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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Role of vision in the School Environment.

Good and comfortable vision is essential in all reading and writing tasks. As children develop so does their visual systems. This visual development should then be able to cope comfortably with all learning activities when formal schooling starts. It is very important for the eyes to remain working comfortably together at near [convergence] and to focus comfortably at near [accommodation] for extended periods. If these two systems are not functioning optimally, the eyes will find it difficult to track properly and smoothly across a page. This will have a negative impact on smooth and speedy eye movements that forms the base of learning and reading speed and accuracy. This gets confirmed by the Developmental Eye Movement Test which will clearly show if the child is still relying on gross motor movements [moving the head] instead of fine motor movements [moving the eyes] when reading.

This may all then result in learning problems or more correctly learning frustrations. These children would present, amongst other, with symptoms such as avoidance of reading tasks, skipping words, making up their own words and reversals, and therefore end up being labeled as dyslexic or suffering from ADD. They may also either be slow to complete tasks or rush through the work. Research shows that this reading frustration may impact 1 out of every 3 children in developed communities today. We are still not able to prove it beyond doubt, but it is surely related to the increased near point demands on the visual system from a much earlier age. With E-learning in COVID, this situation is even getting worse.

In our screening we focus on this so called visual-motor perceptual integration skills and then deal with the cause being convergence and accommodative deficiencies. For this reason, we do a whole range of binocular vision tests to confirm this near point, stress related issues rather than dealing with the symptoms such as poor eye tracking resulting in reading problems. We prefer to call this a reading frustration rather than a reading “problem”, since most children battling with this are children with normal or above normal intellectual abilities. Children, who are left eye dominant, will be even more frustrated and will perform well below their potential. Our aim is to provide support to the visual system and to develop the visual-motor integration that is lacking. Relieving the strain on the convergence and accommodative systems results in an immediate improvement of the eye tracking movements, and therefore an immediate improvement in reading and learning. It will furthermore prevent children from losing their distance vision. We honestly believe that most children can cope in a normal school environment if we can ensure comfortable and clear vision.