

Bullet Point

From

Familiesandsen.com

Incorporating

The Home Educator

Hello and Welcome

Bullet Point is a magazine for everyone interested in low vision. In each issue you will find topics of interest, in depth features and practical advice to develop independence in children and young people. This is particularly note worthy now given the expansion in home education and the management of COVID-19.

Disabled children are children first with the same needs as all children. Their special needs are extra ones, not alternative ones. Parents of disabled children have needs too through encountering the extra demands placed upon them. Consequently, at Bullet Point a major aim is to offer information and advice for all.

Vision stimulates curiosity, imparts knowledge and encourages exploration. Those with severe low vision may not respond to information and the environment in the same way as fully sighted peers. They will need additional stimulation to promote and encourage age and ability appropriate development. It is the job of Bullet Point therefore to help you address these issues.

Rgds

Clive

Education: The Great Equaliser!

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Development During Pre-School Years

In this chapter Bullet Point will offer suggestions under the heading of Developing Independence and Autonomy. It will be done whilst exploring,

- Learning about the Environment
- The Garden, Play and Development
- Tactile Awareness
- Touch
- A Box of Toys
- Mouthing Objects
- Tactile Prompt Cards
- Tactile Books
- Encouraging Movement

Please let Bullet Point know if you have any practical suggestions so we can share them with others in forth coming issues.

Developing Independence and Autonomy

One of your main challenges is to ensure your child who is having difficulty assessing information visually can do so via other means. This can often require you to encourage and develop your child's sense of,

- Time
- Space

And, more generally the immediate,

- Environment

This often requires highlighting identifiable sensory indicators throughout the day.

Learning about the Environment

Events and space can often be defined by their,

- Smell
- Sound
- Texture

And during,

- Visits
- Verbal explanation
- Conversation

For example, your child may learn to realise s/he is going out when the pushchair is,

- Taken from the cupboard
- Erected close by
- Told about the forth coming event

S/he may learn that you are shopping by the smell of a bakers and/or a steep hill leading to shops.

The Garden, Play and Development

Many children enjoy the garden. New sensations are all around. When safe allow her or him to explore barefoot and experience the sensations and draw information this way.

S/he may play with the earth, plants and sand in the sand pit. S/he can feel and learn about the textures and smells when handling and walking on,

- Grass
- Gravel
- Wood chips

And, whilst walking over,

- Decking
- Concrete slabs

S/he may get dirty when looking for toys left out after the last session. All of which aids the development of knowledge.

The environment outside enables you to develop your child's understanding of,

- Rain
- Wind
- Snow

All of this whilst encouraging and highlighting new sensations.

Tactile Awareness

Exploring and manipulating objects for example books will develop,

- Strength
- Dexterity
- Sensitivity

It will also encourage,

- Curiosity
- Tolerance towards new experiences

The materials chosen for exploration should be tailored to your child's needs.

Your child though may need encouraging to,

- Reach out
- Hold
- Grasp
- Squeeze

Also,

- Twist
- Press
- Poke

That is, explore,

- Textures
- Weight

And,

- Hardness

S/he will need to move from using the whole of the palm to finger pads in order to determine,

- Shapes
- Patterns.

Touch

For those with very limited sight developing a wide range of tactile experiences backed up by your verbal descriptions can significantly aid development. This can be done via,

- A box of toys
- Tactile prompt cards
- Tactile books

A Box of Toys

Include in the box fabrics of all kinds; for example,

- A foil survival blanket to crunch and reflect light
- Florist's' cellophane rapped inside a woollen sock to kick
- A silky cushion containing polystyrene beads to clutch
- Any number of embroidered material to touch, manipulate and enjoy

And,

- A chiffon scarf to play peekaboo

Include anything which is safe and feels interesting. Try exploring 'Pound Shops' or take stuff from your home and borrow a,

- Brush
- Shower flower
- Pan scourer
- Lemon reamer

Be creative and make things using everyday items; for example,

- Cover cotton reels with a variety of fabrics made of cotton or fur, leather or canvas
- Fill different containers with rice or pasta, secure the lid and make a rattle

You can make a great drum kit using a variety of pans with wooden spoons for drum sticks.

Mouthing Objects

Always be aware that your child is likely to extract information from an object via her or his mouth. All materials should therefore be clean and of a size which cannot be swallowed.

Tactile Prompt Cards

Make tactile prompt cards to accompany nursery rhymes. Make them using A4 card and link information you've stuck to the card with information present in a rhyme. This information should be accessible via touch along with sight. Don't forget you can use smells along with sounds although this might require a little more creatively.

Then later, you can offer your child a choice about which one s/he wants to access and thereby develop another skill.

To begin, how might you present cards connected to,

- Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star?
- Mary Quite Contrary How Does Your Garden Grow?

And,

- Round and Round the Garden Like a Teddy Bear

Tactile Books

Use the same production techniques discussed above to build tactile books then file each page in a ring bind folder. In the beginning, try to make resources interesting and fun.

A knock on advantage when creating tactile learning resources is the positivity associated with the exercise. Much at this stage may seem negative. Constructing resources represents something positive whilst being valuable for your child's development.

Encouraging Movement

As highlighted above touch is not confined to your child's hands.

From the beginning you're your baby learned through touch and enjoys close handling. You might have engaged in vigorous handling which s/he found pleasurable; for example,

- Tickling
- Blowing raspberries

This helped your child become aware of whole body movement whilst learning to confidently tolerate different positions.

If s/he is slow learning to crawl a brightly lit and sound producing toys may provide motivation to move. This should be reinforced by your encouraging voice.

Placing a toy on a sofa may encourage your child to pull her or his self up and stand. A push toy may give her or him confidence to move forward. From here, s/he can begin independently exploring through touch. It may help to rearrange furniture to help support movement.

Next Time

Over forth coming issues Bullet Point will offer more information under two general headings,

- **Encouraging the development of creativity**
- **Creatively supporting growth and development**

Primarily, this information will be of a practical nature; that is, things for you to do in order to develop your child's skills.

In the next issue we will concentrate on choosing and then starting a nursery placement before returning again to supporting growth and development.

Books you will find useful from www.familiesandsen.co.uk include,

AND SENIORS GROW TOMORROW
Independent Living Skills
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities

It costs

£20

Checkout the following too,

DO IT YOURSELF EDUCATION ADVOCACY
Putting Your Case
Visual Impairment and Other Disabilities

It is available from this site for,

£40

And,

WHAT IS RED?
A POPPY'S RED
Accessing the Curriculum
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities

This valuable resource costs,

£30

Together, they will help put you more in control of the situation. Also,

INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE
Development, Visual Impairment and other Disabilities
During Pre-School Years

This book will be available soon from www.familiesandsen.co.uk. It will cover in considerably more detail topics introduced under the heading,

Development During Pre-School Years

Visual Impairment: An Eye Condition in Everyday Life

Cortical Visual Impairment: Dorsal Stream and Ventral Stream

Following on from last time Bullet Point will further help an understand of Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) by considering two neurological factors; that is, the impact of the dorsal and ventral streams.

Dorsal Stream

One of the two visual “systems” in the brain is called the “dorsal stream.” It tells our body how to get around safely. It helps children and young people,

- Pick objects
- Avoid bumping into things
- Falling over

When the dorsal stream is dysfunctional it is difficult for us to know where things are in three dimensions.

