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How Vision Affects Reading & Learning

Are you or anyone in your family, a "Reluctant Reader?" Do you read only when you are required to? Do you read for fun and enjoyment or only for work or school? Vision is an ever changing process that is learned and directly affects how we think, how we solve problems and even how we feel. The way we see influences all our daily interactions with our families, friends and co-workers. The concern is with not just what you see, but how you see, and how efficiently you use your eyes. The total person needs to be treated. We need to look at how your visual system functions, emphasizing prevention, education and remediation. How the brain and eyes work together – vision – has a great impact on the learning process for both children and adults. Imagine sitting in a classroom taking notes and fighting a focusing problem, that won't allow you to change your focus from near to far and back again quickly enough to keep up with the instructor.

Imagine starting out a day being able to read a paragraph that looks like this:

Double vision often appears or gets worse as the day goes on. Many people block the vision in one eye to avoid seeing double.

Double vision often appears or gets worse as the day goes on. Many people block the vision in one eye to avoid seeing double. And as the day progresses and your visual system is stressed your paragraph begins to look like this:

~~Double vision often appears or gets worse as the day goes on. Many people block the vision in one eye to avoid seeing double.~~

Imagine reading a paragraph and having the letters or words appear to
move and jump

as you are trying to comprehend what you are reading.

In any of these cases, the person having the vision problem more than likely has good eyesight, seeing 20/20 either with or without corrective lenses. Most school screenings check for visual acuity alone and do not screen for visual skills including tracking, focusing, eye teaming or perceptual skills. Many children and adults do not realize that their struggles in the classroom and/or workplace are in no way linked to intelligence or how hard they are trying, instead they are not able to visually process the information put before them.

Not knowing the cause of classroom, and later adult life skills problems, can have a detrimental effect on self-esteem and behavior. Many children begin to be labeled as classroom problems, can grow into troubled teens and eventually struggling adults if their visual problems are not diagnosed and treated. One out of five children and seven out of ten juvenile delinquents have a vision disorder that is interfering with their ability to achieve.

Approximately 10% of the population with symptoms of blurred vision and eyestrain have vision problems which cannot be treated successfully using eyeglasses alone. It is this group of people who need vision therapy. Vision therapy has been shown to benefit children and adults with problems of eye teaming, focusing, tracking, amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (crossed eye), and visual perception. Individuals with these problems experience eyestrain when reading or doing other close work, inability to work quickly, sleepiness, inability to attend and concentrate, double vision and loss of vision. Children with vision problems such as amblyopia and strabismus can face significant problems at school, at work, and at sports.

With proper diagnosis and treatment, reading levels improve significantly, children and adults can go from reluctant readers to avid readers, comprehension increases, and even sports performance can improve.