

VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS: STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

This refers to the ability to coordinate visual information with motor output. Control of movement, visual processing and visual attention are necessary components to perform visual-motor activities successfully.

Weak visual-motor skills can contribute to poor handwriting, cutting and performance of other fine motor activities. An individual must be able to guide movement accurately to accomplish these tasks.

Visual-motor skills for writing develop in a sequence, beginning with scribbling. Lines and shapes are then formed, traced, imitated, and copied from a model.

Activities to Promote Visual-Motor Skills

- Imitate and copy lines, shapes, letters, and numbers
- Trace shapes and letters
- Form letters using different textures
- Complete puzzles and mazes
- Coloring within lines
- Writing on lines
- Cutting on lines

Strategies to Promote Visual-Motor Skills

- Use of various writing surfaces
- Use of various writing instruments
- Provide a variety of papers
- Use of slanted or vertical surfaces, such as a chalkboard
- Teach capital letters first

When working with the student, it is important to make the activity FUN!

VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS: Activities and Strategies

Compensatory Strategies

- Allow extra time to complete assignments
- Provide worksheets with fill-in answers
- Read the material aloud as it is being copied
- Allow the student to copy information in stages
- Provide an alphabet and number line at the student's desk
- Provide sensory cues (tactile, visual or auditory)
- Use of an index card on the line to assist with guidance
- Use markers to outline lines to be written on or colored
- Increase the width of cutting lines
- Give verbal feedback
- Tape record rather than note taking
- Use of a word processor

Reference:

Levine-Johnson, Kristin (1991). Fine motor dysfunction therapeutic strategies in the classroom. Therapy Skill Builders: Tucson AZ.

Olsen, Jan, OTR (2001). Handwriting without tears (8th ed.). Jan Z. Olsen: Potomac, MD.