CHAPTER 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.

6.1: RECOMMENDATIONS.

As a result of this study questions about the reliability of the various tests used by occupational therapists in South Africa need to be asked, and therapists need to consider if the tests that are used so widely and with such confidence are in fact really reliable and valid for the South African society. There is evidence in this study which indicates that the South African child interprets visual stimuli differently to those of their American counterparts and that the difficulty of the test should be adapted to suit the South African child and the order of the test items may need to be revised to suit the cultural and intellectual abilities of the South African child.

The evidence also suggests that the South African occupational therapist should not use American developed tests blindly as they could be under or over testing a child, as these tests are also developed for a different cultural environment to the South African child and so may contain unfamiliar elements, and could be assessing different elements than what the therapist assumes. In a recent study, Visser suggested that the South African child was not exposed to the same preschool activities as their American counterparts and so tended to test lower with the Developmental test of Visual perception 2nd Edition, one of the American standardised tests the occupational therapists in South Africa use.46 This then reiterates Mao, Li and Lo’s conclusions that it is potentially dangerous to use a standardised test to evaluate a child that has been developed in a different culture to that of the child being tested because the developmental levels of the children could be
different and the concepts being tested might mean different things depending on the culture.\textsuperscript{35} It is also important to note that culture has an influence on the language and how it is interpreted and this could suggest that a question is interpreted differently in a different culture to the culture in which the test was standardised.\textsuperscript{39} This is seen in the high number of negative signs that was obtained in this study.

The cultural differences between the South African and American groups could be studied further by doing a further study. This could be done by testing 80 English speaking South African children in the East of Pretoria, comparing their results to those of this and the American study.

6.2: CONCLUSION.

In conclusion although tests standardised from other countries may be useful, they do need to be used with caution and checked for their reliability and validity to the culture in which they are being used.

In order to establish a visual perception test that can be used with confidence in the South African context occupational therapists should endeavor to develop their own test that is standardised on the South African population, with all its complexities, so that it is valid and reliable in determining the visual perceptual difficulties of the South African child.