**Visual Perceptual Skills (0- 5 years)**

**What are visual perceptual skills?**

Visual perception is the ability to understand, process and make use of visual information.

**Why are they important?**

Visual perception is needed for nearly every task we carry out. This includes recognition and identification of shape, colour etc and to be able to use the information to make judgements about size, shape, relationship of one object to another.

**How can Early Years Practitioners help?**

* Offer children plenty of everyday opportunities to participate in visual perceptual activities (see below)
* Introduce these activities gradually in a controlled and non-threatening way.
* Make sure that any targets that have been set for the child are achievable and manageable.

**Games and Activities to support development of visual perceptual skills:**

* **Post a shape** to the corresponding opening
* Select an object from **a sorting box**. Place it at the most distant point in the room from the child. The child must find he same shape from the box.
* Copying a **shape pattern** or picture
* **What’s missing?** Complete a 2D shape picture
* **Guess what?** Ask the child to guess the object when only part is visible. A picture of an object could be cut into 4 pieces and only one part given at a time until the child has guessed what it is.
* **Jigsaw puzzles** of varying degrees of difficulty to suit the individual child
* **Match a shape** to the silhouette using the correct orientation
* **Draw a person**. Ask the child to copy the features of a real person then compare.
* **Colouring**. Use symmetrical patterns of varying degrees of difficulty to suit individual pupils.
* **Kim’s Game**. 4-5 familiar objects or picture hidden underneath a cloth. The objects are uncovered for 5 seconds and then the cloth replaced. What did you say? As the child progresses, increase the number of objects under the cloth and decrease the time.
* Ask the child to close their eyes and describe what is in the room.
* **Pairs.** Turn over cards to find the matching pair.
* Show a detailed picture i.e. a farm. Ask the child to look at it carefully and then remove the picture and ask them to describe it.
* **Ball sequences**: bounce, throw in the air and clap then catch.
* **Clapping rhythms.** Clap out the rhythm to familiar songs and rhymes.
* Encourage the child to **sort objects** or things such as socks or plates by colour, type, size and shape.
* **Where’s Wally?** Ask the child to find a person/object within a picture.
* **Fruit printing**. Cut a piece of fruit in half and demonstrate how the halves match in shape. Use them to print pictures.
* **Treasure hunt**. Search for objects on command (look for all the red objects, look for all the square shaped objects)
* **I spy**. Use shapes, colours, sixes e.g. ‘something that is yellow’, ‘something that is the same shape as the table’, ‘something that is bigger than this teddy’.
* **Rope games**: Jump in between 2 ropes, jump over the rope, crawl under the rope.
* **Stepping stone games**. Jump on the red stepping stone, jump next to the blue stepping stone, jump to the right of the yellow stepping stone.
* **Hokey-Cokey** – Put your left arm in, out etc.
* **Arrow games**. Have the child tell you which way the arrow (flashcard) is pointing then ask them to jump, hop, etc. in that direction.
* **Obstacle course**. Navigate through an obstacle course and have the child explain what they are doing e.g. crawling under the net, climbing on top of the box.