

Tîm Camau Bach

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES AT HOME

THE VISUAL SENSE



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Visual processing deficits does not mean that those affected cannot see. Rather it means that their brains are not processing what they are seeing. It is a very complex system. If asked to get an object, they might look right at it and then say they can't find it. They might also have a hard time finding the words for objects they are viewing. They may exhibit poor exhibit poor spatial awareness, lack coordination. The vestibular system and vision work collaboratively in order to maintain posture and balance.

Activities

- Schedule Board/VISUALS
- Pebbles
- Balls
- Scarf Activity /Go fishing
- Billions of boxes
- Gutter games
- tent

VISUAL TIMETABLES

Children can have difficulty with transitions or sudden changes. Some children have a hard time transitioning from one activity to another or from a familiar adult to an unfamiliar one. Predictable situations are comforting but because changes in life are inevitable, it is important to help the children deal with them. A predictable structure brings comfort, and so does the awareness that one can handle change.

You can have photos of the games you will play so they can take turns choosing which game is played next. Consistency in the schedule means the games always begin and end in the same fashion. You can also give ample warning about what's coming u. e.g. let your child know that after the obstacle course, you are going to play the blanket game. Or when giving free time, use a timer so the children know that when the buzzer rings, free time ends, and a structured activity begins.

Provide your child with a means to make sense of his/her day. Give him a way to mentally prepare for what will happen next by the use of picture prompts to form a visual diary. As well as the whole day, also structure each activity in turn, break it down into its component tasks. Work on achieving one small element of a particular play activity at a time. Use his need for routine to your advantage by introducing regular, short 'learning sessions at times he expects.

This reassuring activity may help visualize daily events so they can picture how their time is structured and what will happen next.

There are many ways to devise a visual timetable e.g.

Measure and mark eight rectangles on a board. Decide what daily moments to include, such as difficult transition times or predictably pleasant times

You may choose to take photographs of your child doing activities that will be placed on the board e.g.

- Eating breakfast
- Getting dressed
- Riding in a car or bus to school
- Doing work at school
- Playing with other children
- Going to the playground, reading a book or preparing for bed
- Going shopping

Additionally, look through magazines together and cut out pictures of other children doing similar activities, or pictures of representative objects such as a sandwich to represent eating lunch, or T-shirt to represent getting dressed.

7.30am	8:30am	12pm	3pm
Get up	Go to school	Lunch	Home
4pm	6pm	7pm	8.00pm
Free time and tv	Supper	Telly off and Calm playing	Bedtime

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD

Before going to bed, look at the cards and place them on the schedule board for next day

VARIATIONS

Make a schedule board and a set of pictures for specific themes: e.g. Shelf-help steps (using toilet, washing hands, brushing teeth or making the bed).

BENEFITS OF THE ACTIVITY

- Finding magazine pictures promotes visual discrimination
- Reviewing the child's daily doings improves memory and language skills
- Placing the photographs and picture cards in order on the schedule board improves sequencing skills and the ability to plan ahead
- Using a picture schedule helps the child's social and emotional development by
 - preparing the child for daily activities and transitions
 - Helping to reduce separation anxiety
 - Increasing independence
 - Decreasing stress

PEBBLES

Put the pebbles in a large pile and use them to make different things such as

- One large square
- Two small circles



- Two intersecting circles
- Triangle
- 2 intersecting triangles forming a star
- A body with arms and legs
- A road for a truck

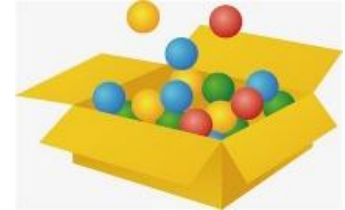
BENEFIT OF ACTIVITY

- Learn about shapes
- Experimenting with design
- Fine motor skills

BALLS

You will need balls and box

- Set the box, open side facing your child on the floor
- take turns to roll or tummy-down roll ball into box
- Count the balls



BENEFITS OF THE ACTIVITY

- ❖ Naming and counting balls promotes visual discrimination, auditory memory, word retrieval and early maths skills.
- ❖ Aiming, rolling, and tossing the fruit strengthens basic eye-movement skills of focusing and tracking, as well as more complex eye-hand coordination and visual-spatial skills
- ❖ Lying tummy-down to roll the fruit improves extension, upper body strength, motor control, and grading of movement

SCARF ACTIVITIES

1. Scarf Basics

Initially, lead children in learning movement concepts by waving their scarves at low level (below knees), medium level (at waist), and high level (overhead). Progress the difficulty of this activity by having kids take turns leading the group by waving the scarves in the above-mentioned positions. Then, challenge children to come up with their own creative positions, such as waving the scarf in front of, behind, between legs, and to the sides.



