

# Bullet Point

From

Familiesandsen.com

Incorporating

## The Home Educator

### *Hello and Welcome*

How are you getting on if Covid-19 has encouraged you to embark on home tuition?

Don't forget: you are invited and encouraged to express your experiences and these will feature within Bullet Point's Letters section. Use the box top right of our web site's front page: [www.familiesandsen.com](http://www.familiesandsen.com)

You have in your possession an information chain. Bullet Point is an information chain of ideas linked together by a belief that experience and the sharing of ideas are important. The sharing of experiences and ideas can help engender feelings that others understand, care about and value. Become a link in the chain and tell us for example,

- What do you think about home tuition?
- Are you receiving enough specialist disability support?
- Have you ideas to share with others reading Bullet Point?

*Rgds*

*Clive*

# Education: The Great Equaliser!

## Contents

• Development During Pre-School Years	2
• Visual Impairment: An Eye Condition in Everyday Life	6
• Other Disabilities, Syndromes and Conditions	9
• More than One Disability	12
• Disability Living Allowance	16
• Do-It-Yourself Education Advocacy	20
• A Close-Up on Curriculum	23
• Independent Travel Techniques	27
• Independent Living Skills	31
• Recipes for Beginners and Experts	35
• Employment and Employability	38
• Something for Teaching Assistants (Home Tuition)	39
• Underpinning Issues	41
• News and Events	42
• Letters	42
• Next Time	43

## Development During Pre-School Years

### Developing Creativity, Growth and Development

You may recall in the last edition Bullet Point suggested,

- **Maximising the outside environment to develop your child's understanding**

Following on, here is an idea to highlight the,

- **Four seasons**

You will need to back this up with,

- Books
- Pictures

And,

- Activities, primarily of a practical nature

It is stressed therefore to give your child the opportunity to experience activities first hand.

Regarding the world outside offer your child the opportunity to,

- Play amongst fallen leaves
- Make a snow ball

And or,

- Experience rain

Each of these also allows you the opportunity to teach your child about dressing and undressing for the event.

## Indoor Simulation

Place in front of your child a tray which s/he can reach. In this tray place examples of the four seasons which you collected from outside with your child.

### Spring

In essence concentrate here on birth and a cycle's beginning. In this tray for example place spring greens, blooming flowers perhaps evoke the smell of an earthy fragrance after rain, damp earth and freshly mown grass. Perhaps present a newly born animal or bird.

### Summer

For some, perhaps many in the UK, summer can be represented by sand, a bucket and spade, sea shells or other things associated with the sea side; for example to simulate this, fill a tray with sand. Remove your child's socks and shoes and then get her or him to experience how it feels. Could you accompany this with a tape or CD of seaside sounds? Of course, it may be easier to simply catch a train to a beach and then explore the environment first hand.

During the trip you could collect items for a tray. Use it then to reinforce learning which highlight and recall experiences encountered during a trip.

### A Seaside Trip

Preparing for a trip will offer an opportunity to develop other skills; for example,

- Set aside a period when your child can spend as much time as needed to undress and dress ready for the trip
- Praise constantly

### Preparation

During preparation allow her or him a chance to use different fastenings; for example, zips, Velcro or push buttons through button holes. Each of these can be difficult.

Start therefore by giving her or him zips or Velcro attached to cloth in order to practice. Then, offer clothing with appropriately sized buttons and button holes to practice on.

Moving on, arrange clothing on a bed or chair where s/he can practice putting clothes on and taking them off. Place them in the order required.

An exercise like this may prove difficult. If you have other children to manage allowing your disabled child the time necessary may be unavailable. Support will often be required with the progress closely monitored.

## Autumn

Returning again to the trays, autumn can mean collecting berries and nuts, wild mushrooms and pine cones. Again, preparing for the event when dressing and undressing can be practiced and discussed.

Autumn is the season of falling leaves and strong winds and the sound of crunching leaves under foot. Walking through woods and uncovering the fallen leaf offers new smells and texture to explore.

## Winter

Collecting stuff for your tray may prove difficult. Beyond snow and ice both of which quickly melt indoors there isn't a lot different from late autumn materials. The texture and smell of frozen earth may last a little longer.

You can still of course practice dressing and undressing in and out of seasonably appropriate clothes. Consider exploring therefore why clothes are best suited to this time of year than for example those ideal for UK summer weather.

You could of course plant crops in autumn to grow over winter; for example, onions along with other root vegetables. These crops may need protecting during very cold weather. Could you include on your tray therefore a winter fleece or other means of protection?

As usual the University of Google may help here.

## Choosing a Nursery

During this and the next copy of Bullet Point we will consider choosing and then starting a nursery placement. This will include covering issues surrounding an Education Health and Care Plan.

A disabled child is a child first with the same needs as all children. The disability and special needs come second. Special needs are extra and not alternative to the needs of all children.

Parents of a disabled child often have special needs too.

Nurseries accustomed to considering the separate and simultaneous needs of parents and children provide a means of beginning to recognise and respond to special needs.

It may be necessary to consider three types of groups,

- A group may include a few children with a disability amongst a large majority of non disabled learners

- A special group which takes children with a wide range of needs alongside a few non disabled children
- A group which takes children plus an equal number of non disabled children

Inevitably there is likely to be an overlap between these groups. Above all though, every learner requires appropriate support.