Many learners experiencing dorsal stream dysfunction have problems with,

- Attention

This is partly because they can only attend to one or two things at the same time which probably including their own thoughts. These learners therefore,

- Have a short attention span

And, find it difficult to,

- Re-attend to the original subject when distracted
- Maintain engagement with others

Learners with attention difficulties regularly walk into things which seem apparently obvious; for example, a lamp post or letter box

Attention problems are more obvious when children or young people feel,

- Tired
- Ill

And or,

- Thinking their own thoughts
- Others are causing distractions; for example,

- a. Having a conversation whilst walking
- b. Background noise
- c. Peripheral visual stimulation to include particularly movement in the peripheral visual field

Young people with dorsal stream dysfunction who have too much to see or, have difficulty estimating where things are in 3 dimensional space, can often feel threatened in certain situations like crowds. Behaviour may therefore be affected.

Reactions to these situations may cause the learner to become,

- Distressed
- Disruptive
- React by going into her or his shell

In a busy supermarket for example with all its sights and sounds can become overwhelming or distressing or, the learner becomes so distracted that it is not possible to pay attention to the task.

Next Time

Next time we will continue considering CVI and in particular the,

- **Ventral stream**

After this we will cover the functional impact of,

- **The act of seeing**
- **A squint**
- **Nystagmus**
- **Aniridia**
- **Albinism**
- **Glaucoma**
- **Cataract**
- **Optic Atrophy**
- **Coloboma**

Other Disabilities, Syndromes and Conditions

Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) and Visual Impairment

These disorders can both cause a significant impairment in for example the areas of,

- Language and communication
- The development of play skills
- The ability to take turns during social interaction

Along with,

- Mirror the emotions of others; that is, recognise, understand and engage with others emotionally
- Being hypersensitive to sound

And,

- Tactile defensive

Many children and young people also display repetitive body movements and/or a restricted range of interests; for example,

- Spinning the wheels of a toy
- Repeatedly pushing the button on a toy

ASDs

ASDs is a brain based disorder with a number of children significantly visual impairment having neurological difficulties too. However, a visually impaired child or young person can display echolalia or other repetitive behaviour without having autism

No one cause for ASDs has been determined. Research over many years however indicates that ASDs is a neuro-developmental disorder. Its symptoms are based on impaired functioning in a child or young person's brain which in turn leads to impaired development.

Identification and Early Intervention

Research has also shown that very early identification and specialised intervention is highly advantageous in avoiding the most devastating impact of ASDs on the child's life. Later intervention often results in less effective results.

Early intervention also helps prevent the feelings of guilt that many parents feel. Parents tend to believe that if their child isn't thriving they as caregivers must be at fault

Early diagnosis can help avoid the problems associated with children who have been assessed as just visually impaired being taught in a heavily language based way which can conflict with the way needed for someone with ASDs and visual impairment.

Working Collaboratively

Collaborative working between professionals and parents is extremely important and can lead to the development of appropriate interventions which take into account the complexity of both ASDs and visual impairment.

ASDs cannot be cured but a significant improvement in the child's communication, social and behavioural skills can be achieved. However, congenitally blind children may often display and then over come,

- Social difficulties
- Obsessive ritualistic behaviours

Juxtaposing ASDs and Congenital Blindness

Seemingly during early childhood autism is a disorder of development in which something has gone wrong with whatever links the early sighted child's understanding of minds and the emergence of creative symbolic play along with context sensitive language around the middle of the second year.

Similarly, blind children may have difficulty developing creative symbolic play, have difficulties recognising vocally expressed emotions and encounter particular problems with abstract thinking. These children are not the same however as sighted autistic children.

Autism is diagnosed by the presence of certain behavioural features. These features display as a cluster. One feature on its own does not indicate autism; for example, hand flapping. A cluster of behaviours are present before the age of 3.

Increased Links

Because it is a brain based disorder children who are neurological vulnerable may have an increased link to for example,

- Seizure disorders
- Septo-optic displacia
- Prematurity
- Rubella

'Autistic Like'

Terms such as 'autistic like' can result in,

- Misdiagnosis
- Delayed support

Eye Conditions and ASDs

Eye conditions where ASDs have been documented include,

- Lebers Congenital Amaurosis
- Peters Anomaly
- Retinopathy of Prematurity
- Septo-Optic Dysplacia
- Congenital Rubella Syndrome

Two relevant statistics here include,

- 50% of blind children have learning difficulties
- 56% of those with severe learning difficulties or an IQ less than 50 have autism

Rubella with Autism and Sensory Problems

To develop the above points further we will briefly explore autism and Rubella. Children characteristically here may not,

- Explore with alternative senses
- Maintain distance from people which is not explained by the sensory deficits nor by the degree of an intellectual development disorder

And,

- Their effective behaviours do not resemble others of the same mental age

Characteristics

Characteristically a child,

- Fails to, or has difficulty, engaging in reciprocal interactions
- Treats others as though they were objects
- Seems uninterested in peers

The learner therefore,

- Has problems shifting attention
- Is unable to process social information effectively
- Has difficulty processing complex stimuli due to difficulties separating a figure from its back ground
- Has problems making very rapid shifts of attention
- Cannot process multiple sensory stimuli simultaneously

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will continue with autism and visual impairment and specifically how this might apply to teachers and parents.

Then, over forthcoming issues we will consider how the following might impact on everyday life,

- **Downs Syndrome**
- **Rubella (German Measles)**
- **Cerebral Palsy**
- **Ushers Syndrome**
- **Dual Sensory Impairment**
- **Lebers Congenital Amaurosis**
- **Septo Optic Dysplasia**

More Than One Disability

Planning Learning

It is important to know both your child and environment.

Knowing Your Child

Begin by learning about her or his,

- Abilities and needs
- Likes and dislikes
- Situation and daily routine
- Ways of learning

This will help you,

- Make learning the activity a natural part of daily life
- Decide the best way to help her or him learn the activity
- Decide upon the best way to break the activity into steps so your child can learn it more easily
- Plan how you, your child and others can do the activity together

Know Your Family

Knowing your family is important because,

- Choosing activities that are important to the family motivates members to help the child learn
- Knowing family wishes for your child helps identify future opportunities
- Knowing how the family interacts with your child can help you plan teaching in a way that fits interaction
- Fitting a plan with the family's daily life makes it possible for everyone to do an activity regularly
- Knowing your family's schedule and responsibilities can help you plan when and how your child will learn an activity

Getting to Know Your Child and Family

You can get to know your family and child by,

- Watching her or him at different times and in different places
- Talking with others who care for your child
- Watching the way s/he reacts to different things
- Observing your child and family's daily habits
- Observing your family's care of the child

Learning Your Child's Environment

Get to know the environment by,

- Visiting places where your child and family spend time
- Ask your family to describe the environment to understand how they see it and what it means to them i.e. its value
- Draw pictures/diagrams/photograph the environment where things are located

Things to Know

As you observe your child during a variety of activities and talk to people who know your child look for answers to the following questions,

- What is your child able to do?
- What is s/he interested in?
- Does your child like to learn new things?
- Does s/he imitate other children or adults
- Does your child like to show others new things s/he has learned?
- Will s/he start activities by her or himself?
- How does s/he react to familiar situations?
- How did your child learn what s/he knows and is able to do?
- How does s/he react to new situations?
- How does your child react when people ask her or him to do something?
- How does s/he react when people touch her or his or try to help physically?
- How does your child react to different people?
- How do other people know what your child likes and wants?
- How does s/he communicate with others?
- How does your child solve problems?
- How does your child use vision?
- How does your child use other abilities such as,
 - a. Movement?
 - b. Hearing?
 - c. Speech?

