



# Complex Child E-Magazine

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## Vision Therapy: One Family's Experience

by Megan

My daughter Maeve, who has multiple developmental delays, has been receiving vision therapy for about three years. Her focus is mainly on orientation and movement. While her vision is only slightly impaired, her visual fields are limited and her depth perception seems to be an issue. Her therapists work on scanning for objects and gaining confidence and coordination in movement.

She has therapy both in a small group and individually. In the group, they usually play games that involve seeking and finding objects. They also do some work with looking at various lights in the dark. Individually, Maeve usually works on scanning for and finding objects. The therapist will place pictures on the wall and have Maeve walk down the hall to find them. They sometimes work with kicking a ball, developing coordination to see where the ball is and how to make contact with it.

Another area they focus on is navigating changes in surfaces when walking. Maeve is often nervous if the floor surface changes, such as from carpet to tile. She is sometimes unsure if there is a step or not. She also has trouble sometimes on stairs seeing where each step ends and how many steps there are. To address this, her therapist has her feel the surfaces and helps her step. Then, they work with her repeatedly to help her gain confidence.

It is hard to quantify how much vision, orientation and movement therapy has helped Maeve, but it has definitely improved her skills. She does seem much more steady and confident in walking and navigating. There is a lot of overlap between her Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy skills in this area as well. I do see improvement in her perception of flat changes in surface. She seems much less nervous and only rarely has trouble with surface changes now. Her stair walking has improved also, and she is generally comfortable independently. There are still times when she seems uncertain, but she copes better now and will simply ask for a hand to hold or hold the railing rather than becoming agitated and upset.

Overall, Maeve seems to compensate well for her visual issues and the head tilt that is often present by using the scanning skills she has learned. I very rarely see her struggle to find something. There are times that she still will run into objects on her side since her peripheral vision is limited. She will have further eye surgeries in the future, and her vision therapy mainly is attempting to help her learn to compensate with her changing

vision. I definitely feel that vision, orientation and movement therapy has been worthwhile.