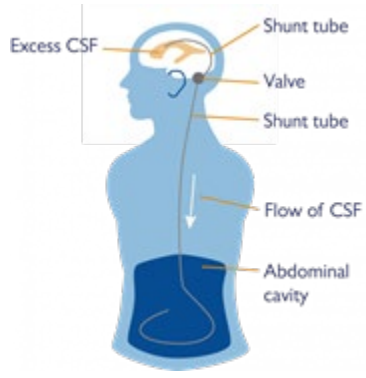
SBH SCHOOL TIPS

VISUAL PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES

Visual Processing is the ability to interpret information received through the eyes. The individual who has difficulty in visual processing has normal or corrected vision. The visual system processes and organizes the surrounding visual information and enables us to evaluate the environment, recognize similarities and difference between object forms, sizes and positions. Relevant information from this interpretation is then stored in an efficient manner to enable retrieval and memory. Visual information is also important in the development of head-eye coordination, fine motor skills such as writing and cognitive skills such as reading.

An individual, who has difficulties, may have good vision (visual acuity) but still not be able to respond accurately or consistently to visual information. The individual will have difficulty in distinguishing important objects from their background (visual figure ground), differentiating between similar objects (visual discrimination), identifying the position in space or orientation of objects (visual spatial relation), recognizing letters and numbers and may confuse left and right. These difficulties can lead to individuals to skip words or confuse lines as they read. They may also have trouble with hand-eye coordination, resulting in awkwardness during physical activity.

SHUNTS and THEIR SYMPTOMS



What is a shunt?

Hydrocephalus is usually treated by insertion of a shunt. A shunt is a device, which is designed to drain excess cerebrospinal fluid from the brain and carry it to other parts of the body. A one way value is used, which usually sits outside the skull, but beneath the skin, somewhere behind the ear.

What are the symptoms of a malfunctioning shunt?

Although a shunt works generally well, it may stop working if it disconnects, becomes blocked or it is outgrown. If this happens, the CSF fluid will begin to accumulate again, and a number of physical symptoms will develop. It is important to get medical attention if any of the following symptoms develop.

- Headache
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Irritability and personality changes
- Lethargy and drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Changes in vision
- Seizures

Shunt revision

As a shunt is often inserted in infancy, at some time, most students with Hydrocephalus will have had a shunt revision. Shunts can become blocked, disconnected or outgrown by an individual. A shunt revision is surgery to the shunt to 'fix' the problem if there have been symptoms experienced.

Supporting Visual Sensitivity

Over-sensitivity: Characterised by over-reaction to visual information in the environment that another individual is not distracted by.

Under-sensitivity: Characterised by an individual who appears unaware of visual information that should be noticed. These individuals do not seem to 'look' as much as others do.

Strategies:

Oversensitivity-Sensory Sensitivity: This problem is characterised by the child who overreacts to mild or vigorous movement that most individuals would enjoy.

- Avoid fast, arousing movements before individual required to concentrate.
- Limit the amount of stimulation the individual receives during a movement activity.
- May need squeeze object to calm down.

Oversensitivity-Sensory Avoiding: An individual who likes to only be in quiet environments.

- Avoid movements where the individual is tilted backwards- as this is usually threatening.

Undersensitivity-Poor Registration: The individual needs lots of vigorous activity in order to 'get going'.

- Stabilise the body when performing a task.
- Use modelling and visual cues to correctly guide the individual's movements when performing an activity.
- Use visual cues to highlight environmental and spatial boundaries.
- Provide supportive seating.
- Decrease the number of materials on the child's desk.

Undersensitivity-Sensory Seeking: An individual who constantly likes looking at moving objects, bright lights and reflections.

- When work is expected to be done, move individual to a desk with minimal visual input.
- Consider the intensity of the lighting in the classroom.
- Place the individual near the source of visual information.
- Ensure the individual is not engaged in other activities while information is being presented.
- Give a cue to gain attention prior to giving instructions.
- Give the individual a chance to see visual information more than once before expecting it to be remembered.
- Evaluate the length of time scheduled to complete the task.