

Dear Homeschooling Parents/Teachers,

Another school year will soon resume. Do you know your student's learning style? Is your student struggling in writing, reading, or spelling? Is your student brilliant in math as long as they do not have to show their work? You know your child is intelligent, but you are puzzled by how hard he or she must work to learn. Then, I encourage you to read Dianne Craft's website and her articles (**AUDITORY PROCESSING DYSFUNCTION CHARACTERISTICS, VISUAL/MOTOR PROCESSING (WRITING) DYSFUNCTION CHARACTERISTICS, VISUAL PROCESSING DYSFUNCTION CHARACTERISTICS**) which were shared last year through Homeschool Legal Defense. The articles appear below.

This year, I will continue to help parents by evaluating a student's learning style and determining if there is a stress in the writing, visual, verbal, and/or auditory processing centers. When a stress is found, I teach parents and students Dianne Craft's Brain Integration Therapy. Classes are held once a week to prevent mistakes in the program, and I implement the "Repatterning Day" required. There is an accountability sheet and reward system.

If you are puzzled by your student's learning style or behavior, you may call me at 410-7900 with your questions. If you know your child needs help and are considering enrollment in Brain Integration Therapy or Right Brain Spelling, please call or e-mail Cheri Moore. Individual assessments are critical for successful implementation of curriculum. Meeting with you and your student will equip you both with the information needed to have a successful academic year. If your student participated in classes last year, but life prevented consistency in performance; thus success, you may need to re-enroll them. Those who consistently use the exercises taught and apply them to everyday life will experience a significant decrease in learning stresses. Those who only do the exercises sporadically will say the program doesn't work, because it can't if brain neurons are not made to fire (exercised) on a daily basis just like trying to get ready for a long 5K run.

Lastly, I am offering a workshop for all parents interested in discovering their student's learning styles (right or left brain); thus, ways to help students retain information. When you leave the workshop, you will also know about your learning style. You may sign up at registration, orientation night, or through e-mail to Cheri Moore (cbmmem@verizon.net). **Workshops will be in Room 204, on September 7th & 14 (Tuesday) and 9th & 16(Thursday), from 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.** There is a charge of \$15.00 for the 2-day workshop. I am working on childcare for those with preschoolers.

I once had a parent ask me this question, "Don't we all have weaknesses in our learning system?" The answer is yes. The problem is when the weakness interferes with the child's ability to consistently show through writing and speech what they know. The problem is when a student has trouble reading and you are hoping he or she is just a late bloomer. Do you hear their desire to read, but they are rubbing their eyes and dropping their pencils due to a stress in their visual system? If you know your child is smart, but you are a frustrated homeschooling

teacher (I have been there); then, there may be a stress in your child's learning system causing him or her to develop "coping behavior." This is not an excuse, but an explanation. I have never met a child who decided to not learn, to fail, and chose to be "bad."

Sincerely, Cheri Moore

P.S. My Virginia Teaching License is pending, and I have met all requirements. This gives me the ability to offer evaluations documenting a student's baseline at the beginning of the year; followed by a mid-term assessment; and end of the year assessment. In place of an achievement test (can be in just one subject area), I can write a letter stating adequate progress. This would be submitted to the school board. A portfolio and assessments are kept by the parents for documentation. I will also get certified as a tester for the Woodcock-Johnson and the Stanford Achievement Test. If you know your student can not be tested due to a disability, please contact me for an initial evaluation by the end of September. Cost is \$30.00 dollars and it will take about one and a half hours. [This establishes student's baseline in the areas of reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and math.](#) Below is information by Homeschool Legal Defense:

What does the law require?

If you homeschool under the homeschool statute, [§22.1-254.1](#), you must provide evidence of academic progress. The results of an evaluation or assessment should be sent to your division superintendent by **August 1** each year. Parents may use

1. Any nationally normed standardized **achievement test**, or
2. An evaluation or assessment, including, but not limited to,
 1. An **evaluation letter** from a person licensed to teach in any state, or a letter from a person with a master's degree or higher in an academic discipline, or
 2. A **report card** or **transcript from** a community college or college, college distance-learning program, or home education correspondence school.

