April is OT Month!

How you can help students better identify letters, Shapes and numbers.

What is FORM CONSTANCY (otherwise known as letter, shape, and number identification)?

Form Constancy refers to the ability to recognize and label objects even when they are viewed from a different angle, size, color or in a different environment.

Students may struggle with form constancy or recognizing shapes, numbers and letters when:

- color, size or font changes
- they are presented in a different context (for example when they see them in the playground instead of in the classroom).
- reading as the student might not recognize familiar letters when presented in different styles of print (fonts, size, or color)

Indications that students are struggling with form constancy:

- May take more time to master the alphabet and numbers;
- May lead to difficulty recognizing errors;
- May cause confusion between “p, q and g”, “a and o”, “b and d”;
- May have difficulty making a transition from printed letters to cursive letters;
- Difficulty assuming the size of objects regardless of their distance;
- Difficulty understanding volumetric concepts such as mass, amount and quantity;
- Difficulty recognizing things that should be familiar when environmental conditions change.
- Issues with visual form constancy also reflects attention and focus, which makes it difficult to complete seatwork.

How can you help your student develop form constancy skills?

- Tactile perception – during free time, ask students to identify various shapes he/she can feel in a “feely bag”.
- Place common objects on a solid background and have students identify shapes found within the objects (ex: a circle can be found in a spoon, a square can be found in a block).

How can you help your student be successful in the classroom?

- give the student what is to be copied on a paper laying flat on their desk, rather than the board
- try to use the same font or style of letter on handouts as the student is used to. (like the “a” here is not like a manuscript “a”.)
- when learning a letter form, have the student work in the same plane as it is being taught (they need a vertical board if that’s what you’re using)
- teach them to tilt their head or eyes if they have trouble visualizing something at a certain angle.