



Visual Perceptual Skills – Visual Form Constancy

Definition of visual form constancy and its importance:

Visual form constancy involves an ability to recognise dominant features of a shape/ figure regardless of size, shading, texture or position. It enables us to see a form and be able to find that form even though the form may be smaller, larger, rotated, reversed, and/or partially hidden. As we begin to explore objects as babies this skill develops along with eye-hand co-ordination. E.g.: Identifying a car as a car even though it is partially obscured.

Strategies and activities to develop visual form constancy

Depending on your child's abilities and interests, please choose appropriate activities from the list below.

Primary school age:

- Using concrete items - do lots of sorting and matching activities categorising according to colour, size, shape or types, such as items in a pencil case – sort out all the pens from the pencils, then categorise further within those groups, putting them in groups according to colour or size
- Examine items within the same category that are not an exact visual match – gather up lots of different kinds of spoons such as teaspoons, tablespoons, wooden spoons and plastic spoons etc.
- Play 'I spy' with everyday objects around the room to identify those with similar forms, such as everything circular – clock, table, bowl etc.
- Match the shadow
- Origami and puzzles
- Explore how objects look from different angles – from above, behind, underneath
- Make a piece of card with a small hole cut out of it and place it over a picture so that the picture is hidden except for the area visible through the hole. Ask the child to guess what the picture is
- Cut out shapes varying in colour and size. Hold one up and ask the child to point to something that is the same shape
- Present some photographs or pictures of a person or character taken from different angles and see if they can recognise the person/character – can use photographs of family members or pictures of pop/TV stars
- Ask the child to identify shapes, letters, numbers or symbols drawn on the back with a finger
- Closed eye/feely bag activities
- Making shapes out of straws or pipe cleaners

Secondary school age:

- Do lots of sorting and matching activities categorising according to colour, size, shape
- Examine items within the same category that are not an exact visual match
- Constructional activities- woodwork



- Present the same word in different styles, font or colour – the student underlines the same word presented in its different forms
- Make Origami and pottery objects
- Explore how objects look from different angles – from above, behind, underneath
- Make a piece of card with a small hole cut out of it and place it over a picture so the picture is hidden except for the area visible through the hole. Ask the student to guess what the picture is
- Puzzles
- Select some reading materials with different styles of text and look through it with them identifying and discussing any difficulties
- Closed eye/feely bag activities

More ways to help accommodate visual perceptual skill difficulties:

- If possible, allow extra time to process visual information
- Narrate visual presentations aloud
- Keep the area around the individual clear of distractions and clutter
- Encourage comfortable, supported sitting (e.g. feet on the floor and elbows resting on the table at a 90-degree angle) or straight standing at a vertical surface.