



Is there a vision problem?

A CHECKLIST

This information was prepared to help teachers identify children's visual problems that could interfere with learning and classroom performance.

Nearly all the visual problems that deter children from doing well in the classroom will NOT be uncovered by a normal eye test.

Clare Holland



Vision is more than clarity

It is the ability to visualise, understand and apply the information that comes through the eyes.

Children with good clear sight may not have these abilities. Therefore, learning problems are often related to vision problems. Even subtle issues with the visual system can have a major impact on our efficiency and performance, even more so for children where these systems are still developing.

Teachers are the best screeners. They observe the child functioning in the classroom.

The appearance of irritated eyes, squinting and frequent blinking are **PHYSICAL** signs of visual problems.

A child's **PERFORMANCE** is affected by problems with eye movement, eye teaming, eye-hand coordination, and visual perception.

Visual problems in the classroom

EYE MOVEMENT PROBLEMS

The information obtained by the child will be reduced if eye movements are slow or clumsy, if the eyes jump, "stutter" or lose their place on text.

EYE TEAMING PROBLEMS

While our eyes are supposed to work as a team so that they perform as one, this teaming is not guaranteed by design. Eye teaming problems can interfere with learning, especially in the areas of comprehension and spatial relations.

EYE-HAND COORDINATION PROBLEMS

Eye-hand coordination problems are noted as a lack of skill in drawing or writing. Paper work shows poor orientation on the page and an inability to stay within the lines when colouring. Often the child will continue to be dependent on their hands for inspection and exploration of toys or other objects.

VISUAL FORM PERCEPTION PROBLEMS

Form perception problems usually are a result of difficulties in the discrimination of visible likenesses and differences. There is confusion with similarities, inattention to slight differences, reversals in reading and reversals of letter forms. This produces difficulties in spelling and writing.

REFRACTIVE STATUS PROBLEMS

Shortsightedness (myopia), longsightedness (hyperopia), astigmatism and focusing problems interfere with the child's comprehension processes and classroom participation. They need prompt attention by a Behavioural Optometrist who treats both vision and sight.

The checklist

This checklist is designed to assist the teacher or consultant in communicating with clinicians and parents. It is particularly useful in identifying those children who did well academically in the early school years and now appear to be stalling.



CHECKLIST OF VISION PROBLEMS

APPEARANCE OF EYES

- One eye appears to turn in or out
- Reddened eyes or lids
- Eyes tear often
- Encrusted eyelids
- Frequent styes on lids

COMPLAINTS WHEN STUDYING

- Headaches
- Burning or itching eyes
- Nausea after reading
- Print blurs/print moves
- Double vision

TEACHER'S OBSERVATIONS WHEN STUDENT READS

- Head movement
- Odd posture when working
- Loses place often
- Needs finger to keep place
- Omits words frequently
- Re-reads lines
- Skips lines
- Quickly loses interest
- Fails to recognise some words
- Confuses similar words
- Talks to self when supposed to be silent reading

WHEN STUDENT WRITES

- Up or downhill
- Repeats letters within words
- Omits letters, numbers or phrases
- Misaligns digits
- Covers one eye
- Tilts head
- Fails to recognise same word when repeated later in text
- Cannot visualise
- Makes mistakes when copying from the whiteboard
- Writing poorly spaced or crooked
- Unable to stay on ruled lines
- Poor placement of words on page

OTHER PROBLEMS

- Must feel things to understand
- Repeatedly confuses right and left
- Difficulty with similarities and differences
- Avoids desk work
- Blinks/squints/rubs eyes/pink eyes
- Needs bigger print to read
- Needs to be at the front of the class to read the white board
- Does not hold eye contact when being spoken to



What is a Behavioural Optometrist?

Behavioural Optometrists are specialist optometrists, with interest in how vision affects human performance.

This includes developmental, functional and neuro-optometry.

Behavioural Optometrists will use a range of treatments to help their patients learn and function more efficiently.

This can be applicable for any age group, not just children. It can also be of direct benefit to those with any form of acquired brain injury.

Not all optometrists practice behavioural optometry.

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