Strabismus

School of Special Educational Needs
Sensory

Description

- Strabismus (or squint) is a condition where the two eyes fail to align and work together.
- Caused by extraocular muscle imbalance, the eyes may not move normally and do not direct toward the same object as each other. One eye often deviates in a different direction.
- There are four types of strabismus which describe the eye misalignment including esotropia (one eye misaligned inward), exotropia (one eye misaligned outward), hypertropia (upward misalignment of one eye) and hypotropia (downward deviation of one eye).
- The misalignment may always affect the same eye (unilateral strabismus), or the two eyes may take turns being misaligned (alternating strabismus).
- Strabismus commonly occurs during early childhood.

Implications

- Correct alignment of eyes is essential for binocular vision (where both eyes form a fused image in the brain to create three-dimensional vision).
- In strabismus, where the images transmitted to the brain are too dissimilar to be fused, the brain ignores the visual input from the misaligned eye to prevent double vision. This suppression typically leads to amblyopia (lazy eye) in that eye.
- Some common concerns with strabismus include depth perception difficulties, headaches, eyestrain, head tilt and blurry vision. The condition may cause fatigue when reading, and may make reading comfortably, difficult to achieve.
- Strabismus can be constant or intermittent and can be highly influenced by the effort of accommodation (achieving and maintaining focus).
- The condition should be identified and treated as early as possible as this creates a better prognosis for good vision.
- Glasses may be prescribed to enhance eye alignment or surgical correction may be considered. Visual tracking and scanning technique practice assists with skill development and visual processing.

Accessing the curriculum

- Enlarge print size, use bold lined paper and ensure strong contrast.
- Reduce visual clutter by ensuring learning materials are well spaced and well organised on a page. Remove unnecessary visual information.
- Use bullet points rather than long narrative text when presenting information.
- Consider depth perception when using stairs or participating in physical activities.
- Consider the impact of possible visual fatigue and offer rest time after prolonged reading and writing activities if fatigue is evident.

Click to see an Interactive Eye Diagram (web link)

As this document contains generic information, please consult with the Vision Education Program in regard to individual educational needs.

References

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