Useful Information about the Family

When considering your family look for answers to the following questions,

- What are their wishes for your child?
- What are their worries for your child?
- What do they enjoy about your child?
- What do they find difficult about your child?
- What are their hopes and fears for other children in the family?
- What are their responsibilities?
- What are their daily schedules?
- What do they like doing?
- What don't they like doing?
- How do they interact with your child and other children?
- How do they care for your child?
- What kind of help would they like for your child?

What Do You Need to Know about Your Child's Environment?

As you visit and observe your child's environments, identify places where your family and other children of a similar age, participate in,

- Daily life activities
- Community activities

And notice,

- The materials the family uses and where they are located
- Conditions that may make it easier or more difficult for your child to participate in a particular place; for example, if your bathroom is upstairs and your child can't walk how can s/he access it or another similar facility?

- The light and noise in an environment during the time your child needs to participate in an activity. Observe how your child reacts to see if they are a help or hinder
- Notice if there are places in the environment where your child likes to be; for example, if your child likes being outside this might be a place to teach her or him how to ...
- Consult with your family about changing the environment to make it better for your child
- Notice any areas that might be dangerous to your child
- Describe in detail an area where your child will learn an activity

Next Time

Next time we will consider,

- **How to use information gleaned from your assessment then what should be included in a plan**

Then, move onto,

- **Making Learning Happen**

Disability Living Allowance

The following information has been produced to assist those managing the needs of a visually impaired child. Over the coming months we will cover,

- Content and wording; that is, what to say and how to say it

This time we will offer more advice on wording and content when filling out a DLA form. More specifically this will include support for your child when,

- Eating and Drinking
- Toileting
- Communicating With Others

A Cautionary Note

Be aware when filling out a form that many people find it emotionally challenging. Answering the questions highlights your child's needs and how they impact on her or him, you and your family, in the present and potentially the future too.

Disclaimer

It should be noted that throughout this issue and forth coming ones too the process over time may have changed along with legislation. Fundamentally though, the same issues will apply although the questions asked may be slightly different.

Information is offered in good faith for general guidance.

Toileting

Before ticking the box **No** read the points below. You may then find **Yes** more appropriate.

During the Day

Can your child locate the toilet,

- In your home?
- At school?
- In unfamiliar places which are considered child friendly; for examples,
 - a. Activity centre?
 - b. Playgrounds?
 - c. At parties?
- Does s/he unlike her or his peers need help to locate and use the toilet?
- Do you need to check the toilet after your child has used it?
- Does he sometimes miss the bowl?
- Can your child go upstairs without help to use the toilet?
- Does s/he need help with zips or buttons after using the toilet?
- Does your child miss the toilet and leave toilet paper on the floor?
- Does your daughter during her menstrual cycle need your help in any way?

During the Night

- Does s/he need your help at night to get up and use the toilet; for example, if s/he,
 - a. Has night blindness which causes panic?
 - b. Needs help to find her or his glasses?

Be specific when filling in boxes at the bottom of any page; for example, how often and/or when questions.

Communicating with Other People

Help to Understand Other People

Tick the **Yes** box

Children with a visual impairment often miss non-verbal communication; for example,

- Gestures
- Facial expressions

They often need a carer to interpret, explain or draw attention to missed cues. This has implications when at nursery, school and college. Potentially they could be vulnerable to strangers too.

The 'Time' Boxes

Addressing these can be difficult; for example, your child may need explanations many times a day. You can therefore either be specific or write 'as required' in the **Times of Day** box.

For a time in minutes give a range for example, 3-10 minutes.

Generally speaking though as mentioned elsewhere try and avoid using nebulous terms like 'as required.'

Help with Being Understood by Other People

Unless your child has speech problems or learning difficulties tick the **No** box

Communicating with Other People - continued

Tick the **Yes** box if any of the following apply,

- Does your child have speech problems which affect communication?
- Does her or his visual impairment affect your child's confidence so that s/he is reluctant to communicate with other people?
- Is s/he frightened of strangers?
- Does s/he need the help of a carer to encourage communication with others?

The Time Boxes

Often it is difficult to say how many times a day your child needs support. Therefore write 'as required' and then be specific in the 'time in minutes' box.

Eating and Drinking

Read the following before ticking the **Yes** or **No** box.

During the Day

- Can your child feed her or himself on a par with non visually impaired children of the same age?
- Does s/he clumsy with drinks?
- Does s/he have spillages; for example, miss the edge of a table when putting a plate of food down or knock drinks over?
- At school can s/he access a canteen facility, choose and then buy a meal
- Can s/he then feed her or himself independently?
- When accessing a buffet style selection of food and drinks does s/he need help to locate and then make a selection?
- Can your child drink from an age appropriate cup?
- Does s/he require her or his food to be cut up and/or then be fed in a non age appropriate way?

During the Night

Some children with additional needs may require extra fluid, for example those with diabetes, which requires a carer to support during the night.

The Time Boxes

It is easier to be specific when addressing this section.

- How often does your child eat during the day?
- How long do you have to help her or him each time? Here give a range of minutes for example 10-20

Help with Medication

No hint necessary here. You will be pleased to know it is straightforward.

Next Time

Next time we will cover points relating to,

- **Help with therapy**
- **Movement and coordination**
- **About your child's condition**
- **What happens next**

Do-It-Yourself Education Advocacy

Following on from last time where we considered,

- Provision for those without an EHCP

And,

- How you may be able to secure an EHCP for your child

This time we will talk about addressing the situation.

Concerns

Begin by write down your concerns and queries in relation to evidence collected and then speak to your child's teacher, the pre-school/school Special Educational Needs Coordinator or head teacher. Ideally the Principal of the pre-school/school/college will support your concerns. However, this is not essential.

Then, raise your concerns in writing and keep a copy. Be precise about what you are asking and requesting.

A Letter Raising Concerns

Dear Sir (Head-Teacher/Principal)

Date

Name and date of birth of your child

I am concerned about my child's progress at school/college and am wondering whether s/he needs extra help. Can you tell me please if the school/college is already giving any extra help and if so what extra support is being delivered?

Can I have a copy please of my child/young person's school/college record? This should include school/college reports and if extra support is being given; also, any targets set and reports from any specialist disability teacher or tutor involved.

Yours sincerely,

Then, find out what progress your child or young person is making. Look at the records and note anything which shows her or him having problems with learning; for example,

- Not reaching targets
- Under achieving during tests and/or assessments

S/he might be scoring lower than others of the same age; or, scoring much lower in one subject as opposed to another.

