

Alderwood

Vision Therapy Center, PLLC

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH VISION



The Autism File Issue 44 (June-July 2012) features an excellent article on the transformative power vision therapy can have on the learning and behavior of children diagnosed on the autism spectrum. The article, “To See or Not to See?” written by Neil Margolis, OD, FCOVD, details his approach to performing a vision evaluation for special needs children. The article is beneficial for optometric care providers, for professionals working with those on the spectrum, and for parents, relatives and friends of people on the spectrum.

Dr. Margolis shares his insight that “nonverbal children often tell us, through their behaviors, what their problems are.” In some cases, typical autistic behaviors like poor eye contact, looking through or beyond objects, extreme aversion to light, unusual reaction to sight, lack of reciprocal play, inordinate fear of heights or lack of appropriate fear of heights may be symptoms of visual problems that can be remediated with vision therapy. “It is incumbent on the developmental optometrist—through testing and observation—to understand whether vision is helping or interfering with performance and development,” writes Dr. Margolis. “Optimizing the visual strategies and therapies available to us can yield significant benefits to children with autism.”

Areas Dr. Margolis covers in his evaluation include eye teaming, tracking, visual processing, visual spatial judgment, and central/peripheral vision. Dr. Margolis gives easily understandable explanations for how and why these areas specifically relate to the vision issues of patients with autism. Ideas for setting up and conducting an examination that help put special needs patients at ease, making the exam process as comfortable as possible for all involved, are also described.

Dr. Margolis writes, “If my evaluation suggests that a child’s vision skills may be a significant barrier to progress, a vision therapy intervention program can be designed to develop these skills.” Within the article is a parent’s first-hand account of the effectiveness of such a program as an alternative treatment alongside suggestions for locating an optometrist who offers vision therapy. Helpful tips for once therapy begins are also inside.

The article can be accessed by ordering a back issue in hard copy or a digital PDF download through *The Autism File* website (<https://www.autismfile.com/store/multiproduct>).



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