

VISUAL SKILLS TERMINOLOGY

Accommodation: the ability to adjust the focus of the eyes as the distance from the object changes. Children frequently utilize this visual skill in the classroom as they shift attention between the book (up close) and board (far away).

Binocular Fusion: the brain's ability to gather information received from each eye separately and form a single, unified image. A child's eyes must be precisely physically aligned or double vision may result. If that occurs, the brain often subconsciously suppresses or inhibits the vision in one eye to avoid confusion. The suppressed eye may then develop poorer visual acuity (amblyopia or "lazy eye").

Convergence: the ability to turn both eyes toward each other to look at a close object. This visual skill is essential to success in school and to life skills in general.

Divergence: the ability to turn both eyes away from each other to look at a distant object. This visual skill is also essential to success in school and to life skills in general.

Stereopsis (depth perception): a function of proper binocular fusion as it allows a critical judgment of the relative distance between two objects. If an eye examination reveals poor stereopsis, it is an indication of incomplete binocular vision.

Visual Acuity: the ability to see objects clearly. A child's visual acuity is sometimes measured in a school vision screening. The typical school eye chart is designed to be seen at 20 feet and measures how well or how poorly the child sees at that distance. If a problem is discovered in the screening, the child should be referred for a comprehensive eye examination. Other visual problems may not be detected during a school screening, therefore children should have regular professional vision care.

Visual Perception: the ability to organize and interpret the information that is seen and give it meaning. The perception that a child encounters is remembered, defined, and recalled during the development of academic skills.

Vision Therapy: a series of procedures designed to improve the specific visual skills underlying efficient binocular vision and/or perceptual abilities underlying the learning process. These activities involve the use of prism, lenses, and other prescribed activities to improve the visual system's organization, integration, and efficiency.