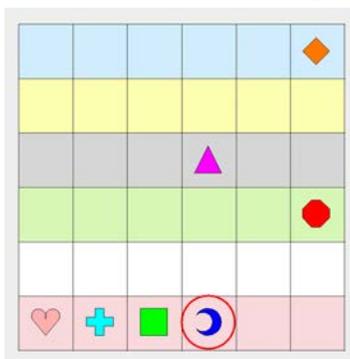


Research Spotlight

The Moving Eyes Game

The world around us is complex and maintaining focused attention can sometimes be challenging, even for adults. The goal of this collaborative project with Dr. Anna Fisher's and Dr. Erik Thiessen's research groups is to investigate the developmental course of deliberate selective attention and to examine factors that play a role in attentional selectivity at different points in development. In this project, researchers ask children to play a game in which they see several objects moving on a typical computer screen and landing on one of the thirty-six screen locations. Children are asked to watch a particular object while ignoring the rest of the objects. When the objects stop moving and disappear from the screen, children are asked to indicate the grid in which the object disappeared.

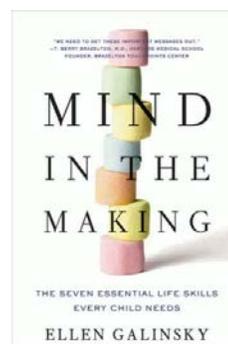


Every child will play the Moving Eyes Games twice, tracking either many objects or just a few objects at a time. During some sessions the objects they need to ignore may all be the same, while at other times they may be all different. Children's performance in the Moving Eyes Game will help researchers to map the developmental course of selective sustained attention and improve their understanding of this basic cognitive ability required for successful performance in many everyday tasks.

Observations for Psychology Assignments:

Students from Dr. Sharon Carver's Child Development class will conduct periodic observations throughout the spring semester to observe specific differences between preschoolers' and kindergartners' development. Their focus will be on the *Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs*, based on Ellen Galinsky's 2010 book *Mind in the Making*. This book is a readable synthesis of early childhood research on the natural maturation of

- focus and self-control,
- perspective taking,
- communicating,
- making connections,
- critical thinking,
- taking on challenges, and
- self-directed, engaged learning.



Galinsky notes that all seven skills are rooted in the prefrontal cortex of the brain, the locus of executive functions that help us "to manage our attention, our emotions, and our behavior in order to reach our goals" (p. 4). She also provides excellent tips for practical ways families can foster each of the seven essential skills during early childhood. The related web site, <https://www.mindinthemaking.org/>, also provides numerous valuable parenting resources.