Consider also,

- School reports which say the learner is not making good progress
- Exclusion reports
- Reports of incidents involving the child or young person
- Teachers' comments; for example, about concentration which indicates the individual having behavioural difficulties effecting learning

House Keeping

From the time you have concerns start collecting evidence; also,

- Respond to every conversation and meeting in writing and keep a copy
- Keep everything date ordered and in a ring bind folder
- Keep a diary and record your observations about the individual's learning and development. It might help to compare the child or young person with others of the same age

Some people find this difficult. Some find responding in writing unnecessarily aggressive. However, if you need to pursue the situation specific and quantifiable evidence will be needed. If the opposition disagree with you they will provided hard evidence to oppose your position.

Next Time

Next time we will explore,

- **Meeting techniques**

Many find these situations difficult. Even those experienced in taking part professionally in meetings find it difficult. When it's their own child the dynamic changes.

How to address this is set out extensively within,

DO IT YOURSELF EDUCATION ADVOCACY
Putting Your Case
Visual Impairment and Other Disabilities

The book can be bought via this web site for,

£40

Explore its content via www.familiesandsen.co.uk and whilst doing so keep in mind an SEN paralegal may charge around £120 per hour and an SEN lawyer £230 an hour.

A Close-Up on Curriculum

Making a Curriculum Inclusive

This time Bullet Point will offer ways to make the curriculum inclusive.

Introduction

- Make sure you the learner's individual needs
- Have high expectations for the young person
- Be aware that lack of sight may have an impact on formal and informal learning
- Seek advice and support from specialists
- Adopt a flexible and creative approach to learning

Classroom Management

When considering managing the classroom environment the following points are relevant

- Appropriate seating position
- Clear and clutter free
- Contrast
- Easy to locate
- Spacing
- Size and style

We will now develop these points.

Appropriate Seating Position

This will vary depending on the individual the activity and the classroom layout. Consider,

- Most, but not all learners with a visual impairment will benefit from sitting near from whatever is the focus of the lesson

- Encourage the learner to sit with her or his peers
- Provide space for the child or young person to work one to one with a Teaching Assistant (TA) if needed
- Do not sit the learner facing a window unless s/he requests to do so
- A child or young person using electrical equipment may need to sit near a socket to avoid the dangers of untidy wires
- The learner may need to move about the classroom freely to view resources from close up

Clear and Clutter Free

- Make board work neat
- Printed material should be of good quality
- Use a simple format
- Use Arial font
- Pictures and diagrams may need to be modified not just enlarged

Contrast

- Make sure the board is clean and use a broad black marker
- Use a contrasting background for visual demonstrations
- A pen will provide better contrast than a pencil. Fibre tips are especially good for this and come in various thicknesses

Ease to Locate

- Make sure that the learner can find his/her desk easily
- Keep the classroom layout the same
- Keep the classroom tidy (bags under tables etc)
- Make sure that the learner can find her or his resources
- Point to work on the board and read aloud what you write
- The learner should have access to her or his own copy of a book/worksheet/board notes

Spacing

- Space makes things more visible
- Print rather than use cursive script
- More space may be needed on the paper to record answers
- Provide broad lined paper for writing, maths diagrams, graphs etc

Size or Style

- Make writing large enough for the learn to read
- Printed work should be presented in an appropriate size and format
- Use a large screen television where appropriate
- Enlarged work is usually best reformatted onto A4 rather than A3
- Specially modified or adapted resources should be provided at the same time as those for fully sighted learners or even before

Teaching Strategies

A visually impaired learner may miss many visual clues on a black board, display board or body language and facial expressions

A visually impaired learner may require,

- A flexible teaching approach to compensate for a lack of incidental learning
- A multi sensory teaching approach suitable for a variety of learning styles
- Adult intervention to ensure s/he makes independent contributions to classroom activities and discussions
- Extra time to complete classroom tasks
- A differentiated curriculum specific to the learner in order to remove barriers to learning and promote participation
- Appropriate modification of teaching materials
- Opportunities to gain first hand experiences and handle real objects
- Structured opportunities to develop listening skills
- A teacher should always use the name of the learner before addressing her in order to enable the learner to tune into what is happening

Planning

Planning takes time but usually ultimately saves time.

Share lesson plans with advisory teachers and support staff in advance so that,

- Work can be modified and adapted
- Appropriate resources can be located
- Support staff are aware of the objectives and learning outcomes
- Individual learning targets can be addressed

Recording

A visually impaired learner may need to record information in a different way to sighted peers.

Handwriting

- The learner may need specialist paper with heavy lines
- The learner may express a preference for broad or dark tipped pens
- Individual help may be needed to learn hand writing skills
- Handwriting may not be neat – legibility is the important criterion but check that the learner can read back her written work at a later date

ICT

- Use a word processor it may improve legibility and presentation
- Touch typing is an invaluable skill aiding speed and accuracy when recording work

Speech

The best means of recording information may be to give it via speech to,

- A teaching assistant
- Specialist teacher
- Electronic recorder

Braille

- For a small number of learners this may be the only way to record and access written work
- Reading and writing often takes longer

Speed of Work

Taking longer to read or write may be eased by:

- Cutting down on tasks
- Doing only every alternate maths problem
- Avoiding unnecessary copying exercises that take time and cause visual fatigue

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will consider,

- **Adapting the Curriculum**

Important aspects around curriculum access are covered comprehensively within,

WHAT IS RED?
A POPPY'S RED
Accessing the Curriculum
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities

The book is available via this web site for,

£30

Explore its content via www.familiesandsen.co.uk and take control of unmet need. Together with **DO IT YOURSELF EDUCATION ADVOCACY** they help put you in control.

Independent Travel Techniques

Inconsistent provision is a major issue across the UK. Current provision requires careful consideration. Some of this falls to central government others bits to local government. However, parents, particularly as a group can 'encourage' change too.

This time Bullet Point will cover,

- Two more points to assess and consider during,
 - a. Pre-school and infant school years
 - b. Junior school years
 - c. Secondary school years
- The Cane and Basic Cane Techniques
- A quiz
- A few more recommendations to pass onto those teaching M and O

Assessment

Observation of your child or young person will enable you to then argue for a mobility and orientation programme. It will help you monitor progress and comment where necessary.

Previously we recommended during pre-school and infant school years to consider how well your child,

- Walks up stairs/steps/kerbs holding onto your (adult's) hand or rail, safely and with confidence?
- Walks down stairs/steps/kerbs holding onto your (adult's) hand or rail, safely and with confidence?
- Avoids obstacles in the learning environment?
- Locates and retrieves a dropped toy or object?

This time consider also how well s/he,

- Turns towards a noise or voice accurately?
- Walks without exhibiting an unusual gait or posture?

Comment

Previously we recommended during junior school years to consider how well your child,

- Walks up down stairs/steps/kerbs independently, safely and with confidence?
- Walks down stairs/steps/kerbs independently, safely and with confidence?
- Avoids obstacles in the learning environment?
- Walks without exhibiting an unusual gait or posture?

This time consider also how well s/he,

- Participates in physical activities at home and/or physical education at school?
- Runs without stumbling?

Comment

During secondary school years consider how well your child or young person,

- Walks up down stairs/steps/kerbs independently, safely and with confidence?
- Walks down stairs/steps/kerbs independently, safely and with confidence?
- Copes with fluctuating lighting conditions indoors?
- Copes with fluctuating lighting condition outdoors?

This time consider how well s/he,

- Finds her or his way across a large open space
- Manages distress during M and O; that is, does s/he display distress when lost or disorientated

Comment

Include as part of your response any mobility and orientation training already received.

The Cane and Basic Cane Techniques

Following are a number of issues commonly encountered when teaching someone mobility and orientation techniques. For a comprehensive explanation on how they fit into an M and O programme go to,

THEY WANT HIM TO GO OUT;
IF ONLY SHE COULD
Mobility and Orientation
A Teaching Manual
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities

This comprehensive manual is available from,
www.familiesandsen.co.uk

for,

£30

Choosing the Most Appropriate Cane?

Symbol cane: those using this type of cane should have relatively good vision and be able to see and avoid obstacles along with cues in the environment to help with orientation.

Guide cane: this type of cane is distinguishable from a symbol cane by its white ribbed plastic covering. It is more substantially made and can be used with a variety of tips.

Long cane: a long cane should only be allocated to those who have been or being given specialist training. This is necessary because a long cane used incorrectly can be potentially dangerous to the user and others.

Canadian cane: this is a long cane fitted with a roller tip and distinguished by a red section at the end of the cane. The red section does not necessarily signify that the user also has a hearing impairment too.

Cane tips: there are several different cane tip types in common use. Often choice is a matter of personal preference. Importantly your child should be given a reasonable length of time with each to find the one s/he is most comfortable with.

Hoople: the hoople is one style of cane not often seen in common use. It resembles a large tennis racquet in shape and is made from tubular plastic or natural materials. When used it allows a child or young person to walk over rough and uneven terrain efficiently and safely. Someone having difficulty managing a traditional type of cane may also find a Hoopole of value.

Cane Techniques

A few points worthy of note include,

- During sighted guide if a cane is not folded it should remain within the body space of the person carrying it
- A child or young person should,
 - a. Always sweep with a cane before stepping off
 - b. Not side step or walk backwards without first checking with the cane that the path is clear
- To encourage your child to note features when trailing a wall encourage her or him to describe what s/he thinks an obstacle is and the material it is made of
- When teaching your child to access stairs begin by teaching ascending techniques as many are generally less nervous going up as opposed to coming down
- When travelling up or down stairs the cane may be kept in a diagonal position. Importantly though ensure that the cane does not protrude too far to endanger others using the stairs
- Point out to your child that a hand rail may end before the end of the steps
- Having walked through a doorway encourage your child,
 - a. To sweep with her or his cane and check for obstacles before setting off
 - b. Not to loiter by the door
- If the doorway represents part of a route being taught ensure your child,
 - a. Knows the next part of the route
 - b. Is clear of the doorway before discussing the next or previous section

A long cane if used correctly offers a lot of protection and notice of obstacles below waist height. A little time will be spent here considering its correct use. Unfortunately, many users slip into bad habits over time.

Grip and Arm Position

- Look for and avoid tension in the shoulders. The cane holding arm should be relaxed
- The upper arm is kept close to the body with the elbow remaining in contact with the body
- The cane is held in the dominant hand in front of the body in line with the navel
- A common problem occurs when the cane holding forearm drops down by the side

The Sweep or Arc

- This represents a sweep or arc of the cane across the body to end approximately 2 inches either side of a user's shoulders. Its purpose is to protect the user by ensuring there is a safe path wide enough to walk through.
- The movement is controlled from the wrist and index finger, not the arm

Walking in Step

- Walking in step can require a lot of coordination. Frustration may result
- The technique is designed to protect the next step whilst walking along; for example, if the right foot is in front, the cane should be on the left then, when the left foot moves forward the cane moves to the right

Contacting Obstacles

- The cane should contact obstacles not collide with them. If this happens your child may,
 - a. Be moving too fast
 - b. Not paying enough attention to information received through the cane

Consolidating Cane Techniques

To help your child consolidate techniques here are a few ideas,

- Ensure s/he has the necessary skills
- Ensure that any route chosen for training is realistic and has a definite,
 - a. Start
 - b. Finish
- Ideally a route should mean something to your child and represent a desired destination
- Survey the route first and identify possible landmarks and safety considerations
- Walk the route first using sighted guide identify and discuss possible landmarks

A Quiz

To further help your child consolidate independent travel techniques here are a few questions to use by way of a quiz. Perhaps a prize for a given number correctly answered may be a useful incentive too.

Returning to a previous edition of Bullet Point here are a few questions associated with sighted guide techniques.

1. What is the 'golden rule' of sighted guide? Answer: the guide leads and always goes first
2. Describe 3 ways grips may be adapted? Answer: linking arms, contact walking shoulder to shoulder, gripping the finger
3. What is the correct side to guide someone? Answer: whichever the child prefers
4. How much information should you give when guiding someone? Answer: describe and warn about major obstacles and land marks but not too much information so it becomes a running commentary
5. Who goes through a doorway first? Answer: the guide
6. What part of a chair do you guide someone to if possible? Answer: the back
7. Name a technique for refusing unwanted or inappropriate guiding help. Answer: limp arm
8. How should someone be guided upstairs? Answer: inform stairs up; approach straight on; assist if necessary to find the hand rail; ascend steps one at a time
9. What should you avoid doing at the top or bottom of steps? Answer: loiter
10. How do you negotiate a narrow space? Answer: inform that there is a narrow space; move the guiding arm to the centre of the guide's back at waist height; ensure that the person being guided falls in behind

Recommendations

Your local authority policy documents covering mobility and independence should include quantifiable and explicit reference to addressing age and ability appropriate needs and educational provision for all child and young people. This should happen during,

- Pre-school onwards

And,

- Whilst undergoing transition

Included should be those,

- Multi disabled and visually impaired
- With different cultural and religious backgrounds

Currently, mobility and independence training varies depending on where you live in the UK. Sometimes it is poor and sometimes very poor. The current situation around COVID-19 is compounded by a lack of consistency.

Consistency is therefore needed in mobility and independence training. Bullet Point consequently recommends that consistent access along with key concepts and skills are adopted by your local authority and across the UK more generally. It is worthy of note that key concepts and skills are set out in,

**THEY WANT HIM TO GO OUT;
IF ONLY SHE COULD
Mobility and Orientation
A Teaching Manual
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities**

**This comprehensive manual is available from
www.familiesandsen.co.uk**

It costs,

£30

Its content can help underpin provision. It offers an invaluable accompaniment to the development of independence more generally whilst also improving employability.

Comprehensive answers to questions raised in the 'Quiz' are also available in,

**THEY WANT HIM TO GO OUT;
IF ONLY SHE COULD**

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will continue helping you take control of your child's mobility and orientation training. We will cover,

- **Two more assessment points to help you monitor your child or young person's independent travel skills**
- **Indoor and outdoor travel skills**
- **A quiz**
- **Under the heading of 'Recommendations' Bullet Point will set out a list of policies which a local authority might like to adopt**

Independent Living Skills

Starting Out

Too often we learn of young people unable to progress socially owing to under developed independence skills. This may become apparent when thinking about university or even when wanting to move out of the family home.

To help address this we began last time in the kitchen and covered,

- **Gas and electric cookers, cookers and safety, safety and the oven, maximising contrasting colours and labelling, handling hot ingredients, highlighting controls, kettles, lighting, microwave ovens, pouring liquids, storage, storing frozen foods, sundry equipment and being tidy and organised**

This time Bullet Point will cover,

- Labelling, Highlighting Controls, Choosing a Kettles, Microwave Ovens, Sundry Equipment, Top Tips
- Being organised in relation to storage to include storing frozen foods

We will also continue deconstructing activities designed for younger learners. This time it's the turn of,

- Refusal to wear items of clothing

And yes I know it's horrible but,

- Caring for the nose

Labelling

The aim of labelling is to make items, some visually identical, accessible to you. That is, so you can distinguish for example a jar of marmalade from one of jam. The golden rule here is, be consistent.

Some useful labelling tips include,

- Tear a piece or all of the label off a tin
- Put one elastic band around for example a tin of peas, two bands around a tin of tomatoes etc.
- Different coloured electricians tape fixed to freezer bags can differentiate items not distinguishable by touch at the bottom of a freezer
- Attach a magnetic plastic letter to the top of a tin
- Write on the tin using a thick black felt tip pen
- A Brailled label or label in MOON can be tied on, attached by elastic band, stuck on or attached via a magnet

Highlighting Controls

Raised marks are often the most effective way of highlighting controls; for example, try using,

- 'High-Marks': this is a bright orange fluorescent substance in a tube which when applied sets into a hard lump or line. It is useful to mark for example 'off', 'low', 'medium' or 'high' settings
- 'Bump-ons': these are self-adhesive plastic dots which come in different sizes and colours
- Touch control panels like for example those found on some microwaves are best marked using raised letters

Storage

Being organised and consistent is the key to effective storage; for example,

- Use standard storage jars with a label attached in suitably sized writing and contrasting colours
- The contents of bags such as sugar or flour can be emptied into storage jars making contents easier to pour and less easy to spill

- If you can't see to read sell by dates organise the fridge and your cupboards so items to be used next are at the front

Storing Frozen Foods

Frozen foods are not always easy to recognise. Strategies to address this include,

- Tie on large print or Braille labels
- Group different types of foods on different racks or in different sections on the same rack

Kettles

Plastic jug kettles may be preferred because they do not get hot on the outside like metal ones. Also, they have no vent pouring out steam. As with most electrical equipment cordless is best although a coiled lead which tucks in behind is less likely to get in the way.

Microwave Ovens

The advantages of microwave ovens are,

- They cook things very quickly
- The oven surface remains cool. This advantage though is lost if a combination microwave, cooker and grill is used
- A microwave oven is extremely useful for reheating food
- It has become very popular for cooking. Preparing pasta and vegetables this way for example has removing many potential hazards

Buying One

- Ideally avoid a digital or sensory model unless your vision is good enough to discriminate settings. Some models can be marked but on the whole a rotating knob type control is easier to manage and mark
- It may be necessary to have someone explain basic safety factors; for example, do not put metal into the oven and be aware that cooked ingredients can soon become very hot or over cooked

Colour code by using different coloured electrician's tape stuck to different bags of vegetables which feel the same

Sundry Equipment

Over time you will develop your own system of adapting and modifying equipment. To begin though,

- Measure using a range of cups and plastic containers like yoghurt or margarine pots. You may find these easier to see and grasp
- Use spoons to gauge quantities; for example,

Teaspoon = 5ml

Desert spoon = 10ml

Tablespoon = 15ml

- To measure a level spoon, scoop an ingredient onto a spoon then use a knife to smooth off the surface
- Sticky ingredients such as honey, treacle and golden syrup can be difficult to measure. Try rubbing the spoon first with grape-seed oil. The ingredients should then slide off easily so you then get the required amount
- A non-slip mat will hold a mixing bowl steady leaving your hands free to mix; for example, ingredients for bread
- A horse shoe shaped peeler can make peeling easier
- Many find a set of talking scales extremely useful
- A mechanical kitchen timer helps you to rely less on sight

Refusal to Wear Items of Clothing

It can sometimes be difficult getting a child to wear certain clothes when for example playing out of doors. The following strategy is designed therefore to increase your child's acceptance wearing unpopular clothing.

Steps

1. Tell your child it is time to play outside
2. Help her or him walk to the dressing area
3. Show your child the coat and encourage her or him to put it on

Then,

4. Walk outside and offer a toy
5. Play with her or him for at least 5 minutes
6. When the period is over do not remove the coat but do not force her or him either to keep it on
7. If removed increase the amount of time it is kept on during following sessions and play with her or him for longer whilst wearing a coat
8. When wearing a coat whilst playing outside pick another enjoyable time when s/he should wear one; for example, wear it when going to the shops or when travelling to meet someone popular

Tips

- Try adopting the strategy at the same time each day
- If showing resistance gradually increase the distance walked wearing a coat before starting to play
- Use the same simple language and object to tell her or him what is happening or what s/he has to do
- Distract when wearing a coat by for example, encouraging your child to hold up her or his head when walking
- If s/he removes the coat bring her or him inside and remove the toys
- Allow your child to remove the coat once play is over and s/he is inside
- Don't,
 - a. Remove the coat for her or him
 - b. Allow her or him to remain outside without wearing a coat
- Do,
 - a. Give time to respond and extra cues before using full physical guidance
 - b. Use the same routine for beginning and ending play

- c. Always put the coat on before going outside (dependent of course on weather conditions)

More Tips

- Use objects of reference consistently with simple words of communication
- Use toys and objects which help learning during play; for example, stones in containers, small pieces of fabric, cans or boxes with things in them which make a noise when shaken
- Use a belt or tie a piece of rope around your child's waist to make taking the coat off harder
- Always ensure that the coat is comfortable

And,

- If s/he wets or muddies the coat so it becomes uncomfortable to wear change the it inside

Care of Her or His Nose

This exercise is designed to increase your child's independence along with hygiene, social acceptance and comfort.

Steps

1. When your s/he is making noises while breathing, sniffing or has a dirty nose point out the cues (noise, sniffing, wet nose) and tell her or him it's necessary to blow the nose

Then, instruct her or him to,

2. Locate a handkerchief or tissue in the pocket or particular place
3. Grasp one corner and shake out
4. Grasp the opposite corner and open it up between the hands

Next, get her or him to,

5. Bring the tissue to the nose, pinch nose lightly with it, blow the nose and then wipe the nose
6. Fold the handkerchief or tissue to close up the dirty area
7. If necessary get your child to grasp the folded tissue or handkerchief and repeat 5 and 6

Then,

8. Locate the bin and throw the tissue away or return the handkerchief to for example, a pocket

Teaching Suggestions

- If your child doesn't have a tissue or handkerchief help her or him locate one
- If s/he has a pocket have her or him put a handkerchief in it when getting dressed
- Model blowing if your child is unclear about doing it
- Allow her or him time to complete each step before helping

- Point out that her or his nose looks better or sounds better to you and ask if it feels different; for example, easier to talk of breath
- If necessary adopt a hand over hand strategy to instruct; that is, get her or him to hold your hand and do the steps with you

Visual Limitations

- If your child does not have a pocket always keep tissues or a handkerchief in the same place

Communication

- Along with words give her or him a signal such as touching the cheek with a tissue to indicate if s/he needs to blow the nose
- When giving your child a tissue or handkerchief require her or him to use the sign before giving handing over the item

If Unable to Bring the Tissue to the Nose

- Require your child to participate in all of the steps with you. Have her or him say or give a signal that s/he needs a tissue

Next Time

Next time we will begin with,

- **Cutting, chopping and slicing**
- **Pouring hot liquids**

Then once again wind-back the years and offer strategies to help you develop independence at an earlier stage under the headings of,

- **Preparing an area for sleeping**
- **Sweeping up around the home**

This will be expressed by way of deconstructing activities for you to teach your child.

Please let us know if you have any practical suggestions so we can share them with others in forth coming issues of Bullet Point.

Books available from this web site will help address under developed skills. Begin tackling age and ability appropriate independence and buy,

AND SENIORS GROW TOMORROW
Independent Living Skills
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities

It costs,

£20

Recipes for Beginners and Experts

Recipes offered have drawn inspiration from all over the world. They have been chosen not only to develop techniques and encourage independence but also the development of a culturally diverse pallet.

This time Bullet Point will offer,

- A few more tips
- Recipes for,
 - a. Spicy scrambled eggs. Ande bhulia
 - b. Paratha

Recipes

The following recipes have hopefully been suitably deconstructed. However, they may not meet the requirements of every one. You may need therefore to go further in order to make information accessible.

Spices, Onions and Ghee

- Unless you use a lot of spices regularly buy them in small amounts and store in sealed jars, in a cool, dry and dark place
- If possible buy whole seed such as coriander, cumin and coriander and grind them yourself
- It's the seeds in chillies that hold the heat. Retain them sparingly until experienced in their use
- Cumin: a widely used spice in Indian cuisine. It is considered to be a 'warm' spice with an earthy aroma and can be used whole or ground, toasted or untoasted

And,

- Onions: onions and shallots are widely used across India. They are a pale pink colour and generally smaller and milder than the brown or red variety available in the UK. Red onions and shallots are usually sweeter. Importantly cook the onions properly to bring out the sweetness and flavour that provide the base for many Indian recipes
- Ghee: ghee is clarified butter that has been cooked so its natural sugars slightly caramelize giving it a nutty flavour. The process of clarification removes the milk solids and prevents it going rancid. Important in tropical climates. It is able to withstand high temperatures

Spicy Scrambled Eggs - Ande Bhulia

Try this excellent Indian alternative to standard scrambled eggs. You will be pleasantly surprised and may never go back to standard fare.

Ingredients

Serves 2-3

2 tbsp vegetable oil

2 large red onions, diced
1-2-3 fresh green chillies, chopped with or without seeds
½ tsp coarsely ground black pepper
3 diced tomatoes
6 free-range eggs, lightly beaten with ½ tsp salt
1 tsp toasted ground cumin seeds
2 tbsp chopped coriander. Personally I believe this dish should be served with coriander. It adds another dimension to texture and flavour.

Directions

- a) Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat and fry the onions for 10 minutes
- b) Add the chillies and black pepper and fry and fry for 2 minutes
- c) Stir in the tomatoes and cook uncovered for 5-10 minutes until the tomatoes have softened and reduced to a very soft consistency
- d) Lower the heat slightly and add the beaten eggs and cook for 2-3 minutes without stirring
- e) Gently lift the ingredients and turn in the pan
- f) Continue cooking, folding once or twice more until almost set
- g) Sprinkle over the cumin and fold through
- h) Finish with the chopped coriander
- i) Serve with warm parathas

Paratha

A paratha is flat bread eaten extensively in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and many other places. It is a flaky version of a chapatti made with the same dough but rolled out to create a few layers that give its flaky texture.

Ingredients

Makes 8

250g chapatti flour or, half wholemeal and half plain white flour. Plus, a little for dusting
½ tsp salt
2 tbsp of melted ghee or butter. Plus, 5 tbsp for brushing
120-150ml warm water

Method

- a) Mix in a bowl the flour, salt
- b) Add the melted ghee or butter and 120ml of warm water
- c) Mix together until you have a soft but not sticky dough. Add a little more warm water if necessary
- d) Knead in the bowl for a minute or two then cover and leave to rest for 15 minutes
- e) Divide the dough into 8 pieces
- f) On a lightly floured surface role a piece into a ball then use a lightly floured rolling pin to roll out into a circle about 13cm in diameter
- g) Brush the top with melted butter or ghee and dust with a little flour

- h) Fold in half enclosing the butter then brush the top with more melted ghee or butter
- i) Dust with a little more flour. Fold in half again making a triangle
- j) Lightly dust the dough with flour and roll out into a larger triangle so that each side is about 13cm long
- k) Repeat with the remaining dough

- l) Heat a heavy-based frying pan or griddle over a medium heat
- m) When hot place one of the triangles of dough in the pan and cook for 1-2 minutes or until bubbles appear on the surface and it puffs up
- n) Brush the top with melted ghee or butter then flip the bread over press down with a spatula to that it cooks evenly
- o) Cook for a further minute or until golden brown
- p) Brush the top with more ghee or melted butter flip it over for a final few seconds
- q) Remove from the pan and place on a warm plate covered with a tea towel while you cook the rest

- r) Serve warm

Next Time

Next time we will offer a,

- **Few more tips**
- **A recipe for stuffed sweet potatoes**

Please let us know about any practical suggestions so we can share them with others in forth coming issues of Bullet Point. Also, tell us about any favourite recipes too.

Offered via www.familiesandsen.co.uk is,

THE WOLVERHAMPTON COOKBOOK
Cooking Skills and Recipes
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities

Information is in large print and clearly laid out. It is designed to enable everyone to roam through and then cook, although perhaps with a little help in the beginning.

It costs,

£15

Employment and Employability

Each issue of Bullet Point will consider the skills we all need to find, sustain and succeed during employment. We have already covered,

- **Being Adaptable**

And,

- **Demonstrating a Positive Attitude and Behaviour**

Moving on we will now look at,

- **Managing Information**

Once again these are skills we all need and not just those with low vision. Developing them will help overcome the difficulty many have in the area of employment. Information is designed for those approaching employment or having difficulties finding a job. Pass them on and share.

Managing Information

Begin by monitoring behaviour when using the following skills,

- Locate, gather and organise information using technology and information systems
- Access, analyse and apply knowledge and skills from various areas of experience

Now, assess in each of these important areas 1 – 5, where 5 is high. Then, consider if any of them needs development.

Ask someone else to assess too. Then, compare the results and ask the other person why s/he graded this way.

Having obtained this valuable information, work on one or two areas at a time. Remember, these are the skills we all need to find, sustain and succeed in the workplace.

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point with cover,

- **Being Responsible**
- **Using Numbers**

Later in Bullet Point you will offered a number of projects where these skills can be developed. This and much, much more is available now within,

DISABILITY: NO BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT
Finding, Securing and Maintaining Employment
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities

Job hunting is time consuming and a stressful exercise. It is also one of the most important tasks we undertake.

This comprehensive guide offers everything you need to help create a winning job application.

Information is designed for those with a visual impairment and covers diverse areas such as presenting yourself in a dynamic and positive way, disclosing a disability and managing intrusive questions in the work place. It is designed to sit alongside two other books available from www.familiesandsen.co.uk Independent Living Skills and Mobility and Orientation.

It costs,

£30

Something for Teaching Assistants
(Home Tuition)

Supporting Learners

Used effectively 1-1 time with a learner provides an opportunity for dialogue between learner and support in which learner requirements are identified and planned. The approach therefore is learner centred. It is an opportunity to identify learner strengths and learner needs along with creating future tasks, projects and assignments. Parents should be closely involved in the process and receive feedback about the sessions.

Time set aside to consider and evaluate learner progress represents an opportunity to,

- Look back over work done and explore and reinforce learning achieved
- Look forward to future learning via target setting and work preparation
- Encourage the learner to organise and reflect upon her or his own work

And therefore,

- Learn strategies to enable a process of reflection, evaluation and project forward to the next stage of work for someone who may have great difficulty with this process

How Effective Is Your Support?

Things to consider may include:

- Is the process learner centred; for example, does it assume communication intent or conceptualisation ability that does not exist?
- How can communication be more effective?
- Is your support empowering for the learner?
- How are the abstract concepts of reflection, evaluation, forward planning to be managed?
- How can the learning process be kept alive until the next lesson?

A Kit Bag of Suggestions

Things to consider include,

- The location should be known to the learner. Ideally it should meet the needs of someone visually impaired and be familiar, comfortable, quiet and distraction free
- All aspects of time should be managed carefully; for example, an activity arranged for the same time, length of time and day of the week
- At the beginning of sessions ensure that conceptual difficulties are not underestimated; for example, the language used and social behaviour during a lesson. This might mean a strict structure so the learner can concentrate on the topic
- Manage content carefully which means having a good understanding of a learner's learning style and visual needs, likes, dislikes and anxieties – if any.
- The learner may be helped by making discussions concrete
- Look forward and prepare work for the future in a structured way
- Provide a diary, action plan and lists with gaps for the learner to complete and take with them as useful tools
- Essentially the person managing the situation will have a good knowledge of the communication skills, general knowledge and ability of the learner. You may need to provide some of this
- Many learners may need help organising work or tasks for a lesson, day or week and what to do if they need support with something
- Always make a structure for what needs to be done and make the structure concrete. Use the structure to address all issues raised; for example, behaviour, social skills independent living and mobility skills
- All materials used during a lesson should provide concrete remedies for continued work on a topic until the next session

It is during social aspects of the visually impaired learner's life where difficulties may arise. It may therefore be necessary to devise a quantifiable course of action available to her or him.

Structured time led by trusted support who understand the learner's needs, recognise skills and achievements can guide her or him through the rules and unwritten codes of every day like inside and outside formal education and training are invaluable to a learner's development

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will consider,

- **Caring for glasses and low vision aids**

Please let us know if you have any practical suggestions so we can share them with others in forthcoming issues of Bullet Point.

Underpinning Issues

Under this heading Bullet Point has looked at some of psychological and emotion impact for family associated with having a disabled child. An empowering way of addressing this is via the support of others who may often be experiencing the same issues. An independent parent group can do this. It could be face to face or over the internet via for example Zoom. A group can for example,

- Discuss pertinent issues
- Arrange activities for children and young people
- Invite guest speakers
- Advocate for better services

Setting up a Group

Setting up and maintaining a group is hard. Successful groups can consist of a few parents meeting in a member's home or a larger group meeting in a community centre.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives can be different too. Not all groups want to take on an adversarial role. Some may simply want to organise activities where families, children and young people can meet socially.

They can be about circulating information covering,

- Local or national services
- Fundraising for equipment
- Social events
- Talks to explore for example the impact of a disability on family life

As a pressure group however, where one voice is ignored a group is much harder to brush off.

A group can fundraise and/or gather volunteers. Volunteers can,

- Augment professional staff, not replace them
- Organising and run holiday play schemes to include out-lying communities

Concrete Information

To make the information offered concrete Bullet Point will discuss in further editions the setting up of a group which meets face to face. As mentioned above though a group could meet over the internet.

Next Time

Next time sub headings addressed will include

- **Building a Membership**
- **Conducting Meetings**
- **A Programme and Communication**

If you wish to run a campaign through Bullet Point contact us via the communication box top right of our front page at www.familiesandsen.com

News and Events

If there is an event coming up that you'd like to inform our readers about drop Bullet Point a line via the contact box top right of the web site's front page

Also, if you'd like to write about what took place at the event drop tell us about that too.

Letters

Following is a selection of letters received at Bullet Point.

Soundbeam

Can anyone help me please? We have a Soundbeam and I haven't found it as useful as I thought it would be. Can any of your readers help us? LM Birmingham.

Good Work

Keep up the good work. We really enjoy Bullet Point and have adopted several of the points made. AP Shrewsbury.

Winter Blooms and Beyond

Further to our conversation last week here a few lines about our window boxes. Last Autumn I planted up all my pots and hanging baskets with winter flowering pansies. Quite an expensive exercise but one that has been worthwhile. So far despite some severe frosts the basket and window boxes by my front door have provided a bright splash of colour for my child Ruth as we have gone in and out of the house.

Next year I am going to try growing my own from seed which will be much cheaper. Seeds should be available in Garden Centres from January onwards. A late spring sowing of winter flowering variety will hopefully come into flower in Autumn. RC Norwich.

Tell us about your experiences. We are not looking for perfect grammar or punctuation but instead your views. Should you decide to contribute please leave your email address in order where necessary to discuss your piece. You will be identified only by your first name or initials – which ever you prefer.

Also, feel free to say what you would like covered in forthcoming editions.

Next Time

The next edition of Bullet Point will hit the internet on, 22nd September

Don't forget, Many of these subjects have been expanded in the books available via my web site.

They contain much more about accessing learning and the development of valuable skills.

*Rgds
Clive.*

PS,

*For university or college have you considered
buying any of the books available from my web
site?*

An aspiring cook might like,

**THE WOLVERHAMPTON COOKBOOK
Cooking Skills and Recipes
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities**

Information is in large print and clearly laid-out. It is designed to enable everyone to roam through and then cook, although perhaps with a little help in the beginning.

It costs

£15

*And, someone thinking about employment might
value,*

**DISABILITY: NO BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT?
Finding, Securing and Maintaining Employment
Visual Impairment and
Other Disabilities**

Job hunting is time consuming and a stressful exercise. It is also one of the most important tasks we undertake.

This comprehensive guide offers everything you need to help create a winning job application.

Information is designed for those with a visual impairment and covers diverse areas such as presenting yourself in a dynamic and positive way, disclosing a disability and managing intrusive questions in the work place.

It costs

£30

And finally, to herald books due to hit the internet next year a nursery rhyme. They will be full of information for parents with a visually impaired preschooler.

Hey Diddle, Diddle

Hey diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jump over the moon;
The little dog laughed
To see such fun,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

If You Don't Do It Who Will?

www.familiesandsen.co.uk

To contact Bullet Point please use the contact form on www.familiesandsen.co.uk

