

CASE 1: **MARK**

The following strategies are suggestions to try out for some of the identified problem areas, for your child at school and home.

It is important to remember that what works for one child may not work for others and that if a strategy works well initially it may not last and may require to be adapted or changed in the future.

It is important to prioritise a few problem areas and implement one or two strategies. Trying to tackle all areas of difficulty and implement all solutions at one time can result in overload and ultimately will not be beneficial.

The following information outlines some of the key areas of difficulty identified from the clinical structured history taking questionnaire and some of the strategies that may be effective for each problem. The numbers are taken from those used in the inventory.

Difficulty interpreting a complex visual scene and making sense of information when too much visual information is present:

This can be due to the overwhelming visual impact of too much information being presented at one time. Difficulty searching for and locating specific items, people, or places can also depend on the amount of visual information, the additional movement visible and the orientation and view of the object.

Poor visual memory and the ability to retain information presented visually may also impact on performance.

Orientation of self around the environment is also a challenge, especially if there is a lot of visual information to interpret and to process.

19. Has difficulty seeing something which is pointed out in the distance

Strategies to try

- Give clear verbal guidelines being very specific i.e. look to the left of the second tree.
- Try zoom lens on a digital camera or camera phone to zoom in to a scene to see one piece of information more slowly.
- Give practice and training to use camera or phone
- Use clear verbal prompts and large visual targets to cue the child onto the correct target .i.e. if you look at the big church and then move past it you will see your friend.

- Play I-spy games to encourage the child to select a distant object and give clues about it so that others have to find and identify.
- Train to regularly scan the visual scene and describe what they can see.
- Give extra time to process information and do not rush on too quickly.
- Take child to the item to view at a closer proximity.

22. Get lost in places where there is a lot to see e.g. a crowded shop (may also refuse to leave parents side for fear of getting lost)

Strategies to try

- Have a pre-arranged meeting point in case of getting lost.
- Ensure child always stays close to the adult they are with, or always knows where the adult will be – the adult may have to stand in an agreed position to allow the child to instantly be able to locate them.
- Try using a digital map
- Sequence each stage of the journey and encourage the use of memory aids
- Photograph landmarks on a camera phone
- Practice to develop familiarity and consistency
- Send child on an errand and have them draw a map of the route they took. They can also draw maps of route to and from school or regular outing.
- Encourage child to use mobile phone to call/text the person they're looking for.
- Encourage child to shout/call for person.
- Ensure close family friends use non-verbal signs which are easily visible to help them be located i.e. waving

24. Has difficulty locating and item of clothing in a pile of clothes, a drawer or wardrobe.

Strategies to try

- Minimise clothes in the drawer or cupboard i.e. socks only
- Experiment with storage styles and layout e.g. vertical/horizontal
- Try hanging clothes by outfit rather than items.
- Spotlight key areas in room i.e. above drawers
- Involve child in storage and organisation
- Layout clothes the night before
- Hang clothes rather than fold them
- Try hanging clothes in groups and colour match them i.e. Red t-shirts together, blue t-shirts together, black trousers together.

- Try an elevated shoe rack
- Practice dressing skills a little at a time with help at the start of a garment and then child completes the last bit.

28. Sits closer to the television than about 30 cm (NB this will not harm the child's vision)

Strategies to try

- Try a large screen TV
- Try a flat screen TV
- Try smaller TV if a large screen offers too much demand for visual scanning.
- Avoid visual clutter between seats and TV
- Avoid visual clutter i.e. photos, plants beside or above the TV
- Join film club / book club to obtain access to older slower moving films which have fewer visual effects.

29. Find copying words or drawings time consuming and difficult

Strategies to try

- Practice visual memory games – eye spy, tell me what you saw
- Make use of auditory memory skills – speak out loud giving information by sound.
- Do not expect the child to write and speak or write and listen at the same time.
- Scribe work where possible especially if ideas are required.

Impairment of visually guided movement of the body and further evidence of visual field impairment

Difficulties may be impacted by the extent of the visual field and the child may need retraining to adjust head position. Difficulties may also be related to perception of depth and judgement.

32. Bumps into low furniture such as a coffee table

Strategies to try

- Give additional verbal reminders “the coffee table is just in front of you”
- Get the child to move furniture when it requires to be rearranged.
- Minimise the amount of furniture in each room thus maximising the space available for movement.
- Enhance colour contrast of furniture and floor
- Ensure that furniture purchased does not have glass or sharp edges
- Arrange room with space to move around if possible
- Room trails or footprints on the floor to mark the way.
- Consider the shape of the furniture and try to maximise floor space and movement areas
- Avoid moving furniture if possible and involve the individual if required.
- Try using plain carpet and wall coverings to reduce the amount of visual information being presented.

Difficulties demonstrating impaired visual attention and fatigue

This is likely to result in difficulties with tasks requiring sustained visual attention and concentration, especially school work.

40. Finds it difficult to get back on task when distracted

Strategies to try

- Give additional verbal reminders. i.e. “it is time to get back to work, are you finished yet?”
- Minimise distractions around the work area.
- Present work tasks in short blocks breaking down activities.
- Present tasks one at a time.
- Give additional movement breaks to alter positioning.

41. Bumps into things when walking and having a conversation

Strategies to try

- Give additional verbal reminders “there is a tree coming up in front of you”
- Encourage one task at a time i.e. walking or talking or listening
- Make only one demand at a time i.e. walk, talk, or listen.

42. Misses objects that should be obvious because they are different from the background and seem to ‘pop out’ e.g. a bright ball in the grass.

Strategies to try

- Reduce the amount of items presented
- Space out items
- Use contrasting colours of background and object i.e. plain floor, walls, bed spread
- Maximise contrast and visibility to increase pop out effect.

Difficulties demonstrating evidence of behavioural difficulties associated with crowded environments i.e. cinema, shopping centre

This may be due to too much visual and or auditory stimulation that can be over-whelming and stressful.

45. Behaviour is difficult in a over stimulating or busy environment i.e. supermarket, shopping centre.

Strategies to try

- Try a tactile object to provide alternative sensory input i.e. fidget object, toy, rubber, giant paper clip
- Try oral sensory input i.e. chewing gum, mint, lemon, ice lolly
- Try scents on a hanky to provide additional sensory input.
- Try building up exposure and experience i.e. trips to small shops for one item. Get child to plan their own route for one or two items in the small shop first.
- Provide additional sensory input through deep muscle activities i.e. pushing trolley, carrying the basket.
- Encourage help and assistance i.e. while shopping to fetch items, to have a task to do at assembly
- Arrive early to give additional preparation time

46. Reacts angrily when other children are restless and distracting.

Strategies to try

- Position in a chair with personal space.
- Try an individual work station
- Try a screened off work area.
- Try head phones or ear plugs to reduce the noise level and auditory distractions.