

Beyond the Eyes: Cortical / Cerebral Vision Impairment

**Sarah Hovington
VIEW Conference 2025**



The Churchill Fellowship begins...



Churchill Fellowship

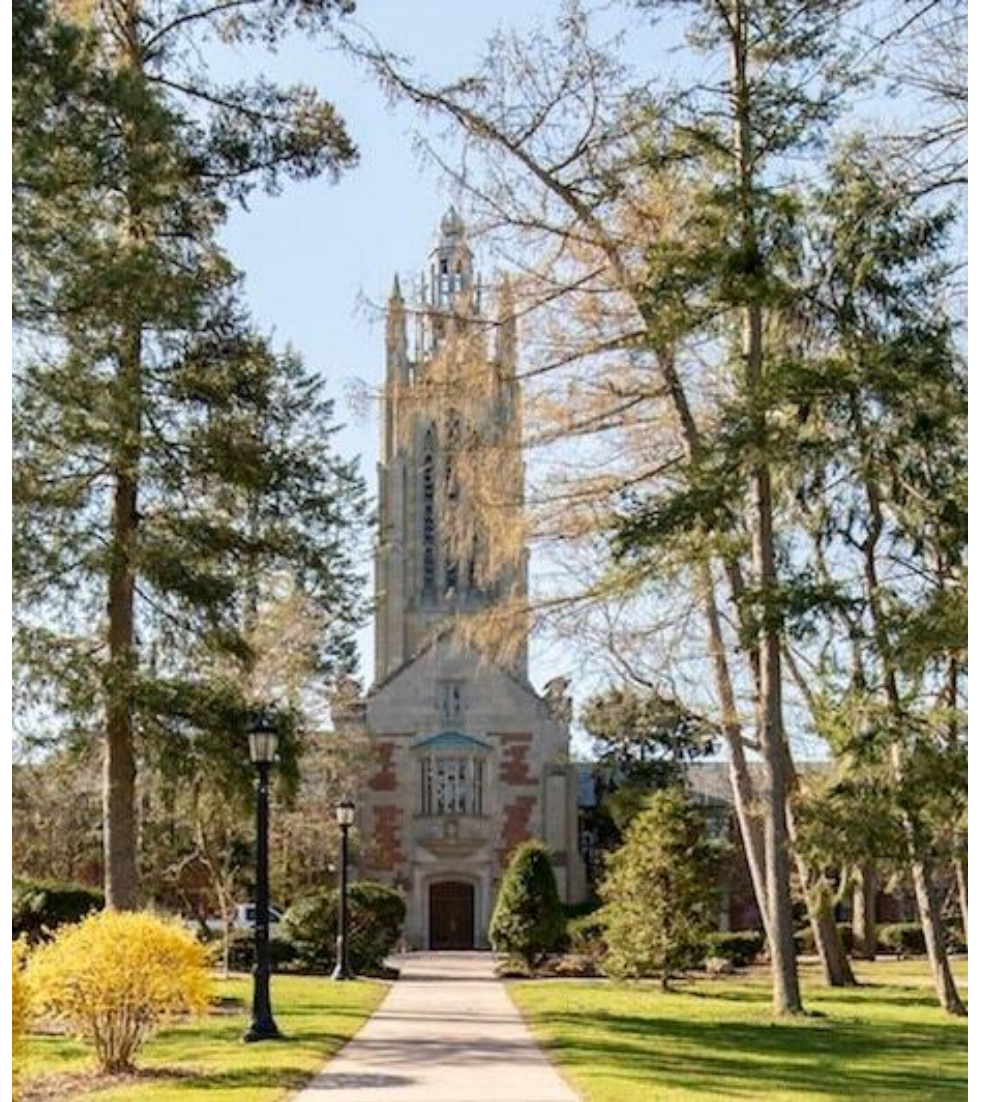
- Anyone can be a Churchill Fellow!
- UK's national memorial to Sir Winston Churchill
- Promotes global exchange of ideas and understanding between people
- www.churchillfellowship.org



Print by Yousuf Korsh



Image by Perkins School



Photograph by Sarah Hovington

Ice Breaker Task

What do you see?