The changes in the 2008 law clarified testing options for parents. The first testing option--a nationally normed standardized achievement test--can still be used. If your student takes a standardized achievement test, he must have a composite score in or above the fourth stanine or 23 percentile. A composite score is made up only of the mathematics and language arts components of the test. Students are not required to take other sections of the test.

While most parents use standardized achievement tests, there are several reasons parents may want to show evidence of achievement by other methods. For some, an evaluation letter will more accurately show progress. An achievement test score may not correctly reflect a student's progress. For others, such as a learning-disabled student, a score below the 23 percentile may show

satisfactory progress. If a student is using a correspondence school, then a report card from the school is satisfactory. If a student is enrolled in a college or community college, or distance-learning program, a transcript will meet the evaluation requirement.

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Do kindergartners have to be tested?

Children who are NOT six by September 30 of the school year do NOT have to be tested. The statute states, "The [testing] requirements of subsection (C) shall not apply to children who are under the age of six as of September 30 of the school year." § 22.1-254.1 (C).

If a student is five years old on September 30 of the year he begins kindergarten, he will not have to be tested that year. However, if a student is six years old by September 30 of his kindergarten year, he will have to be tested. Some kindergarten students will need to be tested and others will not. Age, not grade level, is the determining factor.

Most homeschooling families will receive a form letter in the spring reminding them about testing. If your child is not six by September 30, the information in the form letter does not apply to your child.

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Are there other exceptions?

Yes. In general, homeschoolers must show evidence of progress if they have complied with §22.1-254.1 of the Virginia Code by filing a "Notice of Intent to Provide Home Instruction" or writing a letter to the school superintendent. However, evidence of progress is not required for the following:

1. Children who are under the age of six as of September 30 of the school year;
2. Students who are under the religious-exemption provision §22.1-254(B)(1);
3. Students being taught by a certified tutor §22.1-254 (A); or
4. Students who have graduated, regardless of age.

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What about portfolios?

The law describing evaluations and assessments does not mention a "portfolio." However, in describing evaluation options, the law says, "including but not limited to" an evaluation letter, a report card, or a transcript. Although a portfolio is not included, some superintendents may be willing to accept this form of assessment because of this carefully worded language. Parents who have submitted an unevaluated portfolio in the past may still be able to submit one directly to the superintendent because the language does not limit what can be submitted.

Also, a portfolio could be presented to a qualified evaluator who is licensed to teach or a person with a master's degree in an academic discipline. This person

could review the portfolio and submit an evaluation letter to the superintendent to determine if the student is achieving an adequate level of educational growth and progress.

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NOTE FROM YVONNE BUNN

Do you have more questions about testing? How can I prepare my child for testing? Can I administer the test myself? Who decides which test I can use? Do I have to have my test pre-approved? Where can I get tests? How much will testing cost? How do I interpret the results? You can find the answers to these and many other questions in this informative [Testing FAQ](#). You may also wish to check out our [Choosing Standardized Tests](#) and [Testing Resources](#) pages, along with these tips for [parents administering tests themselves](#) and this [list of counselors, testers, and tutors](#).

If you're not sure what to expect or uncertain about how your child may score on a standardized achievement test, [Achieving Peak Performance](#) is a great resource. This practice test can help both you and your student be ready and confident on testing day!

Remember, you don't need to let testing intimidate you!

Page down for article #1 **AUDITORY PROCESSING DYSFUNCTION CHARACTERISTICS**

AUDITORY PROCESSING DYSFUNCTION CHARACTERISTICS

Your child may be struggling with auditory processing dysfunction if he or she exhibits the following difficulties:

Difficulty remembering sight words, including;

- Trouble retrieving names of letters, words, people, and things.
- Laboring over verbal expression.

Difficulty with phonics, including:

- Trouble remembering sounds of letter combinations such as "au," "oi."
- Difficulty applying phonics rules in a reading setting.
- Sounding out the same word over and over in the same reading passage.

Spelling difficulties, including:

- Trouble spelling phonetically (the child may spell "team" as "tie" or "went" as "wat.")
- Spelling the same word differently each time.

Difficulty sequencing sounds, including:

- Trouble learning and retaining days of the week and months.
- The child guesses at words because reading longer words is very hard.
- The child puts extra sounds in a word (ie., contribution becomes contribu'ta'tion), "band" becomes "brand."

Difficulty saying longer words:

- Transposing letters: "animal" is "aminal;" "magazine" is "mazagine;" "suddenly" is "sundenly."
- Avoiding difficult words when speaking.

The child's silent voice disappears:

- He or she subvocalizes when reading silently, or needs to read aloud to understand a passage.
- He or she needs to repeat the alphabet in his head when writing it out.

Difficulty with speech, including:

- Trouble articulating many sounds.
- Exhibiting language delay.

Difficulty understanding verbal instruction:

- He or she needs to ask for directions to be repeated frequently.
- He or she says "what" a lot.
- An apparent hearing problem can mimic a focusing and attention issue. The key is determining whether the child really is not hearing and storing the information auditorally, or if the child is not focusing on what is being said.
- He or she is easily confused or is never quite sure he understood the speaker.

INFORMAL EVALUATIONS

An auditory processing dysfunction can manifest itself in so many different ways. Many adults and children have mild auditory processing problems, but find ways to compensate for it in their daily lives. It is a bigger struggle for a child to learn with an auditory processing issue, than with just a visual processing issue, or a visual/motor (writing) processing issue. The left auditory brain hemisphere is responsible for retaining sounds, words, and auditory information. When this process is experiencing a block, the child doesn't know why he can't remember what was just taught, nor does the parent.

Storing and retrieving information: Ask the child to write the alphabet. Observe carefully to see whether the child hesitates after writing several letters, then begins again. Watch for this hesitation throughout the writing of the alphabet.

-----If the child hesitates in writing a letter that follows a letter that has a directional component to it, such as "b," "d," "p," "q," "j," "g," then it could be that he has a spatial problem, and had to think about what direction the letter should be written. However, if the child hesitates after writing "e," or "h," then you can suspect that he has lost his silent voice...his "thinking" voice, and is having to go back and say the alphabet over and over in his head.

With older children, you can ask if they had to say the alphabet over several times in their head while doing the alphabet, and they can tell you exactly where they felt they had to stop and repeat. The efficient storage and retrieval of 26 units is one sign of an auditory processing dysfunction.

Sequencing: Ask the child to say the days of the week, and then the months of the year. The months represent sequencing and ordering unrelated sounds. If this is difficult for the child despite being taught it before, or if the child leaves out some months (they often leave out either October or August, because they start with the same sound), assure him that many children do.

However, these difficulties could indicate that the auditory channel of sequencing is not working as well as it should, and causing your child to struggle with learning. If a child is laboring with auditory sequencing then the popular way of teaching multiplication tables through skip counting will be more difficult for that child. That child would greatly benefit from using right brain teaching strategies, using the child's photographic memory to memorize multiplication facts easily.

Word retrieval: The two brain hemispheres have individual responsibilities. When we understand these responsibilities we can see where a child's processing is breaking down in the reading process.

The right brain stores pictures. This means that all of the sight words (words that cannot be sounded out, such as "the," "many," etc.) are stored in the right brain after the child

has been exposed to these words for several days. The name of the word is stored in the child's left auditory hemisphere. Normally, when the two hemispheres are working well together, when the child sees the word (a right brain function), the name comes up quickly (a left brain function), and the child remembers the sight word.

To check the efficiency of this process, have your child read a list of words at his grade level. If your child consistently hesitates at words such as "would, what, know and neighbor," or if he attempts to sound out every word, then make a note of that. If the child is not reading yet, you can have him read, or attempt to name the alphabet letters that you have taught him. If this is very difficult, then we can assume that this is a child who is struggling with the word retrieval portion of an auditory processing dysfunction. There are wonderful methods to help this child.

