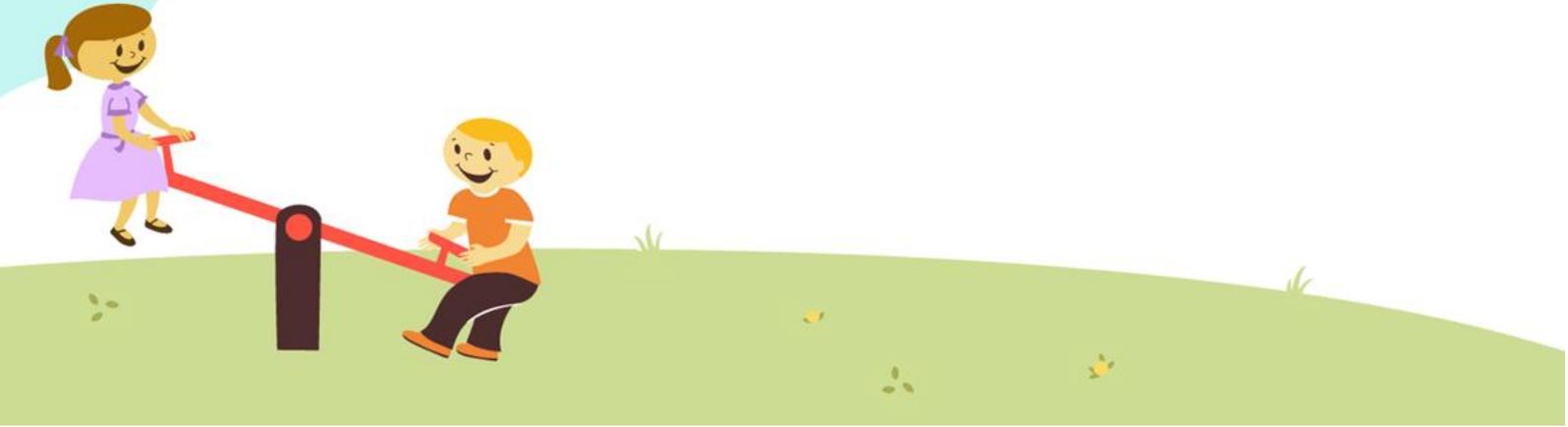


Sensory Questionnaire

Sense of Vision

Greater Glasgow and Clyde



The Sensory Questionnaires are designed to enable you to check your child's progress at particular stages of development.

We use our vision to interpret information from all we see around us. Some children use their vision differently and can either be more sensitive to visual input (e.g. avoiding bright lights) or less sensitive (e.g. appearing not to see something right in front of them).

If you suspect your child does not process visual information as well as they should please complete the following questionnaire and then try using the downloadable strategies to help them.

If you have concerns about your child's ability to see things properly please take them to an optician for an eye test.

Contents

Question 1	.....	1
Question 2	.....	2
Question 3	.....	3
Question 4	.....	4
Question 5	.....	5
Question 6	.....	6
Question 7	.....	7
Question 8	.....	8
Question 9	.....	9
Question 10	.....	10



Question 1 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 1

[Back to Top](#)

Does your child squint, cover their eyes or complain about classroom lightning, bright lights or sunshine etc?

Remember that sensation of coming out of the cinema into broad daylight, or coming out a long tunnel in a car or train and screwing your eyes up against the brightness? Some children appear to experience that level of discomfort quite regularly. If your child appears to react in this fashion quite regularly reply 'yes' to this question.



Strategies and Suggestions

If your child is one of them try the following suggestions:

- Allow your child to wear a baseball cap or sunglasses in bright light.
- Make sure that your child is not sitting in direct sunlight; if there are blinds fitted to the window use them, or tape plain white paper to the lower half of the window.



- You can purchase opaque window film which reduces glare (and prevents a lot of visual distractions) but still allows natural light to come into a room.



- Switch off the classroom light sometimes and allow students to work with natural light only. Consider doing this even on some very overcast days, although not to the point of straining your eyes obviously! Moving from bright to duller lighting conditions gives the eye muscles a work out and changing the levels of brightness in a room can also alter the levels of alertness; so if the children are getting too 'hyper' switch off the lights for a while.
- Where possible use floor and table lamps as these tend to produce a softer pool of light rather than overhead fittings which tend to cover the whole room in a bright light.





Question 2 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 2

[Back to Top](#)

Does your child prefer to be in the dark?