The answer

Workshop Plan

1. Steps of The Perkins CVI Protocol
2. The 16 Visual Behaviors and Compensatory Skills
3. Conducting a CVI Assessment
4. Discussion
5. Resources and Questions



The Perkins CVI Protocol

Sales Pitch – The Perkins CVI Protocol

Watch The Video Here:

https://youtu.be/pcroC4TF_KQ

Two Parts of The Perkins CVI Protocol

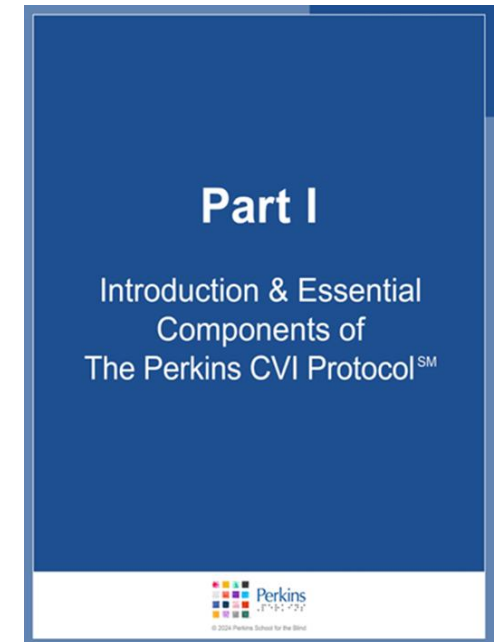
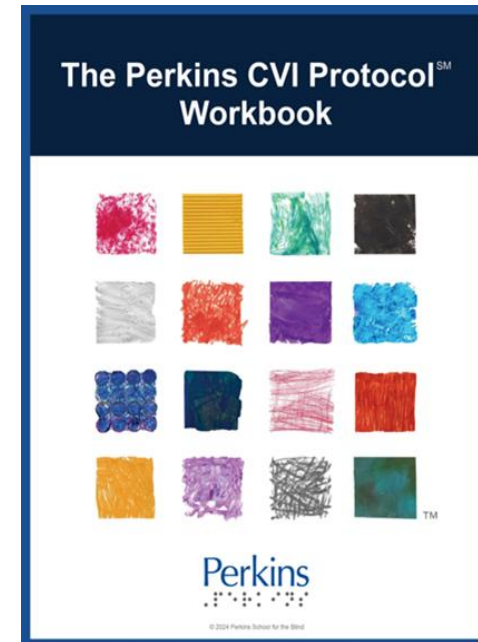
Part I: Introduction and Essential Components of The Perkins CVI Protocol

Part II: Supplementary Guides and Templates

Appendix Folder

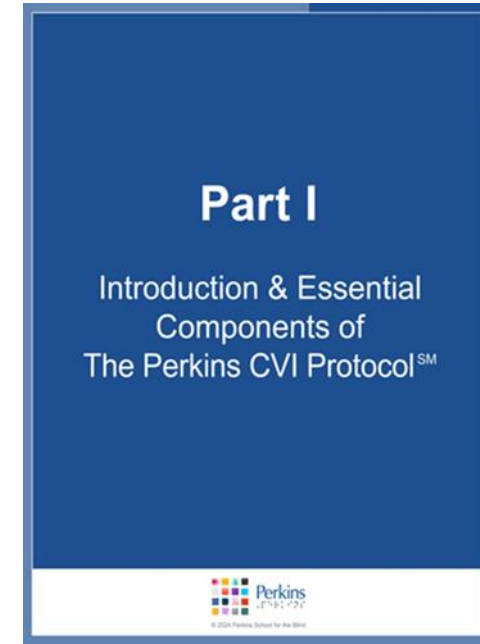
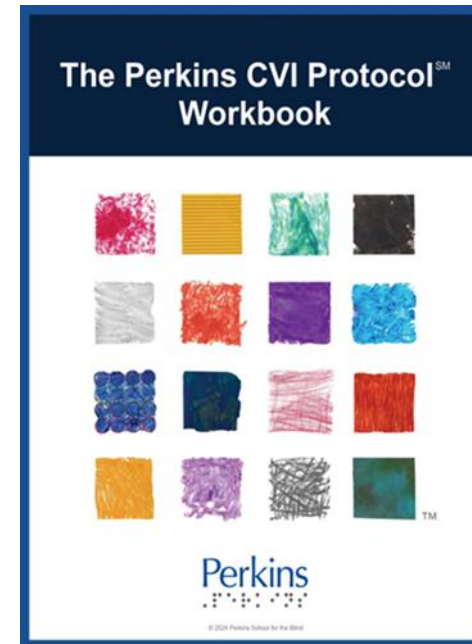
Steps of The Perkins CVI Protocol

