

Visual Motor Integration

What is it?

Visual motor integration is the ability to interpret visual information and respond with a motor action. For example, you see a baseball and you respond by moving your hands to catch the baseball.

Why is it important?

Visual motor integration is crucial for coordination activities. If visually presented information is not perceived correctly, the muscles will get incorrect messages resulting in an inappropriate motor response.

Children who have deficits in visual motor integration may exhibit problems with participating in sports, eye hand coordination skills, eye foot coordination skills, bilateral coordination (combining both sides of the body together), body awareness, activities of daily living (i.e. getting food on a fork), copying visual information, drawing, handwriting, lining up math problems, geometry, speed of complete motor tasks, etc.

How can you help with visual motor integration?

Children need adequate visual spatial skills to function properly in school and at home. If you have concerns about your child's visual skills, be sure to start out by having your child undergo a thorough vision examination by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist (medical doctor).

If your child has difficulties with visual motor integration skills try the following: practice coordination tasks repeatedly, keep worksheets clear, uncluttered and concise, cover up all the problems except the one that is being worked on, highlight or darken important information, use a multi-sensory approach (i.e. activities that require using more than just the visual system such as creating a video presentation instead of handwritten assignment), let a child give an answer orally instead of written, reduce the amount of materials that need to be copied from the board, provide copies of class notes to the child, and focus on the quality of the work rather than the quantity.



Here are some activities that encourage visual motor integration:

- practice, practice, practice balls skills - catching, throwing, kicking and hitting. Start with large balls and slower speed progressing to smaller balls and faster speed.
- practice large movements to form letters and numbers (i.e. air writing forming the letters large in the air using your whole arm and hand).
- use stencils, dot to dot puzzles, mazes and coloring books (emphasizing coloring in the lines)
- practice lacing activities - string beads, simple sewing projects and lacing cards
- copy designs using wooden blocks, interlocking blocks, peg boards, etc.
- play movement games that encourage right/left discrimination, avoiding obstacles, stopping/starting, etc.