

Pediatric Development Center



~ Newsletter ~
May
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We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness. Contact us for further information:

125 Presumpscot St.
Portland, ME.
(207) 699-5531

Good Resources:

www.sensorysystemsclinic.com

Sensory Integration Vocabulary

www.sensorysystemsclinic.com

Praxis: Praxis is the process of getting the idea, initiating, and completing new motor tasks. It is an end product of input from all the necessary systems and the brain. Integrated information from the sense of touch, balance and movement, vestibular, vision and hearing, may be necessary for good motor planning. Dyspraxia means disordered motor planning. Apraxia means that motor planning is almost absent. Individuals with motor planning problems have to think harder to complete a new motor task than other people because of poor information from the sensory systems. They might appear stubborn or lazy, because they can complete a more difficult task, but cannot generalize the skill to an easier task.

Praxis on Verbal

Command: This is the ability to integrate a verbal command and motor response. For example, if a child is given a direction to "sit down and pick up your pencil," they have to hear two steps (auditory) and complete two motor acts. Difficulty following directions is often misinterpreted as deliberate misbehavior in children. Sometimes you can easily spot the young child who had trouble with following verbal directions in the classroom. They are the last ones to respond and look around the class to see what the rest of the children are doing. With adults, it may be seen as problems following verbal directions at the workplace. They seem confused because they thought

the direction was followed and may become defensive.

Postural Praxis: The ability to imitate body position is called postural praxis. Individuals with this difficulty are often poor at sports or games. If the instructor says, "hold the bat like this," they may have a greater difficulty than average in grasping how to place the body or move. An infant may become "stuck" under a table when crawling, being unable to figure out how to move their body to get out. Individuals with postural praxis problems may appear wooden in their movement. Even their personality may be described as inflexible.

Sequencing Praxis:

Sequencing praxis is the ability to know how to get things done in order. Some children have dressing problems because they can't sequence whether to put the undershirt or the shirt on first. Most motor tasks have some sequencing to them, so sequencing praxis is considered to be central to all praxis. It helps to start us on our way to being organized.

Oral Praxis: This is the ability to organize sequenced movements in the area of the mouth. Naturally, it is often a problem area for children with speech problems. Drooling, feeding problems and difficulty in blowing bubbles, whistles, etc. may be observed. An older child or adult may have difficulty with reading that is associated with oral praxis. They may be unable to sequence sounds, and be unable to sound out the word properly. Information from the sense of touch is especially important for good oral praxis.

Constructional Praxis: This is a task which requires three dimensional manipulation. Difficulty in this area may be seen in early childhood with frustration playing with blocks or difficulty with certain toys. Toys just don't move the way they expect and frustration may occur. Difficulty dressing dolls may be observed. Older children may have problems with art projects. Adults may prefer to attempt to assemble things that come "assembly required" using guesswork or give it to someone else to put together. Constructional praxis is much harder to transfer from a two dimensional design to three dimensional project.



Design Copying: Design copying is the ability to see a two-dimensional form and copy it onto a paper. A practical application of this is the ability to copy from the board or from one page to another. This is very important in the career of any student from 1st or 2nd grade to a doctoral candidate.

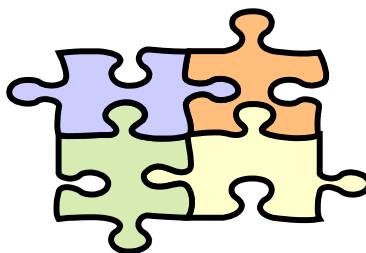
Visual Spatial Perception: Visual spatial perception is how one perceives objects in relationship to space and to one's self. Below are some specific perception concerns.

Figure Ground: Figure ground perception is the ability to separate the foreground from the background. Individuals with this problem may look for

an object in a drawer, around a room, or on a shelf and be unable to find the desired object even if it is in plain sight. They constantly lose things against the background and frustrate those around them who find things easily.

Spatial Relationships: Spatial relationship problems are frequently associated with reading problems or, if severe, dyslexia. Spelling and math may also be affected. The individual may confuse w,m; b,d; and p,q, or reverse entire words. Math may suffer due to numerical reversals or an inability to align numbers in columns.

Directional Perception: Directional confusion can be observed in a few different ways. Sometimes an individual finds it difficult to follow directions because they have never learned to relate easily to spatial words, such as underneath, before, after, etc. Another type of problem may stem from difficulty remembering a general orientation in space. These people may get lost easily because things look a little different each time they see them. Visual perception problems may be seen in infancy if the child swipes or reaches for objects and often misjudges distance. The preschool child may have an unusual difficulty in identifying shapes or assembling puzzles.



Visual Motor Integration: Visual motor integration is the ability to smoothly coordinate the movement of the eyes with each other, the head, neck, hands and body.

Eyes: Difficulty coordinating the eyes is observed while the individual is following a slowly moving object. An infant may have eyes that just do not move well together, jerking, or avoidance may be seen. If this happens for an older child while reading, the words may appear to jump around the page. Fatigue and concentration problems often result. A sign of avoidance may be someone who is irritated or shows an increased amount of activity around blinking or bright lights.

Eye, Neck and Head Integration: If the head, neck and eyes don't move together well, this contributes to an unsteady head. This has much to do with forming our ideas about where we are in space and can also contribute to reading problems. This will cause complaints of being tired while reading.

Eye and Hand Coordination: Sometimes the eyes have a difficult time directing the hands where to go. This may result in poor eye hand coordination. Coloring, handwriting or other tasks requiring the eyes to direct the hands may be affected.

Eye and Body Movement: How our body moves in space is directed by our eyes. A visual motor problem may be suspected in the individual who bumps into things frequently when walking.