1. Preparation
2. File Review and Student Portrait
3. Parent/Guardian Interview
4. Team Interview
5. Observations



Steps of The Perkins CVI Protocol

6. Plan the Direct Assessment
7. Conduct the Direct Assessment
8. Synthesize Findings: Report Writing
9. Choose Recommendations
10. Share Assessment Findings



Step 1 - Preparation

Preparation

16 Visual Behaviors and Compensatory Skills

Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) is a brain-based visual impairment caused by damage or interruption to the visual pathways or visual processing areas of the brain. CVI is the leading cause of childhood blindness and low vision. CVI is based in the brain rather than the eyes and affects how visual information is processed and interpreted. Common causes of CVI include complications from premature birth, lack of oxygen, pediatric stroke, and genetic conditions². Those with healthy eyes and without other conditions can still have CVI³.

People with CVI often have common visual behaviors and traits, but CVI manifests differently in everyone. CVI is lifelong and affects the ability to attend to and recognize the visual world.

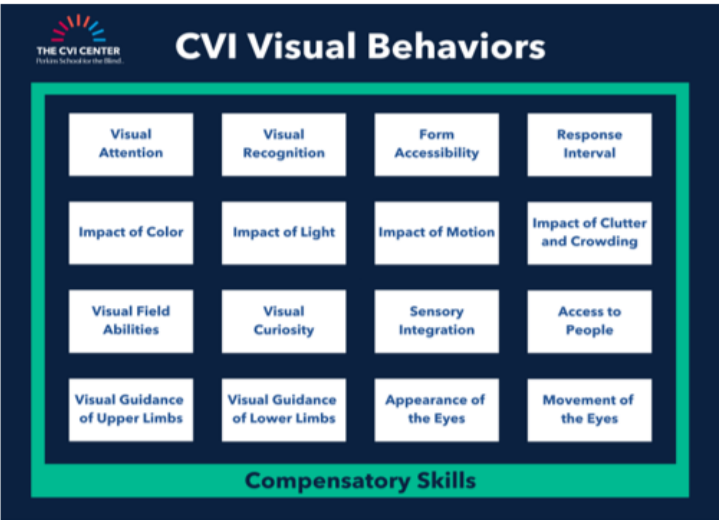
The Perkins CVI ProtocolSM, created by the Perkins CVI Center, is rooted in **16 Visual Behaviors and Compensatory Skills**. The behaviors can be assessed to better understand how people with CVI access their world. The Protocol is also focused on identifying an individual's compensatory strategies: the skills and techniques that an individual uses to access their curriculum and navigate their world. Understanding these visual behaviors and accompanying compensatory strategies is imperative to conducting a thorough CVI assessment.

From [Understanding the CVI Visual Behaviors](#), CVINow.org: Individuals with CVI tend to display key visual behaviors, and might display some or all of these behaviors. The CVI visual behaviors are an ongoing need, they can change and improve for some, but the need never goes away.

