> VISION REHABILITATION NEWS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

toys that enhance visual development

As you well know, when children play too many computer games and watch too much TV, YouTube or movies, they don't get the necessary opportunities to develop the visual skills that are critical to academic success.

Toys can play a vital role in overall development, and especially visual development. This holiday season, if you would like to share a list of toys with parents of your clients that help build eye-hand coordination, shape and size discrimination, space/distance judgments, and visual thinking skills, please email our Patient Care Coordinator, Lindsay: lindsay@sdvisions.com

VISION PROBLEMS CAN LOOK LIKE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

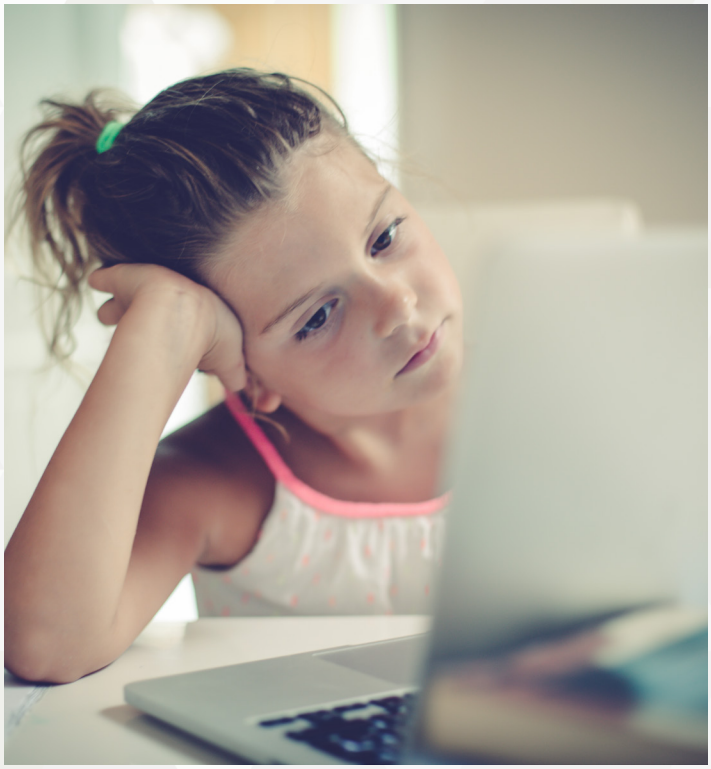
When children continue to struggle with reading and learning despite all best efforts to help them, it can be very difficult to figure out what is needed. Is it a learning disability? Attention disorder? Or is it a vision problem? As a parent, how can you tell the difference?

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 the 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, persistent 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.

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.

According to the Learning Disabilities Association of America, "Be especially certain to have eyes and ears checked for correctable vision and hearing problems." When you need a client's vision checked, please educate the patient and/or the patient's parent on the importance of having all the visual skills critical to reading and learning evaluated by a Developmental Optometrist.

For an in-depth symptom checklist, please email Lindsay at lindsay@sdvisions.com.

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES POST CONCUSSION

Post-concussion patients often have many quality-of-life issues and concerns that they do not realize are due to visual sequelae related to their injury. For example, not being able to focus on work, difficulty reading or using a computer, reduced reaction time, light sensitivity, dizziness, headaches as well as severe anxiety relating to driving and even grocery shopping.

Some of their symptoms are easier to relate to vision than others, such as blurred vision, especially with seeing up close or double vision. However, the symptoms that relate to decreased peripheral vision are often overlooked and can contribute to difficulties including:

- *Driving at night*
- *Gauging the speed of oncoming traffic*
- *Recognizing unexpected events on the sides of the road*
- *Difficulty seeing objects clearly and judging distance*

In addition to driving, we actually use our peripheral vision for almost all our activities of daily living including walking, reading, shopping and playing sports. Typically, most of the mTBI patients we see in our office do not have any difficulties with their central vision. This is why many of these patients have been told their vision is fine by other providers.

As Developmental Optometrists, we have many options in diagnosing and treating reduced peripheral vision. Typically, lenses can help those who have actual loss of peripheral vision, and functional deficits can often be rehabilitated with Neuro-Optometric Vision Rehabilitation which includes the use of prism, Neurolenses, phototherapy or an in-office program.

We continue to see excellent outcomes in our mTBI patients who were previously struggling with post-trauma visual sequelae. Please email our office to receive a symptom checklist that is designed to assist in identifying patients who could benefit from a Neuro-Optometric Vision Evaluation: lindsay@sdvisions.com

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR FREE IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS:

Are you looking for an in-service program?

(1)
Double Vision, Field Neglect, Dizziness and Motion Sickness:
The Visual Connection

(2)
Post Trauma Vision Syndrome:
A Co-Management Approach

(3)
Vision Development Problems in the Special Needs Population

These workshops are available on a limited basis, as our doctors' schedules allow. For more details or to schedule your in-service program, please call our office and ask for Lindsay or email: lindsay@sdvisions.com