

What is Visualization?



Do you get pictures in your mind when you read?

Visualization is the ability to get images in your mind. This skill is very important, because it is highly involved in reading comprehension, following multiple-step directions, learning new concepts, spelling, math word problems, planning and organization (including organizing your thoughts for writing).

The precursor for visualization is visual memory. This is simply remembering what you have already seen. Usually, you can also get a mental picture of people, places, and things you have seen. Imagine your mother's face, your home, your bedroom, or your first car. Can you get a picture in your mind's eye of these? This is visualization.

Part of visualization involves an image of our body moving thru space as we plan a soccer play, karate form, or sequence of chores. You also use visualization in the creative process, and comprehending what we hear, and what we see on the printed page. Often the most challenging aspect of visualization is being able to then manipulate or change that image. This is critical in higher math, sciences, and construction.

Many children today are deficient in this skill.

The primary reasons for this are too much television and video games and not enough games and imaginary play.

So what can we do to help our children develop better visualization skills?

It is not hard or expensive, because the solution is to employ traditional children's games and normal play. Besides that, it is fun for the whole family.



Here is a list of recommendations to help develop this critical skill.

Encourage imaginary/pretend play

Allow time for unstructured play time

Play Blindman's Bluff

Tell stories, pass along stories

Continue to read to children while they are learning to read and even after that and/or listen to audio books

Play "I went to the shore..."

Play checkers, chess, Connect 4 and battleship (strategy games)

Learn dance, karate, and swimming

Ride bicycle, skateboard, and scooter

Solve puzzles of all kinds

Read series of books

Enjoy crafts, drawing and painting

Play traditional children's games such as hopscotch, jump rope, marbles, pick up sticks, dominoes, and string games

Practice describing events

Practice giving and receiving directions

Plan and discuss sequence of events

Play 20 questions, I Spy, hangman, and tic-tac-toe

You can also purchase games to help develop visualization at puzzles.com and mindwareonline.com.

Other ideas to enhance the development of visual skills

Children are naturally creative and seek out activities that will develop visual skills when given the opportunity. Most play not only encourages visualization, but also good basic visual skills such as eye movements, eye teaming, and focusing.



Supply them with free time, old fashioned games, outdoor play, and plenty of paper, crayons, markers, paint, and scissors. They will probably forget about the TV and video games.