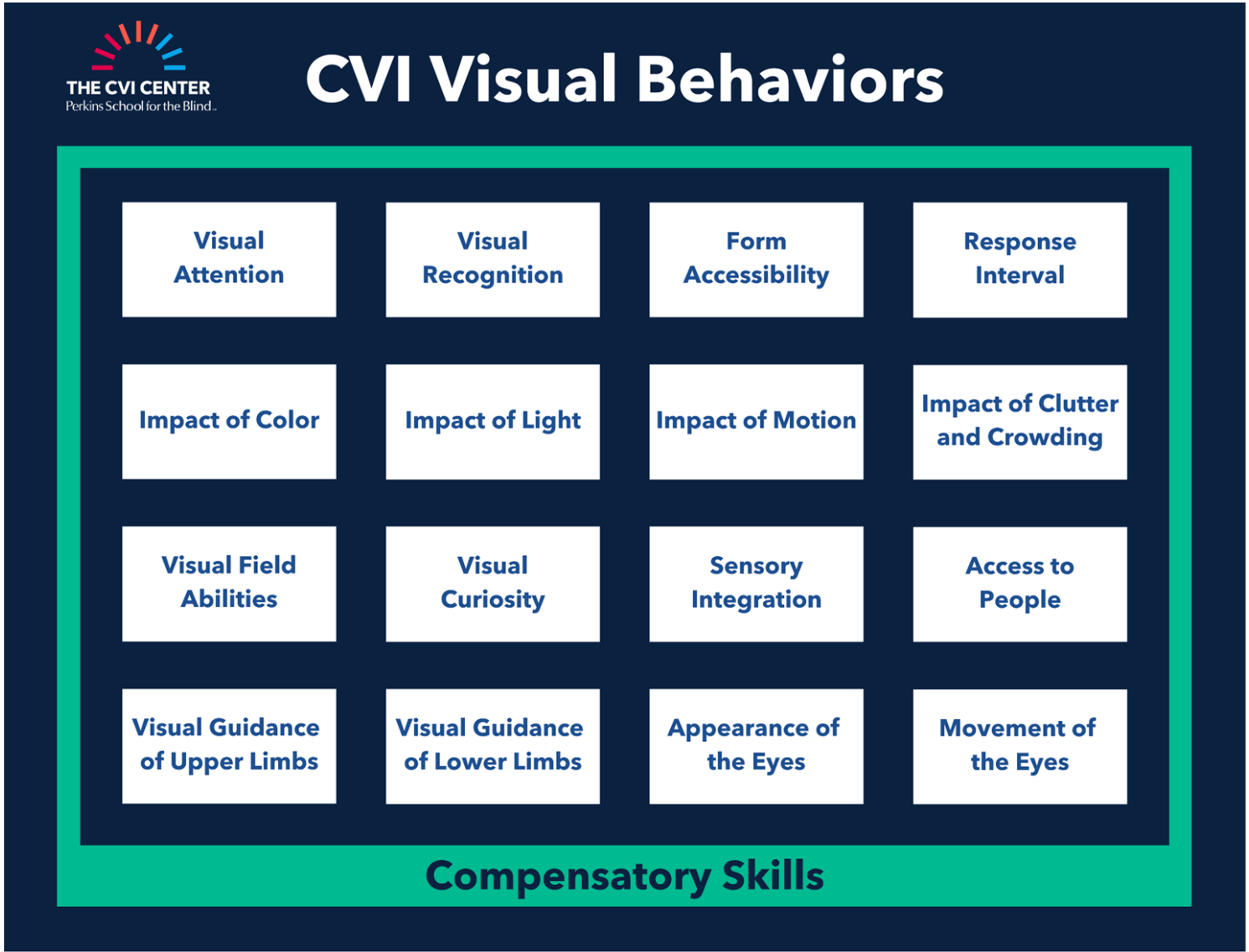
The CVI behaviors overlap at any given time and situation, putting up barriers to access to learning and the environment. No area is separated from the other—the CVI visual behaviors are highly connected—and all can impact the individual with CVI at any time.

The following subsections provide definitions and examples of each of the 16 Visual Behaviors, as well as compensatory skills. Before beginning the CVI assessment process using The Protocol, it is recommended to prepare by familiarizing yourself with each behavior.

The diagram below shows 16 Visual Behaviors connected by Compensatory Skills.



CVI Visual Behaviors and Compensatory Skills



Bingo – 16 CVI Visual Behaviours

What's the visual behaviour?

Meet Zak!

