

Further Assessment for Children with Learning Difficulties

Should my child have this further assessment?

The first step with any child is to have a full eye examination which free is of charge to you, being covered by the NHS. This will check if there is any need for glasses or ocular health issue that could explain any visual difficulties.

A child with difficulties who is found to have no significant refractive error (glasses prescription), or who presents with classic symptoms of specific learning difficulties such as “words jumping on the page” will then be recommended for further assessment. This appointment is not covered by the NHS at present, and private fees will apply.

What should we expect?

The assessment is designed to detect any visual factors which may be contributing to a child’s difficulties. These may or may not be related to any diagnosed Specific Learning disability.

During this test your optometrist will concentrate on the co-ordination of the two eyes (binocular vision). Muscle weaknesses or strain found by these tests certainly explain difficulty sustaining focus when reading. They will also check your child’s ability to focus on near objects in order to make text clear (accommodate). Should any of these tests find areas of weakness then simple eye exercises will be issued for your child to perform at home.

Finally your child will be assessed for “Meares- Irlen Syndrome” which is a certain sensitivity for colour where using a prescribed coloured overlay increases the speed of reading. A recent study found that about 50% of normal school children will choose a coloured overlay as improving the clarity of text and 20% will use their overlay long term voluntarily. 5% of these children read more than 25% faster.

Should your child demonstrate an improvement whilst using their selected individual overlay then a specific coloured A5 sheet will be issued. The child should never be forced to use the overlay as voluntary use of the overlay is evidence itself that it is helping.

Follow up

Following your child’s examination a thorough report will be provided for your reference and another fully documented report will be sent to your child’s appropriate teacher so they are fully aware of our findings and recommendations.

Most children are recommended to return 3-4 weeks after their initial assessment where the results of exercises will be investigated and the effect of using the overlays discussed.



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Please note

All our further testing and treatment recommendations are fully investigated and scientifically proven to be of benefit. There are many other vision training/ tests available but currently there is lack of scientific evidence to support them. We are not able to diagnose a specific learning disability. Our job is to try and find any visual factors which may be contributing to a child's difficulties. Our role is to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team with your child's teachers and educational psychologists.