

Light Pad activities to build visual curiosity & interest

Protect the light pad surface by placing a sheet of cling wrap or thin sheet of plastic over it, especially when doing messy activities or using material that could scratch the surface.

The child must feel relaxed and comfortable in order to best benefit from these activities. Position the child so that it is easy for the head to turn and the hands and legs to move. Do not provide so much support that the child cannot move the body freely. Start with the light pad at the eye level of the child. Keep moving the child or the light pad so that it is presented directly in front, as well as at the left and right periphery.

Child Level	Suggested Activity	Desired Outcome
No response to light	<p>In a darkened room, slowly reduce all sounds and movement until the child is still. Wait a few seconds, put a colour filter over the light box and then turn on the light at maximum. Check for response</p> <p>If the response is a grimace or look away, reduce light intensity further</p> <p>If no response, turn off and on at the speed of a slow blink twice or thrice.</p> <p>If no response, turn on at brightest setting and slide the colour and pattern sheets across the face of the light pad.</p> <p>If no response, place coloured glass paper, patterned wrapping paper or a pattered thin cloth over the light pad. Place the child on the tummy over your lap so that the hands rest on the surface of the light pad. Turn on the light and slowly increase the intensity, hold for a few seconds, then turn down or off and on again. Repeat.</p>	<p><i>Child develops visual awareness and response to visual stimulus</i></p> <p>Awareness: Watch for change in breathing patterns, stilling, or</p> <p>Orientation: stronger responses such as turning head or moving the eyes to search or</p> <p>Localization: looks toward light source</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Your Response</p> </div> <p>Reward EVERY change you notice with praise.</p> <p>Move the child closer to the light box, place hands/legs on it; drum lightly together on the surface, or push around the colours and patterns together – let the child get pleasure from having seen...</p> <p>Even if you don't get any response in a session, end the session with a cuddle or kiss, so the activity has a positive association in the child's mind.</p>
<p><i>If there is no response, don't spend more than 10 minutes on this activity, but do it every day for at least a month. With a very young baby, do activities in short bursts of time - about two minutes.</i></p>		



Child Level	Suggested Activity	Desired Outcome
Awareness of light and / or patterned moving or static stimuli	<p>Select the stimulus that most easily draws visual response from the child and make it move in unexpected or interesting ways to elicit some action from the child.</p> <p>Slide cheap plastic beads or patterned cloth across the surface and encourage the child to catch it as it passes near their hands; follow it as it falls over the end and so on.</p> <p>Let the child play with the beads/ paper, turn off the light, saying “gone!”; move the object to another corner of the light box, turn on the box and ask “where?”</p>	<p><i>Child shows visual interest , curiosity, pleasure and active engagement with what is seen</i></p> <p>The child searches for an item that drops out of sight</p> <p>The child reaches for something seen.</p> <p>Child notices objects of different sizes, not just entire sheets, on the light box</p> <p>Child notices things as they appear and disappear at all corners and parts of the light box</p>

Don't be afraid to use hands– touching helps the brain to understand better what is being received as visual images. Some children who are hesitant to touch something new, will reach first with their heads...allow this, but do encourage the hands to follow, as it will give the child better information. Some children may look away as they touch the object; this is ok – they need time to really pay attention to details from each sense. Gently encourage them to check back and forth between vision and touch, so that they are not stuck on just one sense to get information.

Child Level	Suggested Activity	Desired Outcome
Attention & interest to light and / or patterned moving or static stimuli, within arm's distance	<p>Once a child has understood that she can engage with what she sees, we should be encouraging her to expand her visual awareness of the larger world –</p> <p>Place a favourite object on the light box about two feet away and turn it on. Wait until she notices it and then help her crawl/ roll/ reach/ walk over to it and start playing. You may need to use an object that moves to get visual attention</p>	<p><i>Child visually attends to stimulus beyond arm's length</i></p> <p>Child moves or initiates movement toward stimulus seen</p>



Child Level	Suggested Activity	Desired Outcome
Attention to visual detail	<p>Select objects that glow when lit and have interesting textures. Cheap plastic toys often glow beautifully and especially effective when favourite or familiar toys are used.</p> <p>Fill a freezer safe zip lock bag with a thick vegetable oil and place plastic coloured beads, counters and shapes, plastic translucent wire, tinsel and other shiny or translucent objects in it. Encourage the child to touch and explore what they are seeing.</p> <p>Make a tactile face series with identifiers connected to family members – amma’s earring, appa’s beard, akka’s ribbon etc.</p>	<p><i>Child looks at the details within the object</i></p> <p>Child touches smaller, distinct and visible parts of the object</p> <p>Child identifies, touches or looks at the named part or item</p>
<p><i>Select items carefully so that they do not pierce the bag. Don't overfill – the bag should be soft enough for the child to touch and feel what is seen.</i></p>		

Once a child shows interest in visual stimuli, interacts with them and shows recognition, reduce the use of the light box and encourage the child to develop awareness of things in the environment. Simplify the visual environment, using only one or two toys within the child’s view.

Bring use of vision into every activity – place a bright coloured sock over her bottle and shake it quietly until she notices it visually and reaches for it or shows you she has seen it. Teach your child to place his hand in your hand - play “catch” and grab his fingers when he does, or “high five” to bring in an element of fun. Bring your hand near him, from different angles and different positions, so he has to constantly visually judge where it is and orient his hand correctly to play the game. Sing songs or talk sitting face to face with your baby, so that their little hands can reach out and feel your face and how it moves and changes as you speak.

Only when you have well-established use of vision in natural environments and activities, should you start to think about training vision to develop efficiency and discrimination. Since discrimination requires a lot of attention and thinking, some children will find it easier to start learning these skills on the lightpad and then be able to work with objects and finally pictures with just good contrast, reduced clutter, and good illumination.