- **Medical History:**

ASD, ADHD, hyperlexia

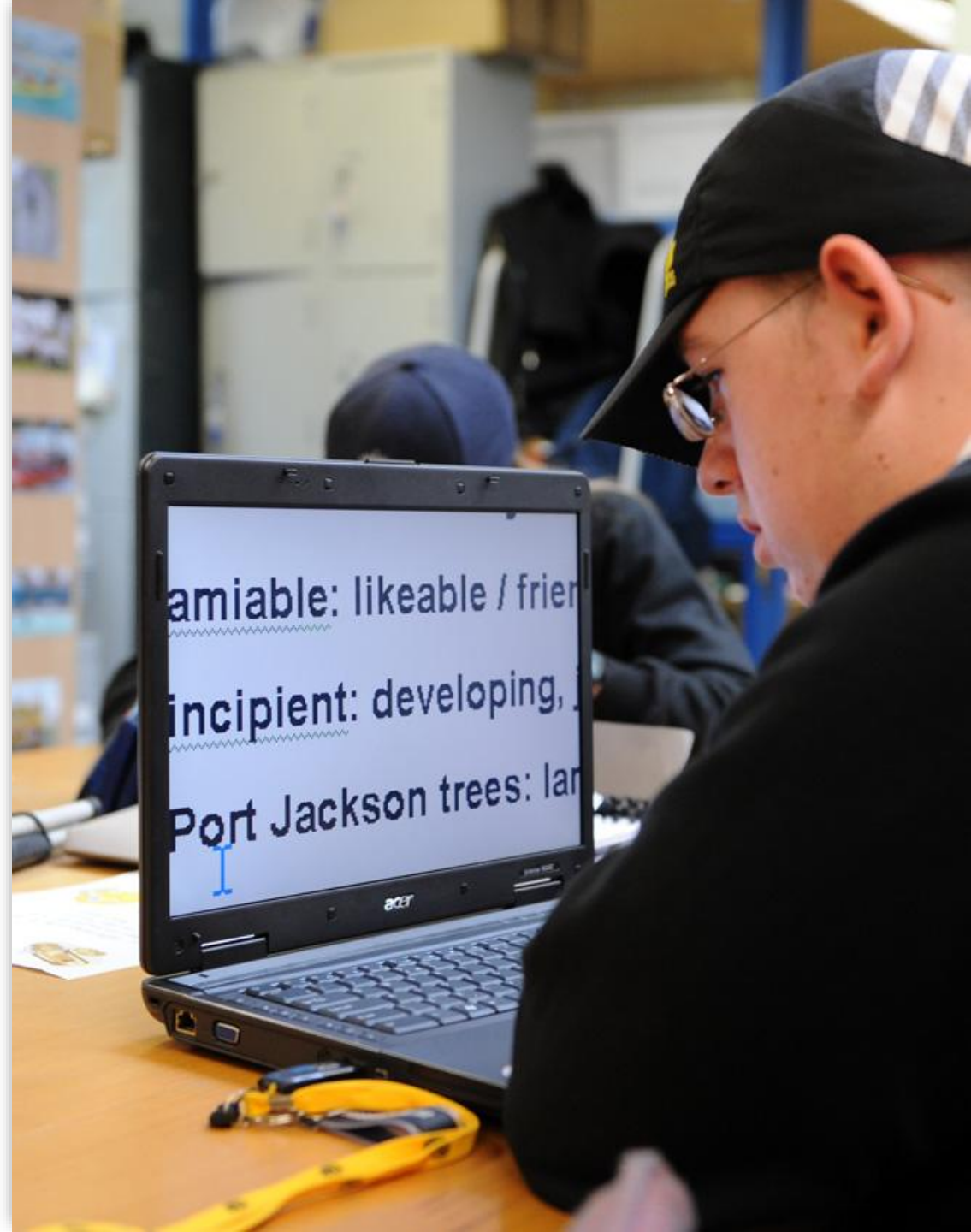
- **Ocular History**

Nystagmus, Cataracts, Glaucoma

Visual acuity: 20/60 (US) 6/18

Wears spectacles

Diagnosed with CVI in 2018



Step 2 - File Review and Student Portrait

Read the Student Portrait (Case Study)
What are the key take aways?

THE CVI PROTOCOL
Perkins School for the Blind.

Child's name: *

First Name Last Name

Child's Date of birth: *

MM-DD-YYYY

Date

Current date: *

MM-DD-YYYY

Date

1. Please list your child's top three best qualities/strengths: *

2. What are your child's favorite objects and activities? *

3. Which of the following statements best describes your child's diagnosis status? *

☐ My child is diagnosed with CVI by a medical professional.

☐ My child is suspected of having CVI by a medical professional.


☐ My child is suspected of having CVI by an educational professional or therapist (for example a teacher, OT, SLP, PT, etc.).

☐ I'm questioning whether my child has CVI; they have not been assessed or diagnosed

Part I: Pg. 44-48

Step 6 – Plan the Direct Assessment

- Time
- Space
- Priority Concerns
- Materials and activities
- Example plan – Workbook II pages 41 – 43 (Jack)



Direct Assessment Planning Template

Student's name:
Student's school:
Date of assessment:
Assessed by:


Student's background information

Student's interests and motivators:

Student's ocular conditions (if applicable):

Student's hearing/auditory processing (if applicable):

Student's vital sensory needs (if applicable):



