

# BUILDING BLOCKS TO VISUAL PERCEPTION

OT can address difficulties with visual perception and the development of key building blocks to improve on visual perceptual skills

## What is Visual Perception?

The ability to recognize, recall, discriminate, and make sense of what we see in our surrounding environment.

## Why is Visual Perception Important?

Good visual perceptual skills are important for many every day tasks such as reading, writing, puzzles, cutting, drawing, working on math problems, dressing, finding your sock on the bedroom floor and many other skills. Without the ability to complete these tasks your child's academic and play performance may become compromised.

## Visual Perception Skills:

**Visual Spatial Skills** - the ability to understand an object's position in space as it relates to you (*example: knowing left and right side of body without having to look and using hands together in bilateral tasks*)

**Visual Discrimination** - ability to notice and compare features (color, shape) to distinguish one item from another (*example: noticing nickels and dimes are same color, but knowing dimes are smaller*)

**Visual Form Constancy** - ability to recognize and label objects even when they are viewed from a different angle or in a different environment (*example: Tetris or knowing that no matter how far you are from a door you still see it as having a constant size*)

**Visual Figure Ground** - ability to distinguish an item from its busy background (*example: word search, Where's Waldo*)

**Visual Memory** - remembering something you saw awhile ago; remembering a sequence of items in the same order (*example: being able to imagine an object to find it if it is lost -*

## Strategies to help kids who struggle with visual perception

- **visual cues** - example, use a colored dot sticker to show what side of the page to start writing or reading from
- **directional arrows** - to help with direction or starting position for letter formation
- **outline boundaries** - use a red marker to outline boundaries for coloring, mazes. or cutting tasks.
- **break visual activities into small steps** - example, when doing a puzzle present one piece at a time and cover

*retracing steps)*

**Visual Closure** - knowing what an object is when only part of it is visible (*example: dot-to-dot, complete the word*)

**Visualization** - creating a mental picture in your mind (*example: you see some cuts of wood and you mentally reconstruct them into a chair, table, or stairs*)

**Visual Integration Skills** - skills that enable you to put together one sensory piece of information with another piece of sensory information and perform a task effectively (*example - hand eye coordination tasks; using visual and motor skills together*)



Gravity Maze



Roller Coaster Challenge



Square By Square

## Ideas to Try at Home to Help Improve Visual Perception

- Hidden picture games - "Where's Waldo"
- I Spy games
- Spot It - game
- Memory games - simply play Memory
- Copy 3-D block designs
- Legos
- Identify objects by touch - place objects in a bag and identify them by "touch"
- Balloon volleyball
- Think Fun - brand of great games for visual motor, visual spatial, visualization, etc. (<https://www.thinkfun.com>)

If you think your child is having difficulties with their vision, talk with your child's Occupational Therapist (OT) about screening them or creating a program you can do at home.