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Visual Referencing: The precursor to “thinking with your eyes:”

Telling a child to look is insufficient, we need to teach a child to look to gain information:

- Looking to gain information
- Looking to determine which object to take
- Looking to determine where to find an object
- Looking to determine which object and which location
- Looking to determine whose turn it is
- Looking to determine likes and dislikes of someone else
- Looking to determine emotional responses
- Looking to gain permission

We program the above content by:

- decreasing the exaggeration of the head shake and the facial input
- eliminating the head shake
- increasing the distance from the child
- increasing the distance to the object
- changing the angle from which you reference
- having more than one object so that the child must check back
- changing the person who is referencing for the child
- changing the complexity of the location in which the visual referencing is occurring
- have more than one child present so that the child has to discern if the adult is referencing him.

Within the classroom setting it is suggested that nonverbal communication be used to convey information to a child whenever possible:

1. Visually reference where he is to go
2. Have him watch the teacher as she moves about the room before she grants permission for him to take his break
3. Offer two items and visually reference which to take
4. Visually reference where something should be placed
5. Visually reference which item to take and then where to put it (e.g. which book and which shelf/ which paper and which desk)

6. Have two children do an arts and crafts project simultaneously with one child in the lead and the other child following along
7. When working with the child, change your seat position relative to him, so he must reference from different perspectives: across, side by side, back to back, etc.
8. Use visual referencing to call on a child to respond
9. Use visual referencing to grant permission for the child to enter room
10. Use visual referencing to assign students to different areas
11. Show the child where to find something or where to put something paired with the statement "over there"
12. Overall use fewer words and increase your use of eye gaze
13. React to his comments with exaggerated facial expressions as opposed to comments. When you do so, make sure your nonverbal cues are distinctive, e.g. difference re facial expression for yes/ no.
14. Answer the child's yes/no questions with head shakes/nods
15. If the child loses his eye gaze with you when you are talking to him, stop talking mid sentence and resume when he looks at you.
16. Visually reference whose turn it is and randomize how many turns each child gets.
17. Hold onto the child's hand when he is receiving or giving an object. When he shifts to look at you, you could offer a declarative statement about the item.
18. Approach his desk and expect him to shift his attention based on hearing/ seeing you approach.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Schwartz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "N" and a stylized "S".

Nancy Z. Schwartz, Ph.D.