2. Tossing Activities

Begin tossing activities by simply showing kids how to toss the scarf overhead and watch (or, what we therapy folks call “visually track”) it as it floats to the ground. Next, introduce a two-handed catch as children become familiar with how slowly the scarf will fall.

Make things even more challenging by introducing:

- tossing with one hand and catching with the other
- tossing and clapping before catching
- twirling around and catching the scarf before it hits the ground,
- tossing and catching the scarf with different body parts (head, elbow, and foot)

3. Skywriting

Scarves can also be used for skywriting. Skywriting involves writing letters in the air using the muscles of the upper arm and shoulder, much like working on a vertical surface. Children can use their scarves to skywrite the first letter of their name, their entire name, or familiar words.

4. Let's Go Fishing!

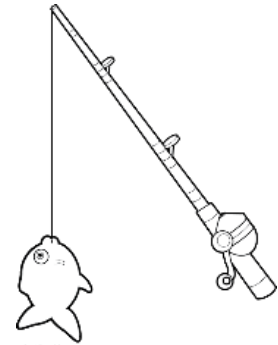
My favorite scarf game is, Let's Go Fishing. While standing in a circle, everyone holds their scarf with two hands and pretends it is a fishing pole. We all say, "Here fishy, fishy, fishy" and lift our scarves pretending to catch something.

The adult leader asks each child, "What did you catch?" Children take turns answering and showing off their catch. I have heard everything from, "I caught a shark", "I caught a minnow" to "I caught an old boot" while playing this game!

GO FISHING

You will need cardboard cut like a fish; paper clips and magnet

- Draw a fish as a template for your child to trace on the construction paper.
- Put a paper clip on each fish head
- Tie a magnet to the end of a 2-3-foot piece of string and tie the free end of the string to the end of the stick
- Spread the fish out on the ground or floor
- Pick up the fishing pole and go fishing
- Pull the fish off the magnet and place the fish in the basket. A bigger challenge is to jerk the pole to shake the fish off the magnet, right into the basket without touching the fish.



BENEFITS OF THE ACTIVITY

- Bilateral coordination and fine-motor skills improve as one hand traces around, holds the paper cuts it with scissors and attaches paper clips to fish.
- Body awareness, proprioception and gross motor control improve as the child gauges how far to stretch his arm to extend, lower and raise the pole; and how to steady the pole to prevent the magnet from swinging to and for.

BILLIONS OF BOXES

Your child can:

- Nestle the boxes
- Stack the boxes into a tall tower
- Arrange boxes into steps
- Sort into size; shape; colour; weight; plastic cardboard
- Collect pebbles, shells and sort into boxes
- Pretend the boxes are houses, furniture, planets, trains, cards, boats, mountains, farmyards, etc.



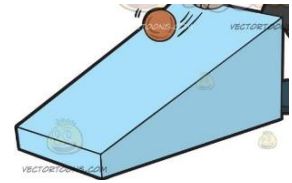
BENEFITS OF THE ACTIVITY

- Looking for the just-right box among a multitude of boxes improves fundamental visual-motor skills, including fixation (aiming one's eyes or shifting one's gaze from one object to another, focusing (switching the gaze between near and distant objects), and coordinating the two eyes to work together.
- Searching for the right box also improves more complex visual-spatial skills
- Improves eye-hand coordination
- Handling boxes promotes tactile discrimination

GUTTER GAMES

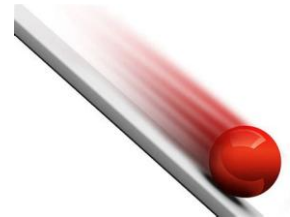
You will need cardboard gutter; vehicle and box

- Place trucks at the top of the gutter track and watch the trucks go
- Place two tracks side by side and have races with other kids



VARIATION

You can create a long gutter and play on a slope outside.



BENEFIT OF GUTTER GAME

- Watching toy vehicles improves basic visual-motor skills such as tracking and focusing

Dark Den

Try some lights inside; cushions/blankets. If you haven't got space for the dark den, try and make an area of the room where your child can go and settle down quietly.

Tips for choosing lights

- Look for steady lights not spinning
- Spinning lights tend to create excitement and "wind" the children up!
- Keep your lights in the black tent or in the quiet area.
- Try and keep the lights in the tent: make it a rule that if your child wants to use the calm down lights he has to be in the calm down space,
- Sit with your child in the space to use the lights



Vision is a complex process that enables us to identify sights, to anticipate what is 'coming at us', and to prepare for a response. As the child matures and integrates information from the other senses, especially the Vestibular sense, more refined visual-spatial processing skills evolve.

