



Does your child struggle with memory, disorganization, lack of attention to detail, slow thinking, poor reading and comprehension?

HomeLink offers mental exercises to correct these problems. Many students have shown the results of the “mental workout” quite quickly. If exercises are continued over a period of time, permanent changes can result.

The exercises are delivered in the computer lab using Parrot software. The time commitment requires at least 4 30-minute sessions per week. The cost is \$25 a month for HomeLink registrants.

For more information, or to make an appointment for a “try-out” session, call Becky Meinzinger at the HomeLink office 248-6388

Parrot Software Programs offered

Hierarchical Attention Training

Forty-eight combinations of attention activities at varying degrees of difficulty are included in the program. A target stimulus is first identified. Then a series of stimulus are displayed for short periods of time. The user is instructed to watch or listen for the target stimulus and respond only when it appears. When other stimuli appear, the user makes no response. This form of treatment paradigm (where not responding is sometimes the correct response) facilitates attending skills and helps curb impulsive or preservative behavior. The attention conditions from the simplest to most difficult are: Focused Attention, Selective Attention, Alternating Attention, and Divided Attention. Focused Attention requires watching for one event to occur and responding only when it does. Selective Attention is similar to Focused Attention except that an element of visual distraction is added. Alternating Attention requires attending to one stimulus for a period of time and then switching attention to another stimulus. Divided Attention requires attending to two different aspects of the same set of stimuli. The user must respond when a specific stimulus occurs and periodically information is requested concerning the frequency of occurrence of the stimulus set.

Visual & Auditory Memory Span

Visual and Auditory Memory Span was designed to test and exercise memory abilities. A list of between 1 and 9 items is presented, and the user must recall the entire list in the correct order. Stimuli can be either letters or numbers and can be presented either visually or auditory.

Word Memory and Discrimination

Word Memory and Discrimination requires users to remember a list of words and be able to discriminate the meaning between words in the list. Users hear a list of words and are then asked a question about one of the words; e.g., Which one is not an animal? You can display the list of words on the screen or as a more difficult option, you can require the user to type the correct answer without ever seeing the list.

Word Recognition

Word Recognition was designed as a lexical memory task. This program requires users to remember a list of 1-10 words and then when words are displayed one at a time, determine whether the displayed word is a member of the list. The user simply clicks a Yes or No button. You can set the number of words to appear in the list and can determine whether the list will appear as a cue when the user makes errors. Twenty lessons are included. The program not only tracks performance but also calculates mean response times for items completed.

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Listening Skills

A random selection of 1 to 5 part, verbal instructions is presented that the user must follow. The instructions consist of assigning colors to specific geometric forms displayed on the screen. Users first select the appropriate color and then assign it to a geometric form by pointing to the form and clicking the mouse button. If the response is correct, a positive verbal reinforcement is presented. If the response is incorrect, the user is given a second try. After a second incorrect response, the correct answer is displayed.

Multitasking

Multitasking is a program that requires users to keep track of from 2 to 5 different events. Users select the number of events and then geometric shapes are presented one at a time. Users must keep track of how many times each was presented. This program stores progress and response times.

Memory for Directions

Either written or spoken directions are given requesting the user to move small pictures to special locations on the screen. The pictures are moved with a mouse. If a picture is moved to the correct screen location, a positive reinforcement is provided. Otherwise, the instruction is given again and the user is provided a second chance.

Visual, Auditory, and Grammatical Attention Training

There are lessons for visual, auditory, and grammatical processing. In each, a simple concept is presented with competing stimuli as a distraction. 1. Competing Visual Stimuli: When you hear the word orange, click orange even though the letters may be blue. 2. Competing Auditory Stimuli: A statement is made where two similar sentences are spoken at exactly the same time. Then a question is asked 3. Competing Grammatical Stimuli: Two streams of characters are presented. One contains random letters and the other is a real phrase with no spaces between words. The user determines which is the grammatically correct phrase.

Visual Attention and Tracking

Visual Attention and Tracking was designed to provide support for individuals with attention deficits. Three types of visual attention training are provided representing varying degrees of difficulty. The attention conditions from simplest to most difficult are: Focused Attention, Selective Attention, and Alternating Attention. Focused Attention requires watching for one event to occur and responding only when it does. Selective Attention is similar to Focused Attention except that an element of visual distraction is added. Alternating Attention requires attending to one stimulus for a period of time and then switching attention to another stimulus. The program is very easy to use and provided an interesting challenge.