

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE DIFFICULTY CATCHING A BALL ON THE FULL, PLAYING TENNIS OR CRICKET?

Not all children are “sporty” and for those that are not, the frustration that they feel when they are expected to perform competently on the sporting field can lead to them feeling that there is something wrong with them. For a number of these children, they may also be having difficulties with learning at school. These two problems combined can lead to further frustration and eventually “giving up” and not trying anymore.

Parents of these children may get their child’s vision tested to make sure that there is not a vision problem causing their difficulties with both sport and learning.

If a child does not have a vision problem but they do have a problem catching a ball on the full, getting on and off escalators or any other tasks that require judgement of distances, it may well be worth considering investigating if they have Irlen Syndrome. This is a visual perceptual dysfunction, which means that the brain has difficulties “seeing” letters, numbers and/or words and can also affect depth perception. People who have depth perception problems cannot judge distances well, so they often are considered clumsy as they seem to walk into the edges of doorways, tables etc., and cannot catch a ball on the full, sometimes cannot play sports such as squash, tennis or cricket because they all require us to judge the distance of objects as they approach our bodies and for us to react accordingly to catch or hit them.

These “sporty” difficulties by themselves may not indicate the presence of Irlen Syndrome, but if your child is also having learning difficulties, especially with reading and/or spelling it is worth considering Irlen as the possible cause.

Irlen Syndrome is the result of a person’s sensitivity to particular colours of the visible spectrum (the rainbow) and these colours interfere with the functioning of the visual pathways that connect our eyes and the visual cortex of the brain.

A short test that can be used to determine if your child has some of the symptoms of Irlen Syndrome is below. If you tick more than four of the symptoms, it is an indication that Irlen Syndrome may be causing the problems.

When reading or looking at white paper in a book do any of the following occur?

- words blurring, moving, shaking?
- tiredness after a short time of reading?
- headaches
- sensitivity to light or glare?
- having to reread lines of print?
- difficulty maintaining concentration when reading?
- missing words or lines when reading?
- difficulty with comprehension?
- untidy writing?
- watery, itchy or stinging eyes when reading?

Further information can be found at www.irlendyslexia.com