

Games to Improve Visual Perception (and Reading!)

- **Hidden Pictures:** Purchase hidden picture workbooks or magazines (such as Highlights) or download free app for ipad.
- **Mazes:** There are many websites with mazes, here are a few: printactivities.com, allkidsnetwork.com, coloring-pages.net.
- **Jigsaw Puzzles:** Use developmentally appropriate commercial puzzles, or make your own using pictures from magazines or your own photographs glued onto light cardboard. Draw puzzle shapes on back and cut out. Kids love doing these personalized puzzles over and over again. Keep pieces safe by storing inside an envelope.
- **Blindfold Drawing:** This game has two rules – no looking and no lifting the pencil. Demonstrate activity first and describe your actions as well as your thought processes: “I am going to draw a cat, first I imagine what the whole cat looks like in my mind” (you are teaching your child how to visualize) then draw cat without lifting pencil. Kids will enjoy watching you and see that it’s okay to have a less than perfect final product. Begin with very simple objects (ball, egg, bowl, simple shapes). This is a great way to develop visual imagination.
- **Find It:** Choose an object to search for in your environment (house, street, store, school). Some ideas of things to search for: blue jackets, orange sweatshirts, yellow flowers, baby strollers, flying birds, black backpacks, particular letters in road signs, bicycles, basketball hoops, etc.
- **Picture Memory:** Choose a photograph or picture from a magazine or picture book, show the picture to your child and ask them to study it for a moment or two. Then remove the picture and ask questions about visual details from the picture (what color pants was the woman wearing, was the boy wearing shoes, were the trees in front of the flowers or behind them, etc.). Make this fun and enjoyable for your child, not a test! Be light and have fun. There is a commercially available game called Stare that is very similar to this task. Good for family fun.
- **How Do I Look:** Stand (or sit, kneel, etc.) in a fun/funny way then ask child to copy you. Start with simple poses then make them more challenging. Give your child a chance to be the leader and you copy their pose!
 - Once this game has been mastered you can change it up by having your child see your pose then close their eyes and you change your position in some small way, ask them what is different.

- **Set the Table:** Collect a bunch of pairs of objects (pencil, spoon, spool of thread, block, paper clip, safety pin, etc.) and keep them in separate paper bags. To play, take a few or several objects out of your bag and arrange them on the table in a special way. Then ask your child to exactly copy your arrangement, including orientation, so that his/her design is exactly like yours from the perspective of seated person.
 - A variation of this game would be to build your design, ask your child to look at it carefully then close his/her eyes. You remove an object or change the design in some way for him/her to discover the changes – tell how many changes you made.
- **Letter Contest:** Hunt through written material (books, magazines, newspapers) looking for specific letters – a paragraph works well for this. Ask child to choose a letter to hunt for then he/she carefully works line by line to find how many times that letter appears in the paragraph or on the page – upper and lower case if appropriate. Then you hunt for your letter; the one with the most letters wins. Letters can be selected by choice or even by drawing letters out of a paper bag (if you do this write letters on small pieces of paper and omit J, Q, V, X and Z).
- **Same or Different:** Gather strips of paper for this game. Draw a line dividing the paper in half and write a group of letters on each side of the line, sometimes the letters should be the same and sometimes make them slightly different. Show the paper to your child for just a second or two then flip it down so he/she cannot see it. Were the letters the same or different? You can use just a few letters, actual words, or groups of numbers. Examples include: krn/krm, wixb/wizb, went/want, pjen/pyen, tries/tires, etc.
- Some toys and commercial games that are great for developing visual perceptual skills include: Spot It, Perfection, Stare Junior (memory game like Picture Memory above), Where's Waldo, Eye Spy, dot to dot, Memory, Set, parquetry blocks, building activities where copying a model or picture model – lego, etc.

**Ideas from Games for Reading by Peggy Kaye. (1984) New York: Pantheon.
(Games for Learning, similar book by Peggy Kaye, available at local library – great ideas!)**