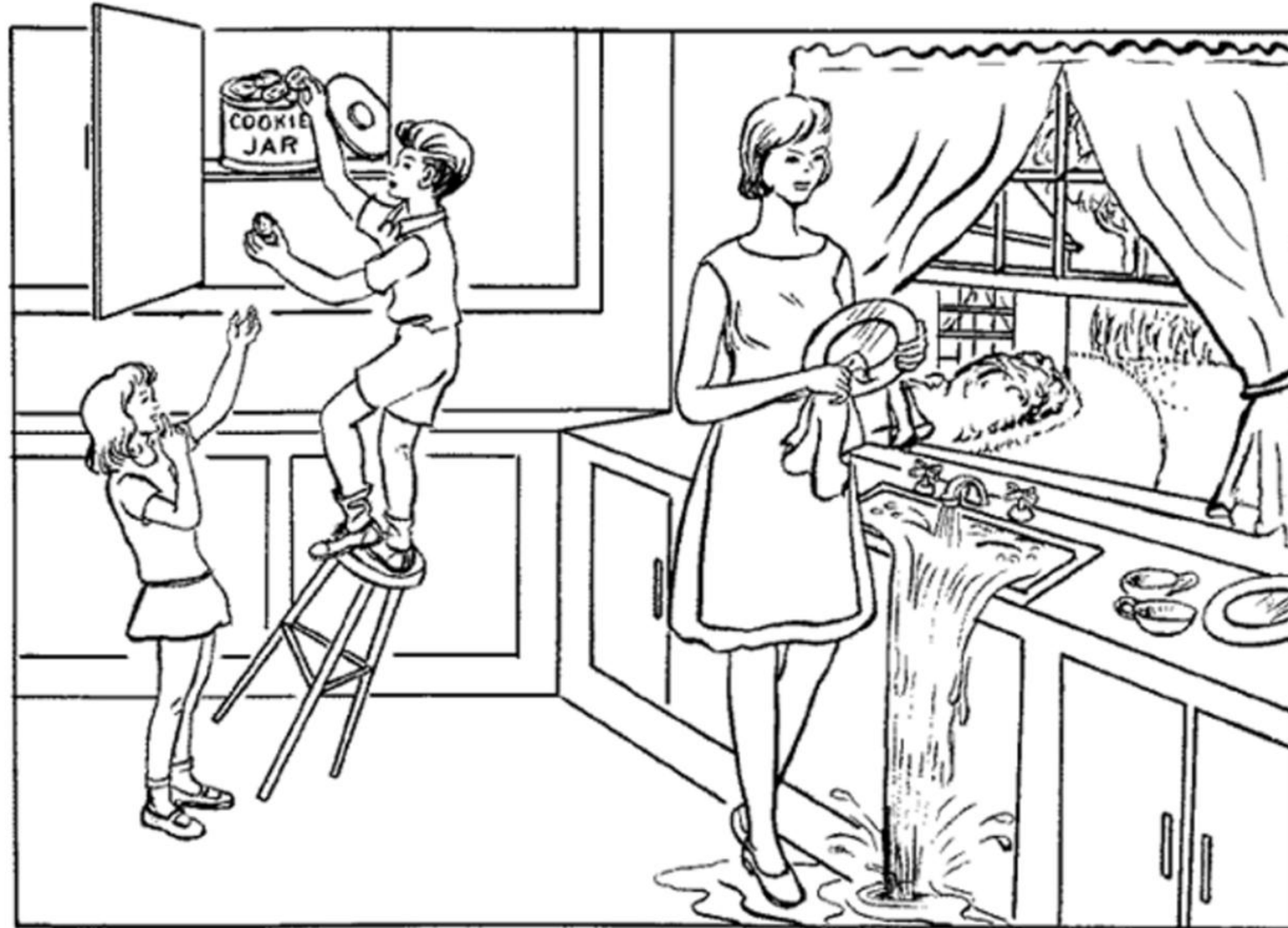
Priority concerns

- ☐ Visual attention
- ☐ Visual recognition
- ☐ Form accessibility
- ☐ Response interval/fatigue
- ☐ Impact of color
- ☐ Impact of light
- ☐ Impact of motion
- ☐ Impact of clutter/crowding
- ☐ Visual field abilities
- ☐ Visual curiosity
- ☐ Sensory integration
- ☐ Access to people
- ☐ Visual guidance of upper limbs
- ☐ Visual guidance of lower limbs
- ☐ Appearance of the eyes
- ☐ Movement of the eyes
- ☐ Compensatory skills

[illegible]

Part II: Pg. 36-38

'Cookie Theft'

