



A Shared Vision

Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment

Where O' Where?



This interactive activity develops a child's ability to scan their environment and find requested objects. This is important for safety reasons and developing independence. When children with visual impairments are moving around their home, the ability to scan their environment will help them avoid obstacles and drop-offs. Also, children with visual impairments will be more independent if they can find requested items like their shoes, coat, cup, toys, etc. This activity also teaches children where things are kept in the home and can increase their mental mapping skills.

Duration

This activity will take 5 to 15 minutes depending on your child's interest and your family's needs.

Materials

- Objects of different sizes depending on your child's functional vision and interests. Talk to your Early Intervention Teacher of the Visually Impaired (EI-TVI) to get recommendations. You might try stuffed animals, plastic Easter eggs, balls, cars, blocks, colored straws, sticky notes, etc.

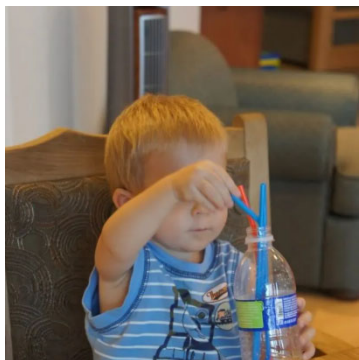
- Painter's tape for attaching smaller objects like a straw or small toy to a wall, door, etc. Painter's tape doesn't leave marks on walls or furniture. Plus, the bright blue color will contrast with the object and the wall.
- Bin, basket, pail, tub, or laundry basket for your child to put the objects in once they are found.

Activity Steps

1. Hide four to five of your chosen objects while your child is preoccupied with something else like eating, playing, or sleeping. To start, only hide the objects in one room.
2. Introduce the activity to your child. "I have some surprises for you to find, and I need your help." Be excited and get your child interested in the activity. "I need your help finding _____!" Fill in the blank with whatever you hid. Name the room where the objects are hiding.
3. Encourage your child to use an organized search pattern, such as looking for the object from the left side of the room to the right, or the top of the wall to the bottom.
4. If your child can find the object, congratulate them! Talk about where your child found the object and label where it was. Use positional concepts such as "beside," "above," "on," "inside," "under," "to the left," "to the right," or "behind." "You found the _____! It was UNDER the sofa." You can also say, "Wow, you found it! It was NEXT TO the TV."
5. If your child can't find the object, you can try the following strategies.
 - Teach your child to visually look where you are pointing. You can wear a bright colored glove to help the child attend to your point. If they don't look, move your finger and/or arm to get their attention while pointing. Exaggerate your point. You can tap on the item you want them to look at with your index finger.
 - You can use a larger object to find.
 - You can move closer to the object.
 - You can let your child see you hide the object and then go get it.
 - Use a flashlight and point the light at the object.
 - Increase the background contrast so the object stands out.
6. Once your child has retrieved the first desired object, have them place it in the container you chose. If possible, the child can carry the container so that they can get used to

carrying something while walking. Someday, this container might be a lunch box, a purse, or a basket!

7. Choose your container based on the objects the child is finding and the child's needs. For example, if your child is working on pincer grasp and finding straws or small blocks, you can use a container with a hole cut in the lid to place the object. If your child is finding larger objects like big balls or stuffed animals, use a laundry basket that your child can push across the floor.



8. Praise your child during each part of the activity. Keep it positive and help your child be successful. If at any time your child loses interest, discontinue the activity, and try it again later.

Tips

1. If your child isn't mobile, you can still have them complete this activity with adaptations. Position your child in supportive seating next to a wall or surface where you can tape or place an object. Follow all the activity steps. Observe your child. Are they looking or pointing at the object? Did your child's reaction change to let you know they saw the object? Sometimes, no movement at all – when the body suddenly becomes still – is an indication that your child is reacting to the object.
2. You can teach scanning from short distances, too. Place objects on the table, high-chair tray, or in an egg carton. Ask your child to find the _____. Teach them to look from right to left and top to bottom.
3. When communicating with a child who is visually impaired, it's OK to use the words "look" or "see." People who are visually impaired or blind might look at things in a different way, but "seeing" is in the perception (rather than the eye) of the beholder.

Extension Activities

- You can try games like “I Spy” and “Hide and Seek” to have fun while teaching your child to look at what you are pointing at.
- You can practice giving your child one or more verbal directions. You can try finding a specific color or other attribute depending on your child’s interests. “Where is the RED ball? Is it hiding next to the sofa?”
- Try setting obstacles – an ottoman, a laundry basket, or even the family dog -- in your child’s path so they must avoid the obstacle while looking for the requested object.
- You can take turns looking for objects. Hide something for your child to find and then ask your child to hide something for you. The back-and-forth of playing a game builds your child’s social and communication skills.
- Add a song to the activity. The tune “Where Is Thumbkin?” is easy to adapt for this activity. Just insert the name of the object instead of the word “Thumbkin.” Here is a link to the song if you are interested:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRNDu3O2VQY>
- You can teach scanning within a book or picture, too. Use books your child is interested in and have them find things on each page. Sesame Street’s I Spy book is specific to looking for characters and objects while reinforcing shapes, colors, and sizes.

