spelling
- Copying from the board or a textbook
- Following classroom routines
- Remembering sequences (days of week, months, alphabet, phone numbers)

**Provide:** blocks or beads of different shapes and/or colors. Each child should have the same set of blocks/beads as the leader.

The leader sets out/strings 3-5 blocks/beads (K) 4-7 blocks/beads (1st – 3rd) in a pattern or in random colors/shapes. You could also hold up an enlarged picture of the sequence to show the whole class.

Encourage the kids to look at the sequence of items for 5-10 seconds and tell the children to remember them “in order”. Take away the sequence and see if the children can copy it in order.

- Repeating patterns will be the easiest for the kids to remember
- Random colors/shapes are harder to remember
- Some 1st and 2nd graders may be able to memorize both shape and color—possibly even position (whether the triangle was flat side down or point down).
- Grade this game according to the needs of your class to make it challenging but still fun!

**Provide:** 2-5 directions on a piece of paper

- Give your students 30-60 seconds to review
- Have your students follow the directions without looking at them
- An example might be draw circle, place an X inside the circle, draw a square around the circle, and place your paper in the top right hand corner of your desk.

**Week 4 – Visual Figure Ground**
(The ability to visually locate a picture, shape, letter or number among a busy, competing background). This skill is essential for:

- Finding items in a desk or book bag
- Keeping one’s place when copying from the board or a textbook
- Looking up words in a dictionary or on a map

**Provide:** Letter/Picture/Word Searches
Find books or make up sheets with letters, picture or words in rows and columns. Have the children circle the letters/pictures/words which you specify

**Provide:** I Spy activity – no materials needed

- Name a color of an object in the room and have the children look around the room to guess which object you “spied”
- OR – place various objects in a pile and have the children locate a specified object using only his/her eyes, without moving the objects or touching them
- OR – have the children scan a shelf or drawer for a specific item