Physical Therapy Activity of the week

Eye tracking and eye/hand coordination are important to develop in the early years of life. Eye tracking, of course, is a necessary physical skill for reading... moving the eyes in a deliberate, and disciplined manner. You can see it happening naturally as your child grows. For instance, when a child watches a balloon floating away, you might see him point up into the sky. This is his way of helping his eyes stay focused on the balloon. Children with developmental delays often can have trouble with these skills as well. Decreased eye hand coordination affects our ability to color, draw basic strokes and pictures, solve mazes and dot-to-dot pictures, write by hand, catch a ball, bat a ball, create art, put a puzzle together, tie our shoes, build with blocks, thread a needle and use scissors to name a few. This week for physical therapy activity of the week we would like to give some ideas to work on visual tracking skills.

Here are some simple and fun ways to work on visual tracking at home

1. Hit My Balloon (or ball) on a string. – Tie the balloon on a 1-2 foot string and have your child watch the balloon and “hit” it when it comes close to them. Aim for making contact 10 times. Balloons move slower than balls, but if your child can track and hit a ball that is great too. You can also give them a paper towel roll or a pool noodle to hit the target with.

2. Pop the bubble. – Have your child put out their pointer finger and practice popping imaginary bubble gently with a slow tap. The key is to make sure the kids are looking at the bubbles. Then begin blowing bubbles and having your child slowly pop them. If they are having trouble with their fingers, a paintbrush also works and they can “paint” the bubble to pop it.

3. Play flashlight chases. Do this by getting a flashlight for you and your child. Lie on your backs on the floor, and have your child chase your flashlight beam with his.

4. Make a visual tracking ring to use with a marble. To make the ring, bend a regular pool noodle into a circle and duct taped the ends together. Then take scissors (or an x-acto knife would work better) and slice out a strip of the noodle, so you see inside of the noodle. I left the duct tape area intact so the circle kept its integrity. Have the kids move the ring around in a circle fluidly to make the marble go around the circle. You have to visually watch the marble as it goes around. From: Therapy fun zon.net