

Book Review, by Elise Ciner, O. D.

Developmental Visual Dysfunction: Models for Assessment and Management (book)
and Normal Visual Development: Birth to 6 Months (video)

By Rhoda P. Erhardt, MS, OTR/L

The appropriate evaluation and management of multiply handicapped children is one of the necessary keys to unlock doors and allow individuals to reach their full potential in life. Rhoda Erhardt is an occupational therapist, working with multiply handicapped children, who has recognized the importance of vision and its primary role in development and learning. Ms. Erhardt's book is unique in three important ways

The first is her refreshing acknowledgment of the importance of a transdisciplinary approach in working with the multiply handicapped. While she presents both ophthalmological and optometric points of view, she emphasizes the importance of optometry's contributions by presenting the overviews of Skeffington's model of vision and Kephart's philosophy on vision training programs

Rhoda Erhardt then draws upon behavioral optometry's wisdom and her own expertise in neurodevelopmental treatment in a second important way to present four models for assessment and management. These include the medical, educational, developmental and functional models. She emphasizes the need for a more formalized evaluation called the Erhardt Developmental Vision Assessment (EDVA) as well as a model for the management of visual motor dysfunction in multiply impaired children. Her observations are then brought to life by her video "Normal Visual Development: Birth to 6 Months" which presents a functional model for vision development and nicely compliments many of the important points emphasized throughout her book

A third unique aspect of this book and one of immeasurable value is the use of actual cases. The stories of three children with mild to severe deficits are used as adjuncts to the actual material being presented throughout the book. The effective use of the children's histories, charts and photographs reminds the reader about the need for individualized treatment and emphasizes the need to remember that the "whole" child is best served by the cooperative efforts of a team approach

In summary, Rhoda Erhardt's philosophies as presented in her book and video are complimentary to those views espoused by behavioral optometry. It is very clear that she not only respects optometry but believes the two professions of occupational therapy and optometry need to work together in managing the multiply handicapped child. This book is clearly an important addition to the library of optometrists who work with multiply handicapped children and other members of the transdisciplinary team.

Ciner, E. (December, 1991). Book review: Erhardt R. P., *Development Visual Dysfunction: Models for Assessment and Management* (book) and *Normal Visual Development: Birth to 6 Months* (video), *Journal of Optometric Vision Development*, 22(2), 26.