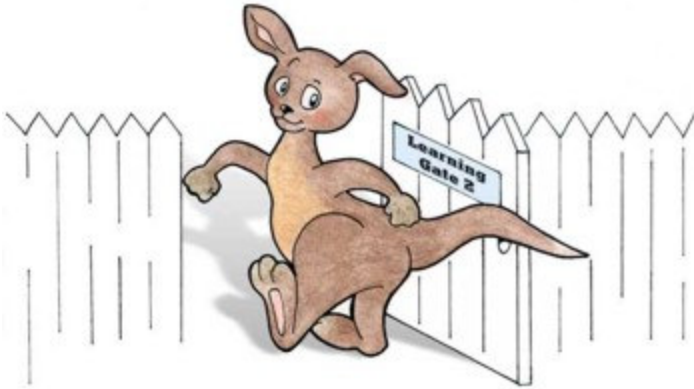
Hearing individual letters: This is the auditory channel that is involved in learning and remembering the sounds that letters and letter combinations get. We teach this in great detail in phonics. Have your child read a list of words that are on the child's reading level (if you don't have a list, you can obtain one from HSLDA Learning Specialist Department, if you are a member). If your child cannot sound out a word, for example, cannot remember the "f" sound to begin a word, or laboriously sounds out "f-a-t," and then says "fan," you know you have a child suffering in this area. If your child is older, and guesses at longer words, because he cannot remember the phonemes (vowel and letter combinations) to sound it out easily, then that child is suffering also in this area. Many times these are children who played the *Phonics Game* well, and knew all the "pieces" (left brain function), but cannot put it into a "whole" (right brain function), when reading a passage. Make a note of your results.

RESOURCES FOR CORRECTION

- Speech therapy.
- Brain training with music. Various programs include:
 - *The Listening Program* by Dr. Tomatis helps retrain the auditory processing area of the brain.
 - *AIT* (Auditory Integration Therapy) home program that requires a speech therapist to work with parent.
 - *Samonas Listening Program*, which requires a professional.
 - *Interactive Metronome* (corrects child's timing, among other things) non-home professional program.
- *LinguSystems* (word games, workbooks, etc.)
- *Brain Integration Therapy for Children*, a home-based therapy program for parents to administer. Visit www.diannecraft.org.
- Specialized reading Instruction. Various programs include:
 - Right brain teaching strategies (bypassing the auditory glitch)
 - *Merrill Linguistic Readers* (very few sight words)
 - *Lindamood Phonemic Awareness Program* (professional program)
 - *Wilson's Reading Program*
 - Nutritional Therapy: Article "Ear Infections: Impact on Learning," and "Essential Fatty Acids and the Brain," available at www.diannecraft.org.

ARTICLE # 2

VISUAL/MOTOR PROCESSING (WRITING) DYSFUNCTION CHARACTERISTICS



The processing glitch that affects children the most is an interference in the writing system (spatial, visual/motor system). The process of writing has not been taken over by the child's automatic brain, which is the right brain hemisphere. This causes the child to have to use much more energy to write. This can make a child look lazy, uncooperative and unmotivated because writing is involved in so many learning activities. See if your child has many of the following symptoms of stress in the writing system:

- Reversals in written letters both laterally and vertically, six months after being taught to write them correctly if written daily.
- Reversals in written numbers.
- Poor spacing in writing.
- Difficulty copying from book or board.
- Resistance to learning or writing cursive.
- Displaying awkward writing posture, with eye and hand very close together.
- No "helping hand" used when writing despite being instructed to do so.
- Failure to complete written assignments despite performing well on tests.
- Spaces math papers poorly.
- Tells great stories orally, but writes very little.
- Leaves out letters in a spelling test, but could spell the word orally correctly.
- Wants to do all math "in his head," no matter how long the problem is.

INFORMAL EVALUATIONS

Check your child's eye/hand dominance: Tear a hole in a piece of paper that is the size of a dime. Have the child stand five feet in front of you and hold the paper with arms extended, in front of him. Ask him to look through the hole and find your nose. As he is looking at your nose through the hole in the paper, you will be able to see his dominant eye.

