

# Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

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## EPISODE 25

In this Episode, Laurie and Abbey Interview Dr. Lindsay Berry, Optometrist in Frisco, TX at Vision Advancement Center. They talk about recognizing and treating visual processing disorders, and everything in between.

### **Symptoms of Visual Processing (3 min)**

Dr. Berry talks about the difference between using your eyes, and using your eyes well. Many times, visual processing issues can go unnoticed because as a person goes along their journey, they learn lots of ways to cope with their visual weaknesses. How our brains take the information it receives and processes it, is how we read, solve math problems and even have self-awareness of direction and space. Some red flags to pay attention to may be visual fatigue such as being tired of reading in short amounts of time, closing or covering one eye at a time, headaches, or even skipping lines or words when they read.

### **How the Eyes Work Together (5 min)**

Eye-teaming, eye-tracking & eye-focusing are terms used in this episode to describe different ways that the eyes work together to acquire information for our brains to process. Eye-teaming is how the eyes work together to point at the same thing. It affects things like depth perception. Eye-tracking is how well the eyes work together to follow something like words along the same line of a page, and of course affects reading. Eye-focusing is how well the eyes can clearly focus on an object, so not just acuity, but keeping the object in your vision. Dr. Berry also talks about how the eyes and brain communicate, for example when a child is learning to write, they realize the formation of a letter D is basically a circle and a stick. It's easily written backwards because they know the formation is a circle and a stick, but not necessarily that is on the left or the right.

### **Testing for Visual Processing Issues (9 min)**

There are a couple of tests that can be administered for visual recognition, or spatial relations to recognize different fonts, bolded, or in a different size. Also, visualization such as being given an object and asking them to know what it would look like rotated.

### **Treating Visual Processing Issues (19 min)**

Vision is a learned skill. Experiences we go through like peek-a-boo, seeing and grabbing things, playing catch and learning to read are all-natural stages that a developing child goes through to learn how to process information visually. If a milestone is missed or even if a traumatic experience has remediated those skills, such as a stroke, there is still plenty of opportunity to learn those visual processing skills. This can be done through lenses, prisms and visual therapy. An Irlen lens enhances the way spaces look between words and lines, and make them easier to read in the order they are meant to be read. Ultimately lenses and prisms are temporary fixes to help an individual cope while they're in the process of learning or re-learning those necessary visual processing skills and therapy is the ultimate permanent fix.

### **Early Detection of Visual Processing Red Flags (22 min)**

A parent can recognize clues along the developmental path of their child to be aware of their visual processing abilities such as being dependent on a finger while they read. Also, if they are over 5 years old, they should be able to follow a finger while reading without having to move their head. So, if there is a lot of movement while reading, that's a clue that those fine eye motor skills need to be worked on through visual therapy. Also, not knowing the difference between right and left, such as having to hold up an L and a backwards L with your fingers, after they should have knowledge of that difference can be a sign that the visual spatial skills need to be worked on. As kids get older, other tasks like copying from the board or filling in scantron sheets can be very difficult.

## **Finding a Vision Therapist (22 min)**

The College of Optometrists & Vision Development, or COVD organization, has a website that lists associated Optometrists who cater to a wide range of vision treatment needs. The best way to find someone who is a good fit, is to find nearby doctors and call to ask about the specific condition or skills that are needing to be addressed. If they don't seem to specialize in that area, move on to the next one until you find an optometrist who specifically has experience in what you're looking for.

### **Resources:**

Dr. Lindsay Berry OD, FCOVD: <https://www.visionadvancement.com>

College of Optometrists In Vision Development: <https://www.covd.org/>

Contact info for the podcast: [letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com](mailto:letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com)

E-Diagnostic Learning Website: <https://ediagnosticlearning.com>

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**Length of episode 40:35**

Example Photos:



