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Age differences in visual search for compound patterns: Long- versus short-range grouping.

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## **Abstrak**

Visual search for compound patterns was examined in observers aged 6, 8, 10, and 22 years. The main question was whether age-related improvement in search rate (response time slope over number of items) was different for patterns defined by short- versus long-range spatial relations. Perceptual access to each type of relation was varied by using elements of same contrast (easy to access) or mixed contrast (hard to access). The results showed large improvements with age in search rate for long-range targets; search rate for short-range targets was fairly constant across age. This pattern held regardless of whether perceptual access to a target was easy or hard, supporting the hypothesis that different processes are involved in perceptual grouping at these two levels. The results also point to important links between ontogenic and microgenic change in perception (H. Werner, 1948, 1957).