

Vision Problems Masquerade as Learning Disabilities

It is important to understand that while our eyes take in visual information, that information is sent to the brain where it is processed. If the information that is sent to the brain is faulty, it can make learning very difficult. While learning disability websites list a variety of accommodations that can help children with Visual Information Processing Disorders, it is important for parents and educators to understand that these are signs that a correctable vision problem is playing a role in a child's learning challenges .

Many individuals with learning disabilities also have ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). One of the signs that a vision problem may be contributing to one's learning challenges is a short attention span when it comes to reading and near work. This behavior could easily be mistaken for ADHD.

A study published in the November 2013 issue of the Journal of Attention Disorders states that "attention and internalizing problems improved significantly following treatment for Convergence Insufficiency ." Convergence insufficiency is an eye coordination disorder which can make reading difficult and cause symptoms such as eye strain, double vision, loss of concentration, and frequent loss of place when reading and working up close, all which play a negative role in learning.

The National Eye Institute of the National Institutes of Health recently funded a 5-year, 8 million dollar study called the Convergence Insufficiency Treatment Trial - Attention and Reading Study (CITT-ART). This will be a national multi-center clinical trial that involves optometry, ophthalmology, psychiatry, and education in evaluating how this eye-teaming problem impacts a child's attention and reading performance.

There are eight clinical sites participating across the United States and participants are needed. This means that this is an opportunity for parents to have their children receive optometric vision therapy by participating in this study. For information about the requirements and locations for the study visit: <http://citt-art.com>.