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**Therapi Galwedigaethol Plant**  
Canolfan Iechyd Plant Wrecsam  
Ffordd Croesnewydd, Wrecsam LL13 7TD

**Children's Occupational Therapy**  
Wrexham Child Health Centre,  
Croesnewydd Road, Wrexham LL13 7TD

## Figure Ground

Figure ground is the ability to pick out an object from a busy background. Having problems screening relevant and irrelevant information may cause difficulty with picking out items on a busy page that contains lots of words and pictures, copying from the whiteboard as well as finding items in pencil cases, clothes in drawers, toys in cupboards etc.

### Activities to try:

- Categorising items – ask the child to point out various categories of items such as round objects, red objects, wooden objects etc.
- Shape recognition - ask the child to find a named object amongst a collection of objects. For example, a square button in a box of round ones, a large block in a box of smaller blocks, a green marble in a box of coloured marbles or a truck amongst a collection of cars. Progress to subtler tasks e.g. identifying smooth paper strips amongst rough paper strips, etc.
- Finding hidden items in a picture.
- Sorting objects - have objects of two or more types together and ask the child to sort them. Objects can be sorted according to colour, size and texture as well as shapes. The more variables there are present, the more difficult the exercise.
- Point to named objects on a picture.
- Overlapping pictures - identify overlapping shapes in pictures.
- 'I-Spy' - ask the child to point out various categories of items, such as round objects, red objects, wooden objects, etc. As the exercise progresses, the objects to be chosen should become less and less conspicuous.
- Parents and teachers can help improve the child's figure-ground abilities if they use everyday opportunities for practice. While out walking, for example, you can ask the child "do you see the white house amongst those red houses?", "do you see the blackbird in the middle of the tree?", and "can you see the daisies hiding in the grass?"
- In the house, ask the child to pick out a particular can from the kitchen shelf; to sort clothing into the drawers; to sort knives, forks and spoons into respective compartments, etc.
- 'Snakes and Ladders' and other similar board games.



### In the classroom

- Wash the whiteboard often so that the background for writing is clear
- Encourage the child to have a clear desk top.
- Consider the position of the child's desk within the classroom.
- Where possible, prepare worksheets that are free from visual clutter.