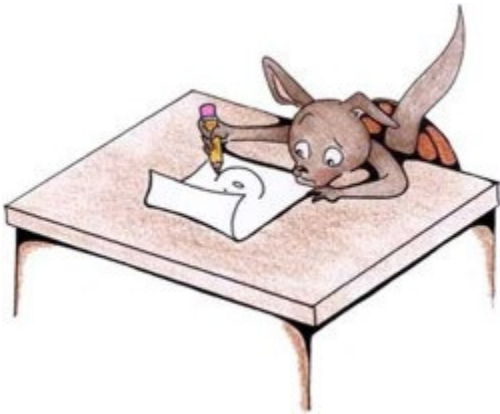
Now to see if he is using that same eye for close-up work, place a small, round object on the floor about five inches in front of the child's feet. A toy construction cone is good. Ask the child to hold the paper at arm's length and look through the hole at the object on the floor. Tell the child to "freeze" his hands when he has seen the object. Then get behind him and cover one of the child's eyes with your hand. Ask the child if he can still see the object, or if it disappeared. Do the same with the other eye, making sure that the child does not move his paper. The object should disappear when you are covering the child's dominant eye.

We always use only one eye when looking through a small hole, and we use our dominant eye. If the child found that the object disappeared when you covered his right eye, then he is right-eye dominant. If he is also right-handed, then we call that "uniform dominance." The brain finds it more efficient to be uniform dominant.

If the object disappeared when you covered the child's left eye, then he is left-eye dominant. If the child is also right-handed, then he is considered "mixed dominant."

Being mixed dominant can be very helpful in sports, such as baseball and golf, but is less efficient for writing. However, if a child has good brain hemispheric integration, then it is not very bothersome for him. If the two hemispheres of his brain are not communicating well for the act of writing, then the writing has not transferred into the automatic hemisphere, and the writing process can be very laborious.

Make a note of whether the child is uniform or mixed dominant. This gives you a clue as to one reason why your child has been struggling with writing. Many times these mixed-dominant children do not develop a hand dominance until they are 4 or 5 years old, as opposed to other children who develop a hand dominance earlier.



Clockwise or counterclockwise circles? Have child write a word with the letter "o" in it, or just write the letter "o." Watch to see if he writes this clockwise or counterclockwise. If a child is hard-wired to be right-handed, he should be making all letters counterclockwise. If a child is hard-wired to be left-handed, he will tend to make his letters clockwise.

We only are concerned when a child who has chosen his right hand to write with, but is making all letters clockwise like a left-hander. This creates great stress in the child's writing system. Make a note of this, because there are specific exercises that can be done to take the stress out of this system. We do not have to change a child's handedness.

Bottom-to-top letter formation: Ask your child to write the alphabet in lower-case print. There is a natural flow of electricity in our body that God put there. When we make

our letters according to that flow, writing is effortless. When we write letters against the flow, writing is laborious. Observe, but don't correct. See if the child makes letter bottom-to-top, which is considered a vertical reversal. See if the child finds it difficult to remember the next letter to write. See if the child writes a mixture of lower-case and upper-case letters. Watch for clockwise letters, and letters that do not go below the line. These are all signs of stress in the child's visual/motor/spatial system. Make notes. These problems can be corrected, and the stress taken out of the system.