A child with visual dysfunction may:

- Shield her eyes to screen out sights, close or cover one eye, or squint.
- Complain of seeing double
- Have difficulty shifting her gaze from one object to another, such as when looking for the blackboard to her own paper

- Turn or tilt her head as she reads across a page
- Turn or tilt her body as she watches television or the teacher
- Have difficulty tracking or following a moving object, such as a table-tennis ball, or following along a line of printed words
- Fail to comprehend what she is reading, or quickly lose interest
- Confuse likenesses and differences in pictures, words and objects
- Omit words or numbers and lose her place while reading and writing
- Have difficulty with fine motor tasks involving spatial relationships, such as fitting pieces into jigsaw puzzles and cutting along lines
- Misjudge spatial relationships of objects in the environment, often bumping into furniture or miss stepping on stairs and curbs
- Confuse right and left and have a poor sense of direction
- Not understand concepts such as up/down and before/after
- Fail to visualize what she reads
- Be uncomfortable or overwhelmed by moving objects or people
- Withdraw from classroom participation and avoid group activities
- The child with difficulties processing visual information may be distracted by a cluttered, busy room. This child may not be able to locate her favourite blanket or find a specific toy on a crowded shelf. This child might look like she cannot follow directions.

Developing Eye Contact

- Eye contact is an important skill for developing interaction and learning. It is essential that a child is looking and listening in order to learn language. Eye contact is also the way we let others know we want to communicate and that we are interested in listening.
- Some children need help to develop eye contact.
- However, for some children eye contact can be stressful or even painful so it is something to aim for, rather than to insist on.

The following are suggestions for encouraging eye contact:

- Position yourself in close face to face contact to the child. Make your facial expressions and voice animated to draw attention to your eyes. A child sitting on your lap is a good position for eye contact. Songs and rhymes (especially with actions) are excellent for promoting both eye contact and listening.
- If you see that the child is looking at something, talk to them about it and move into the line of gaze as you talk. If you find the child is looking at you, respond with a smile and a greeting or make conversation.
- Motivating toys can be held up to your eyes before play. Wait for some eye contact (even if brief) before giving the child the toy.
- Hold a squeaky toy near your face and press it to make a noise. Stop the noise and wait for eye contact before starting again.
- Pepo games are motivating and promote eye contact. They can be part of many everyday activities e.g. getting dressed, making a bed etc.
- Taking items on and off your face encourages the child to look more closely at your face and eyes e.g. scarves, sunglasses, masks, hats. The child might enjoy playing with these and looking in the mirror.

IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE VISION

Look at mobiles, lava lamps, bubble lamps

Coloured lightbulbs

'safe space' with minimal visuals

Respect colour preference in clothing and objects

Reconsider complicated prints and patterns on clothing, walls and flooring

Look at photos, picture books, etc

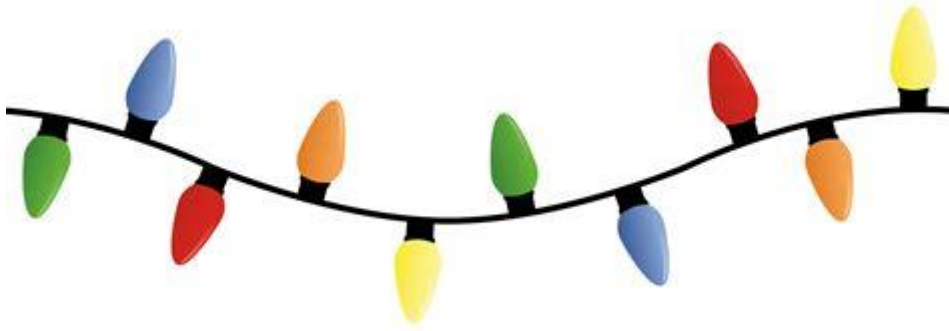
High quality sunglasses for outside

Games and activities that develop visual skills – mazes, drawing

A Word about the Environment

Decrease the clutter in rooms where the child is frequently. Does the space feel cluttered or open? What sounds do you hear? What outside noises do you hear? What can you smell?

This includes decreasing wall decorations and can even mean changing the paint. Purple with blueish undertones is a calming colour and there are others as well. Using a toy rotation system can also be effective in reducing visual stimuli.



Have fun with Visual Activities

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