

> HEALTHY VISION RESOURCE



VISION PROBLEMS CAN LOOK LIKE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES



When children continue to struggle with reading and learning despite all best efforts to help them, it can be very difficult to figure out what is needed. Is it a learning disability? Attention disorder? Or is it a vision problem? As a parent, how can you tell the difference?

A lot of people mistakenly assume that if a child can see things far away that they can see fine up close. In addition, most vision screenings only test how well a child can see the letters on the eye chart from a distance of 20 feet away. However, most of the children who have eye coordination and eye movement disorders can see fine when looking at things in the distance.

When a vision problem is at the root of a child's struggles with learning, the signs are very easy to see – when you know what to look for. Children don't know how they are supposed to see, so the only way they can tell you they have a vision problem is with their behavior. Therefore, you need to know the various signs to watch for; for example, does your child:

- *avoid reading?*
- *prefer to be read to?*
- *turn his or her head at an angle when reading?*
- *have trouble comprehending what is being read?*
- *read a paragraph out loud but not remember what was read?*
- *have a short attention span when reading or doing schoolwork?*

Any one of these can be a sign of a possible eye coordination, tracking or eye movement problem. It is important to understand that our eyes take in visual information and then send it to the brain where it is processed. If the visual information that is sent to the brain is faulty, it can make learning very difficult. For example, eye coordination problems can make it look like the words are moving on the page or appear double or blurry.

When children have difficulty reading and also tend to reverse letters and numbers a lot, parents often think their child may have dyslexia. Typically, children who have dyslexia can pass most vision screenings because they can see the letters on the eye chart just fine.

A study performed at the University of Waterloo in Canada included 121 patient files of elementary school children who were identified with reading problems. The results in this study show that children with an IEP for reading also present with visual problems involving how their two eyes work together when they try to read.

In addition, research from Harvard Medical School found that 80% of children with Dyslexia and 33% of neurotypical children struggle with eye coordination and eye movement disorders which are making their difficulties with reading more challenging than it needs to be.

Research also continues to show that Optometric Vision Therapy is effective at resolving a variety of vision disorders that interfere with reading and learning; specifically, eye movement (tracking), eye teaming (eye coordination), visual motor skills, etc.

For more information or to schedule, contact www.sdvisions.com today!

WHAT SHOULD A PARENT DO WHEN A CHILD CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE WITH READING?

It is best for vision problems to be ruled out before a child is diagnosed with a learning or attention disorder. Whether or not your child has been diagnosed with a learning disorder, if reading and comprehension is a struggle, schedule an appointment with one of our doctors to evaluate all the visual skills required for reading and learning.



VISIONS

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