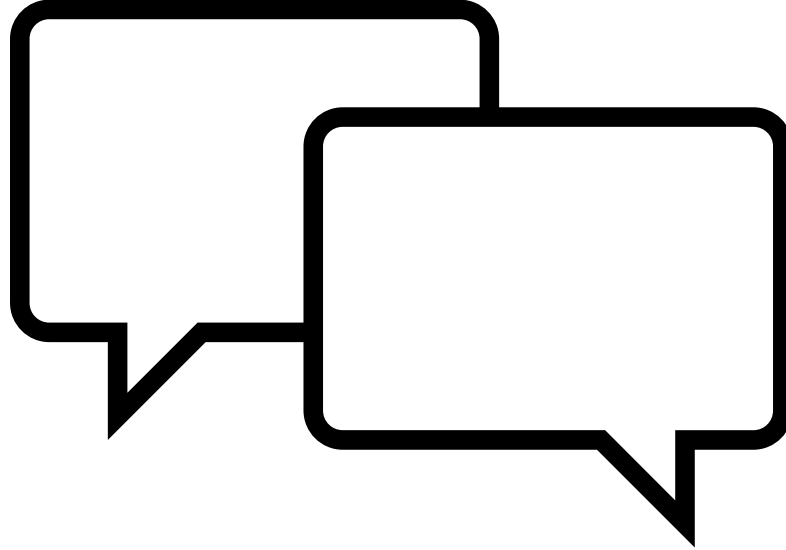


Johansson Experiment

Watch the Video here:

<https://youtu.be/rEVB6kW9p6k>

Discussion



Questions



One Perspective of CVI

“Information is landing on your eye, but you can’t make sense of it! You can’t wrap your head around things you’re seeing. You can’t tell where one object ends and the next begins. You are looking at things, but you don’t know what you’re looking at. You try to look closely and maybe you can make out light coming through a window, or the colour red enters your awareness, but these pointers are barely enough to give you an overall sense of your environment. It’s visual cacophony!”

Words by Nai. Image by Perkins School.



A joined-up approach

Helen Keller:

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”



Image by Perkins School

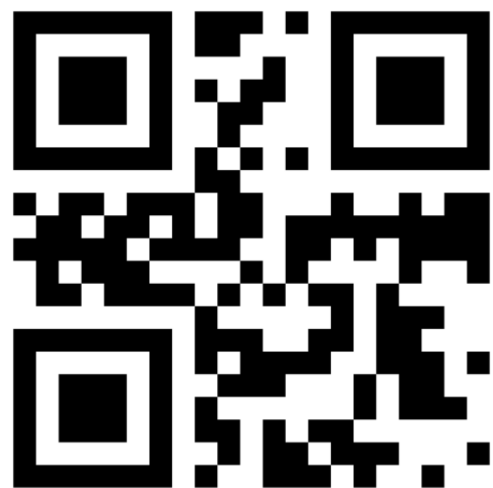
Resources

- Educator Community
- Educator hub on CVI Now
 - The Perkins CVI Protocol
 - Intervention Library
 - CVI Educator Toolkit
- Monthly webinars:
 - CVI for the TVI
 - Coffee and connect
 - Educator live webinar



Educator Hub

Stay up to Date!



CVINow.org



CVI Parents & Caregivers

Lean in. Ask your questions. Find community and resources. We've got you.

[Join the Parent/Caregiver Group](#)

[Sign up for a 1:1 call](#)



Educators

Educators and providers working with kids:
Join our community to learn, network, share resources, and build community.

[Go to the Educator Hub](#)

[Join CVI Now® for Educators](#)



Stay connected

Keep up to date with all that's happening in the CVI community: current research, CVI Now® resources and stories, and upcoming events.

[Subscribe to the CVI Now® newsletter](#)

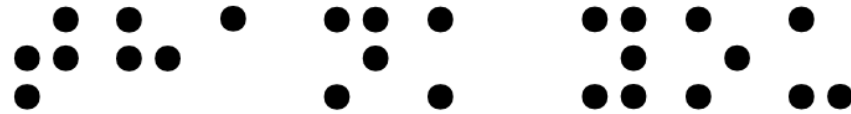


The CVI Center is urgently confronting the world's leading cause of childhood blindness, CVI, through education, innovation and collaboration. Our approach is research-based and whole-child focused.



cvinow.org | perkins.org/cvi | email: cvinow@perkins.org

Thank you for all the support you give children and young people who are visually impaired to lead a happy and healthy life.



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