RESOURCES FOR CORRECTING WRITING DYSFUNCTION

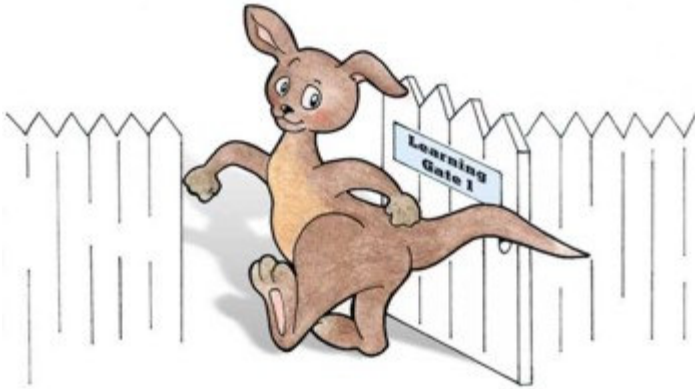


- When teaching, have the child answer as many questions orally, reducing the need to write until you can take the stress out of the writing system.
- Eliminate copying tasks because of the labor involved until the child's writing improves.
- Do timed math tests orally if possible.
- Do the Writing Eight Exercise designed by Dr. Getman, to encourage the child's kinesthetic midline to function well, eliminating both lateral and vertical reversals. This daily exercise, when done in a deliberate, monitored manner, will convert the writing process to the automatic hemisphere. The exercise is described in the manual *Brain Integration Therapy for Children* by Dianne Craft.
- After the child has a strong midline, then you can use the writing program *Handwriting Without Tears*.
- Teach your child keyboarding to encourage computer use for longer papers.
 - Keyboarding program: [Keyboard Classroom](#)
- LinguSystems has several books that talk about writing issues, such as the dysgraphia described in the characteristics section.
- "[Smart Kids Who Hate to Write](#)" by Dianne Craft

PAGE DOWN FOR ARTICLE #3 Visual Processing Dysfunction
Characteristics

ARTICLE #3

VISUAL PROCESSING DYSFUNCTION CHARACTERISTICS



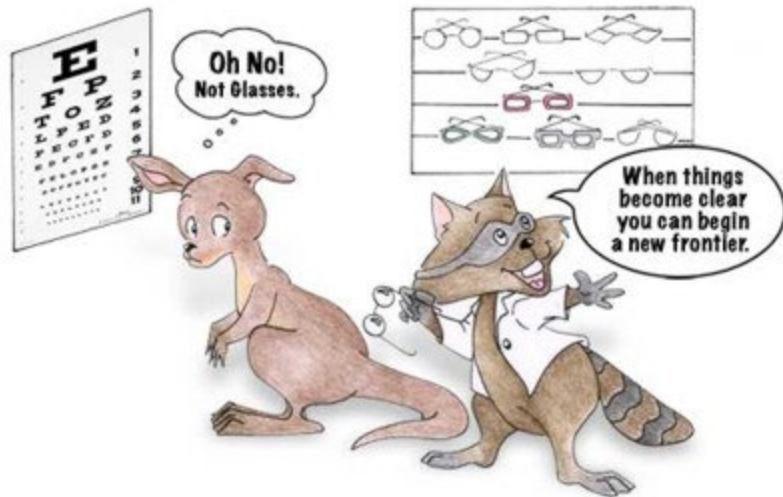
A child struggling with visual processing issues will display some of these characteristics:

- Reading reversals ("was" for "saw," "on" for "no," "big" for "dig," etc.) after initial introduction of the words.
- Skipping of small words when reading.
- Needing to use finger to track after age 7.
- Oral reading that is smooth at the beginning of the page, but becomes more labored the longer a child reads.
- Experiencing eye fatigue shortly after reading begins (watery eyes, rubbing eyes).
- Yawning shortly after reading begins.
- Continuing to struggle even after being prescribed eye glasses.

INFORMAL EVALUATIONS

These informal evaluations can be done at home to help a parent determine if a child is experiencing a blocked learning gate. Be sure as well to have your child's vision acuity checked by an optometrist or ophthalmologist to make sure that this is not the cause of the child's reading problem.

