

Colour Deficiency

Colour Blindness or colour vision deficiency is the inability to perceive differences between some colours. There are many forms of 'colour deficiency' including Protanopia, (Dichromacy - moderately severe colour vision defect with the three basic colour mechanisms is absent or not functioning) and Deuteranopia (colour vision deficiency of green and red hue.)

Both forms are hereditary and affecting predominantly males.

In some parts of the world it is classified as a mild disability but in certain situations individuals may have an advantage over persons with normal colour vision.

Colour deficiency may also present itself in the spectrum of degenerative diseases of the eye such as age-related macular degeneration and retinal damage caused by diabetes.

Implications of Colour Deficiency

- May have social interaction issues due to the feeling that the child may feel inadequate because of not knowing colours
- Colour codes present particular problems for the child to perceive correct colour recognition.
- Colour deficiency is highly sensitive to differences in material e.g. colours on a map may be harder to define than colours on a computer screen
- Colour deficiency may create issues in discerning colours on natural materials such as paper rather than on plastic or acrylic paint
- Colour deficiency is not the swapping of colours e.g. grass is never red. Individuals may have difficulty in distinguishing a red apple and a green apple
- Children with colour deficiency may be teased due to the colours used in their art
- Children may not actively participate in activities which include learning and identifying colours
- Children with colour deficiency may not be able to follow through with directions that include identification via colours
- White boards may be difficult to read if adult is using colours that are not clear

Colour Deficiency Inclusion Strategies

Each child diagnosed with colour blindness will be different and individual. It is important to gain information from the parents as to what characteristics of Colour Deficiency their child displays. It is important to work closely with the parents as well as any additional support specialists e.g. therapists who may be involved with the child. It is also important to gain an understanding from the parent as to what is the most important aspect of their child attending your service. What is it that parents hope to gain from using your service? The following inclusion strategies are just some examples which may be applied to support the inclusion process. This list is only the start and it is dependant on a variety of factors such as environment, length of time child is in care, child's interest, likes, dislikes and skills already achieved. The strategies are divided into developmental areas; however some strategies overlap and assist in a variety of developmental areas.

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- Share your ideas and information with the parent to build up a number of strategies that are consistent with home and child care.
- Talk to the parent about what they are happy for staff to share with the children about the child's colour deficiency.
- Use the term Colour Deficiency rather than Colour Blindness as the word "blindness" can frighten a child.
- Encourage and plan for positive social experiences (small group experiences etc).
- Provide activities that do not require colour codes e.g. classify the blocks through shape and size rather than colours.
- Assign a classmate to help the child with colour deficiency when doing an activity that requires colour recognition. Create the activity so that it focusses on the social aspect, sharing and helping rather than the fact that the child is having problems with their colours.
- Label pictures with words/symbols to assist a child's response in colour recognition.
- Label colouring utensils with the name of the colour. Support the child to recognise G= green.
- Provide activities to help the child develop the knowledge of colours of common objects e.g. blue for the sky.
- Teach the child all colours. Often the child has problems defining the hues and tints but can easily define the primary colours.
- Acknowledge with the child that you understand that some colours look the same to them and that is okay.

Reference

Deiner, P.L. (1993) **Resources for Teaching Children with Diverse Abilities - Birth through Eight.** Harcourt Brace:

Umansky, W. and Hooper, S. (1998) **Young Children with Special Needs** Third Edition New Jersey, USA:Prentice-Hall

Kozma, C. & Stock, J. (1993) **Caring for every child—Ideas to meet diverse needs in Child Care.** Funded by the Commonwealth department of Human Services and Health : Sydney

<http://colorvisiontesting.com>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_blindness

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