

Tactual Profile



An observation instrument for charting the tactual functioning of children with severe visual impairment



What is Tactual Profile?

A Tactual Profile is an observation instrument for charting the tactual functioning in children from 0 to 16 years of age who have a severe visual impairment. The instrument's target group is children who are born with such severe visual impairment that they cannot use or hardly use their sense of vision. In daily life they depend on the other senses, including touch. Although the method is aimed at these children, it can also be used for children who have developed severe visual impairment later in life.

The instrument focuses on the tactual requirements that the daily environment imposes on perception. Tactual perception and functioning are explicitly viewed in a broader sense than reading braille or understanding geographical maps or graphs. For example: when a visually impaired child is playing with dolls, he/she has to know how to hold a spoon and be able to find the doll's mouth in order to feed it.

Tactual Profile is based on practical experience tested against recent literature and developments in both science and the field of touch. The way the instrument is used is defined as a "structured observation".

What does Tactual Profile consist of?

- A theoretical work guide
Components: theoretical justification, a manual, alerting signals, categories with observation items for administering the instrument and an overview of the factors which affect tactual perception and functioning.
- The viewing box
A box with several materials to determine whether a child still has some residual vision to perceive, for example, light, darkness, outlines, colours or thick lines.
- Folders containing sample worksheets
These folders contain worksheets that correspond to specific observation items.
- Materials: Several materials accompany a number of observation items. For example rolls covered with different kinds of fabrics.
- Report on the validation study

Tactual Profile was updated and validated based on two series of trial assessments. This has resulted in a sound, reliable and practicable instrument for charting tactual functioning.



What can be expected from Tactual Profile?

Tactual Profile is composed of two components: the first contains items enabling the specific observation of a child's tactual functioning in the following areas:

- Tactual-sensory functioning: including tactual noticing, touch sensitivity and body-awareness
- Tactual-motor functioning: including tactual exploration, manipulation and two-handedness
- Tactual-perceptual functioning: including perception of detail, discrimination, tactual-spatial perception and figure-ground perception
- Practical skills including touch strategy, game activity, dealing with variables and linking function to object.

The second part incorporates a survey containing factors that affect tactual perception and functioning. It provides a tactual conceptual framework. This framework is based on general (e.g. memory and intelligence) and specific child-based variables (such as sequential perception and touch strategy) in addition to stimulus variables (e.g. texture, relief and tactual distractor). The purpose of this overview is to provide reference points for a differentiated approach of touch for the particular child, using these possibilities under these circumstances.

Both components are complementary and provide an impression of the child's tactual functioning, as thorough as can be. However, they can also be used separately. The observation instrument Tactual Profile has been

Who developed Tactual Profile?

developed by professionals of Royal Dutch Visio with practical experience in close cooperation with employees from the University of Utrecht and the University of Nijmegen.

Visio is an organization dedicated to supporting people with a visual impairment in their wish to live, learn and work independently. Services vary from research to visual and tactual functioning to providing assistance. Visio does not only provide help for children and adults with a visual impairment, but can also be called upon by individuals and organizations that work with people who have both visual and learning impairments.



More information

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