Most children prefer to have a degree of light child being completely in the dark during the night. This question does not refer to children who are happy to be in the dark at night but is more about children who look for dark places to go during the day. Whether that may be going into a large cupboard, or disappearing under the duvet or cushions (or even under the bed!) they do this because they find the constant visual stimulus of their surroundings a bit overwhelming.



Strategies and Suggestions

Most children prefer to have a degree of light and parents often use a night light to prevent their child being completely in the dark during the night. This question does not refer to children who are happy to be in the dark at night but is more about children who look for dark places to go during the day. Whether that may be going into a large cupboard or disappearing under the duvet (or even under the bed!) they do this because they find the constant visual stimulus of their surroundings a bit overwhelming.

- Your child might try to avoid bright places so bear this in mind if they are refusing to go somewhere. In such cases let them wear a cap or sunglasses to block out bright light.
- Let your child have a quiet dark place to go to for some 'down time'. This could be a pop up tent, a 'den' you build underneath their bed or in a cupboard under the stairs.



- Some children can sleep better with a canopy over their bed, or when black out blinds are fitted to the bedroom window.
- Let your child wear sunglasses to block out the bright lights; even on days where there is light cloud cover it can be too bright for some children.





Question 3 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 3

[Back to Top](#)

Is your child attracted to bright lights and shiny objects?

At a younger age it is quite common for children to love all things bright and sparkly, however by the time a child reaches primary school age this tends to have reduced, or even disappeared (we are not talking about little girls and their love of sequins and glitter here, which can in some cases last into adulthood!!).

Some primary aged children can get lost in particles of dust dancing in the beams of sunlight, or fixate on the light bouncing off the teacher's jewellery, to the point that they forget where they are and what they are supposed to be attending to.



Strategies and Suggestions

- Some children can become quite fixated on visual stimuli and struggle to move without help. It is important to allow them this stimuli in a structured way, for example let them choose what visual activity they want to look at but use a timer to make sure after 5 minutes they move onto something else.
- Children love to watch TV or other electrical devices, however this should be time limited. For further information on supervising 'screen time' visit www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/playing-with-technology.



- Try to reduce the amount of bright and shiny objects in the child's bedroom to help them settle and calm down more quickly at bedtime.
- Try to reduce the amount of bright and shiny objects in the classroom as these will be distracting for the child.





Question 4 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 4

[Back to Top](#)

Does your child become frustrated when trying to find objects in competing backgrounds e.g. trying to find a toy in a toy box or trying to find a particular sock in a drawer?

As an adult you know how frustrating it can be to find the matching pair for a sock in the laundry basket, however you keep searching because you know it might be there. Some children really struggle to spot a sock in their sock drawer, find a specific jumper in a pile of clothes or locate a favourite toy in the toy box. This is because looking for an item against a busy or cluttered background is a challenging visual task.



This visual perceptual skill is known as figure ground discrimination and continues developing throughout early childhood.

Strategies and Suggestions

We refer to this ability as 'figure ground discrimination' and it is a difficult skill to master; for children who process vision differently it can be a hard lesson to learn indeed. Being organised helps massively!!



- Don't assume that because you can find something easily that the child can too!
- Use drawer dividers to separate small items of clothing out into clearly defined compartments. Have specific places for different items of clothing i.e. pants in one drawer, t-shirts on one side of a wardrobe and jumpers on the other.
- Keep toys in separate clearly labelled boxes, and your child's favourite, most often used toys in a basket.
- Minimise visual stimuli in your child's bedroom by using plain bedding and pattern free carpet.
- Practice developing this skill in a non-pressured way; make a game out of finding specific items laid out in a tray with 4 or 5 other items on it. Make this harder by adding more toys as your child becomes more able.
- Look at busy pictures in a book together and see if your child can spot various items.





Question 5 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 5

[Back to Top](#)

Does your child have difficulty putting puzzles together compared to other children of a similar age?

Most children have mastered the skill of putting together a simple 4 piece jigsaw whilst still in nursery. To develop this skill you have to be able to look at different pieces of the picture and know from the clues you see what the complete picture is likely to be and what section fits where. Some children, when presented with a part of a picture, are able to work out what the complete picture will be.



Strategies and Suggestions

Some children are unable to work out what a picture is meant to be when it is not complete (this skill is known as 'form constancy'). Encourage your child to develop this skill by starting with simple jigsaws that they will be able to finish and will allow them to experience success.



- Make some basic jigsaws by cutting old Christmas cards or magazine pictures in half. If this is too easy for your child, cut them in half again and ask them to put all 4 pieces back in the correct place.





Question 6 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 6

[Back to Top](#)

Does your child stare intensely at people and objects?

Normally we look at people and then look away. Even when we are talking to somebody it is unusual to maintain unbroken eye contact; we do look more when we are listening but would still give a cursory glance to other people or objects in our surroundings. Some children however appear to stare at you beyond the point of comfort. If your child appears to fixate on faces or objects to this degree then respond 'yes' to this question.



Strategies and Suggestions

- Your child does not mean to stare and is not being rude, however they may need adult support to stop looking and focus back on something else or to the task in hand.
- Your child may not hear you calling their name when they are intently focussed on something. You may need to get in close to catch their attention and help them move away from the object or person in question.





Question 7 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 7

[Back to Top](#)

Does your child spin or flick objects in front of their eyes?

Some children may twirl pencils, flap pieces of paper, or even flick their fingers in front of their eyes. Likewise children can spin toys (even toys not designed for spinning) or spend ages watching the washing machine in spin cycle because they enjoy the visual stimulation so much.



Strategies and Suggestions

Some children like looking at objects using their peripheral vision. Once they start flicking the objects it can be difficult to stop as it can make them excited. They may get upset if you tell them to stop flicking or spinning objects as they do enjoy it, and it is important to use a behaviour approach when tackling this.



- Offer a variety of objects that the child can flick or spin; these can range from special pencil toppers to strips of holographic paper. Use an egg timer and visual prompts, in conjunction with 'now' and 'next' e.g. "Now you need to finish this task, next you can play with one of the items in your sensory box for 1 minute". For more information on creating a sensory box visit www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/sensory-box-visual.
- Distract the child to another activity they find motivating.



Question 8 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 8

[Back to Top](#)

Can your child be startled when being approached suddenly?

Does your child seem surprised each time you approach them from behind? Do they get upset or jump when their name is called?



Strategies and Suggestions

- Children can get a surprise if they are approached suddenly, especially if they do not process visual information as quickly as the rest of us. They can become quite upset or angry when this happens so please be aware of this if you are walking up to them.
- When approaching them move towards them slowly, say their name clearly and try and approach them from the front or side rather than from behind.





Question 9 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 9

[Back to Top](#)

Is your child very cautious when going down stairs or stepping off a kerb when crossing the road? Does your child step over a join between two different floor coverings e.g. when carpet joins kitchen linoleum?

Does your child tend to feel their way with their feet when moving across thresholds at doorways or where one floor covering meets another? They may use the back of their foot to check where the edge of the step is and then slide their foot and ankle over the stair tread until they feel the step below.



Strategies and Suggestions

If your child is not processing depth perception accurately they may tend to feel their way with their feet when moving across thresholds at doorways or where one floor covering meets another. As they walk downstairs you may observe them use the back of their foot to check where the edge of the step is and then slide their foot and ankle over the stair tread until they feel the step below.

- Let your child take their time when going down stairs, walking off a kerb or crossing over different floor coverings. You can go slowly in front of them to show them it is ok.
- They need to be able to see clearly where they are going and to feel with their feet. Simple things such as clearly marking the edge of steps with neon tape, keeping obstacles to a minimum in the house and classroom environment, and even making sure the child's fringe is not obstructing their vision can all help.



- Children can become upset, angry or fall over if they feel rushed or get pushed by other children so allowing them to leave class a few minutes before the rush at break-time, and return a few minutes earlier than their peers can also help.



Question 10 - Visual (5 - 12 Years)

Question 10

[Back to Top](#)

Is your child easily distracted by nearby visual stimuli e.g. pictures, items on walls, windows or other people moving around?

Some children struggle to concentrate in a busy room. It can be hard to focus your attention on the teacher if you are fascinated by the murals or wall and window displays, or continue to look at the person talking to you if the TV is playing in the corner. Whilst mild distraction is fairly common, particularly amongst younger primary aged children, as a child matures they should be able to focus on the person talking to them or the book they should be reading without being side-tracked by other visual information around them.



Strategies and Suggestions

Consider carefully where the child is sitting when they are being asked to concentrate in school or complete homework at home. Simple environmental changes are normally all that is required to reduce distraction and increase concentrations.

- Can you give them a blank wall to look at with no distractions?
- Can you use baffle boards or pop-up screens to section off a low stimulus space?
- Can you pull the blinds to stop them looking out the window?
- Consider where the child's desk is in relation to pathways around the class? Is there a seat that gets the least amount of passing traffic?



Please think about these things before you get annoyed at them for not concentrating.