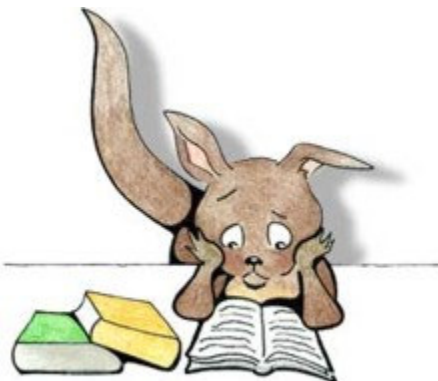
Eye tracking: With the child standing three feet in front of you, take an interesting object and slowly move it in a left-to-right manner in front of the child's eyes. Ask the child to keep his eyes on the target. Do this for about four swings of the target. Watch to see if the child's eyes skip in any spot, or if they begin to water. Then slowly move the target in a horizontal figure eight manner within the child's shoulder width, making sure that the target is not too close to the child's face. See if the child can look in those various directions without skipping or his eyes looking stressed in any way. Make a note of your findings. There are specific exercises that can be done to strengthen a child's eye teaming abilities to reduce the stress in the visual learning system.



Cross crawl: Many times younger children have difficulty reading because they are not efficiently crossing the midline of their body. This is the process that normally occurs when a baby is crawling. However, some children develop a learning gate problem in this area because they did not crawl, or they crawled but had a traumatic event (such as a fall, or back-to-back ear infections) that inhibited this natural process and made it much less effective.

Stand in front of the child and demonstrate the cross crawl movement by lifting the right knee and tapping it with the left hand, then doing the same with the left knee and right hand. Do this for a minute so the child can observe you. Then ask the child to do it also. Don't correct the child at first, but let him or her figure it out while you continue to do your cross crawl movements in front of him. If the child can't do it, and becomes frustrated, then you can start him out by having him march with his legs while you touch the opposite knee with his hands. After doing this for a bit, remove your hands from the child's hands, and let him do this himself.

Make a note of your findings. If you confirm your child has midline issues, there are specific things that you can do to address this problem.



Reading: There are four components to reading successfully:

- Eye Tracking ability.
- Sight Word Memorization.

- Phonics (letter sounds and word decoding ability).
- Reading comprehension.

We can observe a child's oral reading to help use determine if eye tracking ability is contributing to the child's reading difficulties. If the child can read, have him read a passage, and carefully watch his eyes to see if he reads to the end of the line, and then starts the new line, but quickly darts back with his eyes to the last line to make sure that he is in the right spot. We all do this once in a while. Watch to see if the child does this frequently. This takes much more effort to read when this saccadic eye movement is occurring.

Also observe if the child begins reading the word "dig" by forming a "b" with his mouth first. Any time a child reverses a letter or word, six months after being taught to read, that is a sign of stress in the child's visual processing system. Make a note of your findings. There are specific things that can be done to make this process easier for your child.

Colored overlays: At times, a child will experience a mild scotopic sensitivity syndrome, which means that the reflection of the white background of the paper makes it more difficult for the child to see the black letters that compose the text.

One of the ways that you can informally determine if this is any issue, is by obtaining some plastic colored reading overlays (available at www.diannecraft.org.)

Have the child read a paragraph or a few lines. Then place a blue colored transparency over the next paragraph and have him read. Then place a green overlay over the next paragraph when the child is reading orally. Listen for subtle changes in fluency. Ask the child what he experienced in fluency while reading with the various colors. Many times the child will say that a particular transparency acted as a magnifying glass, making the letters bigger, and easier to see. There are other colors that you could try, but blue and green are the main ones that help children right away, in my 35 years of working with bright, hard-working learners.

If the child does markedly better with one of the colored overlays, continue to use it to reduce the visual stress that he is experiencing. However, it will only act as a temporary aid, until you correct the underlying problem, which is lack of eye convergence. The eyes can be encouraged to work together as a team while reading by doing various home exercises, or by working with a vision therapist using both home and office exercises.

RESOURCES FOR CORRECTING VISION ACUITY PROBLEMS

- Prescription eyeglasses.
- Vision therapy from a developmental optometrist. (This kind of therapy can be quite expensive.)
- Brain integration therapy. This program can be conducted at home. For more information see www.diannecraft.org for the Instruction Manual.
- Colored transparencies. For information on how to obtain these visit www.diannecraft.org
- Irlen Lenses (colored lenses placed into glasses for easier use. For more information look for the *Reading With Colors* book available at www.irlen.com.
- [PACE program](#) done with professionals.