



## Information Sheet

### Visual Tracking

#### What is visual tracking?

Visual tracking is the ability to control and co-ordinate eye movements to follow a moving object or to smoothly scan across a line of text. It is a foundational visual skill which supports reading, writing and many classroom activities.

#### *Children use visual tracking when they:*

- Follow words across a page whilst reading.
- Copy from the board to their notebook.
- Watch a ball during PE or play.
- Scan for items in a busy environment.

#### Why visual tracking matters in the classroom?

#### *Strong visual tracking helps children:*

- Maintain focus on tasks.
- Read fluently and accurately.
- Avoid skipping lines or losing their place.
- Engage confidently in group activities and games.

#### *When a child is struggling to visual track, they may:*

- Struggle with reading or writing.
- Seem inattentive or easily distracted.
- Avoid tasks that require sustained visual attention.



## Signs a child may be struggling with visual tracking

Teachers might notice some of the following behaviours in children struggling with visual tracking skills:

- Frequently loses place when reading.
- Uses a finger or ruler to guide reading.
- Skipping words or lines.
- Having poor handwriting or struggling to copy from the board.
- Appears disengaged during visual tasks.
- Complains of eye strain or headaches.
- Avoids reading or visually demanding activities.

## Strategies to support visual tracking in the classroom

Here are some simple, effective ways to help children strengthen their visual tracking skills:

- Use reading guides or coloured overlays to help focus on one line at a time.
- Encourage children to finger trace during early reading stages.
- Provide clear, uncluttered worksheets.
- Allow extra time for copying tasks.
- Use large print or well-spaced text.
- Incorporate movement breaks to reduce visual fatigue.



## Fun Activities to Build Visual Tracking Skills

These games and exercises can be used in class or at home:

### 1. Flashlight Tag

- **How it works:** In a darkened room, shine a flashlight on the wall and move it slowly. The child follows the light with their eyes (not head).
- **Variation:** Let them use their own flashlight to 'chase' yours.

### 2. Bug Hunt

- **Materials:** Print or draw small bugs or objects on a large sheet.
- **How to play:** Ask the child to find and point to specific bugs as quickly as possible.
- **Challenge:** Use a timer or give clues to make it more exciting.

### 3. Follow the Ball

- **Materials:** Use a small ball or balloon.
- **How to play:** Move the ball slowly in different directions (left-right, up-down, circles). The child tracks it with their eyes only.
- **Variation:** Use a string to suspend the ball and swing it gently.

### 4. Online Eye Tracking Games

- Websites like "Eye Can Learn" offer free interactive games designed to improve visual tracking and other visual skills.

<https://www.eyecanlearn.gr/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Teacher-Parent-Vision-and-Learning-Guide.pdf>

### 5. Maze Tracing

- **Materials:** Printed mazes or tracing sheets.
- **How to play:** The child uses their finger or a pencil to trace through the maze whilst keeping their eyes on the path.



- **Variation:** Use a laser pointer or stylus for added fun.



## 6. I Spy with a Twist

- **How to play:** Instead of naming objects, describe their location ("I spy something above the red chair") to encourage scanning and tracking.



## 7. Straw and Pom-Pom Race

- **Materials:** Straws and small pom-poms.
- **How to play:** Blow the pom-pom across a table and have the child track it visually before chasing it.

### Other Ideas

More visual spatial and co-ordination activities may include:

- Tracking and popping bubbles.
- Sitting on the floor and scattering small toys all around, encouraging a child to reach out for different objects at a time.
- Using resources school as picture books, such as "Where's Wally".



- Dropping objects down a tube and watching them travel.
- Blowing feathers and catching them.