

Areas of Perception

Introduction

Many times parent of children diagnosed with perceptual problems, processing disorders etc will be told that their children have problems in visual and auditory areas and that is the reason why they have problems learning. However, most parents have no idea what this means or the different skills that make up visual and auditory perception. This ***Parent Teacher Conference Handout*** explains in simple terms those areas covered under Visual Perception and Auditory Perception.

VISUAL PERCEPTION

Visual perception is considered to be one of the more important specific ability areas in early assessment because of the assumed relationship between visual perception deficits and reading performance. The following assessment area skills are most often associated with visual perception:

- **Visual coordination:** The ability to follow and track objects with coordinated eye movements
- **Visual discrimination:** The ability to differentiate visually the forms and symbols in one's environment
- **Visual association:** The ability to organize and associate visually presented material in a meaningful way
- **Visual long-term memory:** The ability to retain and recall general and specific long-term visual information
- **Visual short-term memory:** The ability to retain and recall general and specific short-term visual information
- **Visual sequential memory:** The ability to recall in correct sequence and detail prior visual information
- **Visual vocal expression:** The ability to reproduce vocally prior visually presented material or experiences
- **Visual motoric expression** (visual motor integration): The ability to reproduce motorically prior visually presented material or experiences
- **Visual figure-ground discrimination:** The ability to differentiate relevant stimuli (the figure) from irrelevant stimuli (the background)
- **Visual spatial relationships:** The ability to perceive the relative positions of objects in space
- **Visual form perception** (visual constancy): The ability to discern the size, shape, and position of visual stimuli

Diagnostic Symptoms for Visual Perceptual Disabilities

There are many symptoms that may indicate problems in a certain perceptual area. Some of these are observable, whereas others are discovered through intakes and testing. What follows is a list of symptoms that may reflect perceptual disabilities in a variety of visual areas.

General Visual Perceptual Problems

The student

- Exhibits poor motor coordination
- Is awkward motorically—frequent tripping, stumbling, bumping into things, having trouble skipping and jumping
- Demonstrates restlessness, short attention span, perseveration
- Exhibits poor handwriting, artwork, drawing
- Exhibits reversals of b, d, p, q, u, n when writing (beyond a chronological age of seven or eight)
- Inverts numbers (17 for 71), reverses as well
- Gives correct answers when teacher reads test, but cannot put answers down on paper
- Exhibits poor performance on group achievement tests
- Appears brighter than test scores indicate
- Has poor perception of time and space

Visual-Receptive Process Disability

The student

- Does not enjoy books, pictures
- Fails to understand what is read
- Is unable to give a simple explanation of contents of a picture
- Is unable to categorize pictures

Visual-Association Disability

The student

- Is unable to tell a story from pictures; can only label objects in the pictures
- Is unable to understand what he or she reads
- Fails to handle primary workbook tasks
- Needs auditory cues and clues

Manual–Expressive Disability

The student

- Has poor handwriting and drawing
- Communicates infrequently with gestures
- Is poor at acting out ideas, feelings
- Is clumsy, uncoordinated
- Plays games poorly; can't imitate other children in games

Visual–Memory Disability

The student

- Exhibits frequent misspellings, even after undue practice
- Misspells own name frequently
- Cannot write alphabet, numbers, computation facts
- Identifies words one day and fails to the next

AUDITORY PERCEPTION

Auditory perception has long been a concern for special educators because of its relationship to speech and language development. The areas that compromise auditory perception are:

- **Auditory discrimination:** The ability to differentiate auditorially the sounds in one's environment
- **Auditory association:** The ability to organize and associate auditorily presented material in a meaningful way
- **Auditory long-term memory:** The ability to retain and recall general and specific long-term auditory information

- **Auditory short-term memory:** The ability to retain and recall general and specific short-term auditory information
- **Auditory sequential memory:** The ability to recall in correct sequence and detail prior auditory information
- **Auditory vocal expression:** The ability to reproduce vocally prior auditorily presented material or experiences
- **Auditory motoric expression:** The ability to reproduce motorically prior auditorally presented material or experiences

Diagnostic Symptoms for Auditory Perceptual Disabilities

As previously indicated, a major objective of a perceptual evaluation is to identify those areas that may have a direct impact on a child's ability to process information adequately and that may interfere in his or her academic achievement. What follows is a list of symptoms that may reflect perceptual disabilities in a variety of auditory areas.

General Auditory Perceptual Indicators

The student

- Appears less intelligent than IQ tests indicate
- Does many more things than one would expect: puts puzzles together, fixes broken objects, and so on
- Appears to have a speech problem
- May emphasize wrong syllables in words
- May sequence sounds oddly
- May use small words incorrectly
- Appears not to listen or comprehend
- Watches teacher's or adult's faces intently, trying to grasp words

Auditory Receptive Process Disability

The student

- Fails to comprehend what he or she hears
- Exhibits poor receptive vocabulary
- Fails to identify sounds correctly
- Fails to carry out directions

Auditory Association Disability

The student

- Fails to enjoy being read to by someone else
- Has difficulty comprehending questions
- Raises hand to answer question but gives foolish response
- Is slow to respond; takes a long time to answer
- Has difficulty with abstract concepts presented auditorily

Verbal Expressive Disability

The student

- Mispronounces common words
- Uses incorrect word endings and plurals
- Omits correct verbal endings
- Makes grammatical or syntactical errors that do not reflect those of his or her parents
- Has difficulty blending sounds

Auditory Memory Disability

The student

- Does not know address or phone number
- Fails to remember instructions
- Has difficulty memorizing nursery rhymes or poems
- Has difficulty knowing the alphabet