Importantly also, it may be necessary to remember that visual impairment is a low incident disability and this may impact on the experience within a nursery which has supported disabled children more generally in the past.

## Considerations

Following are a few general considerations,

- A group should be well established. Children well settled with those delivering the group confident in delivering support. Small groups for example under 20, may find assimilating your child easier than a larger one. A large group may find it hard avoiding your child being over whelmed by numbers
- The proportion of children with special needs should probably not exceed 1 in 10.
- Regular extra support should be available with those providing it trained to meet individual need. The involvement by a qualified specialists for example, qualified teacher of the visually impaired and educational psychologist will be necessary too

Also,

- The level of specialist support should be specified and quantified
- Nursery group leaders should understand a non disabled child's development and be willing and know where to seek advice on special needs
- A pre-entry assessment should take place

And,

- Regular assessment of your child's progress is necessary
- A parent should accompany the child until s/he is really settled. It may be necessary therefore to consider the needs of a parent attending in relation to other children s/he may have along with other responsibilities within the family
- Continual communication between the nursery and home should take place. This will help over coming any difficulties which may arise whilst ensuring that developmental programmes can be continued at home
- Specialist equipment may be necessary. Nursery activities will need to be made accessible. This will almost inevitably require input from for example a qualified teacher of the visually impaired

## Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will consider,

- **How a Play Group Can Help**
- **Issues Concerning A Play Group Run For Those With A Visual Impairment**

Then, a little later we will cover,

- **Making Play Accessible To Those With Low Vision**

Books you will find useful from [www.familiesandsen.co.uk](http://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. And,

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

This book will be available soon from [www.familiesandsen.co.uk](http://www.familiesandsen.co.uk). It will cover in considerably more detail topics introduced under the heading,

# Visual Impairment: An Eye Condition in Everyday Life

## Cortical Visual Impairment: The Ventral Stream

Following on from the last edition of Bullet Point and to further help an understanding of Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) we will consider the second of two neurological factors associated with seeing; that is,

- **The impact of the ventral stream**

Last time we discussed,

- **The dorsal stream**

The brains 'ventral stream' helps us recognise,

- Faces
- Objects
- Places

Being unable to recognise faces can vary in severity; that is, sometimes no face is recognised whilst at others family members might be recognised but not friends.

Face recognition training does not seem effective but drawing attention to other identifiers might; for example,

- Voice
- Shoes
- Clothes commonly worn

Some children find it easier to recognise someone's face if the person is facing them but cannot do the same thing if the same person is side-ways on.

## Recognising Facial Expressions i.e. The Language of the Face

Being unable to see facial expressions or read facial expressions are therefore both possible in children with low vision. It might be worthwhile therefore to find out the distance a child can read facial expression by gradually increasing the distance and asking the child to read your expression.

Those having difficulties recognising the difference between a sad, angry or smiling face need a different method of communication. This might mean being taught the meaning of words like sad, happy and angry.

One way of doing this is to show the learner a sad face and then encourage her or him to recognise the intonation of someone who is sad.

Not being able to recognise the nuances of facial expressions can lead to misunderstandings. Consequently, everyone working with a learner will need to know s/he cannot understand facial expressions and as a result, may have to receive information in different ways.

## Difficulty when Looking at Faces

Some children find it difficult looking at the faces of other especially during conversation. We do not know the reasons why. Theories of this include,

- Difficulties seeing any language in facial expressions
- Difficulties handling a lot of information so that looking at a face, listening to what is being said and formulating the answer cannot be done all at once

## Naming Colours

A few children have difficulties naming colours but if given the task of matching colours they have no difficulty. These children can be supported by linking a colour with a noun; for example lemon, yellow and grass, green. Eventually it becomes possible to remove the link noun but the child retains the ability to name colours because they remember the link words.

## Shape and Object Recognition

Those who have great difficulty recognising objects to include shapes often have profound difficulties using vision to interpret what s/he is looking at. However, the individual may retain good dorsal stream function (the ability to judge the position of objects moving through space) and good mobility skills.

By using language carefully in order to describe what the individual is touching or interested in allows her or him to make better sense of the world. S/he may then be able to relate an object to a previous experience or context.

## Letter and Word Recognition

There are a number of learners who have difficulties recognising letters or words through damage to the brain – usually left side. They can often recognise words presented as a pictorial image for example Coke or Pepsi but have great difficulty naming individual letters and building letters into phonics. However, teaching words by the look and say method can prove effective. For some, longer words can prove easier to learn than short ones as the individual recognises the overall shape of the word rather than individual letters. For those who have good hand function, simultaneously reading the word and Braille can help lead to word recognition.

## Orientation

To move around we use visual recognition, visual search, a sense of direction and a memory of the number of turns we have to make. There are therefore a number of visual difficulties that can lead to not knowing where we are. However, a learner who is unable to follow a route which s/he has been shown a number of times may have a specific problem with orientation. Problems with orientation are most commonly due to damage to the ventral stream on the right and can affect learners who also have difficulties recognising faces.

Learners who have orientation difficulties need a programme designed to improve and maximise independence requiring different ways of managing a route. Some learners may be able to recognise certain landmarks with a route broken down into small stages whilst others will be able to use tactile landmarks. Importantly, the learner should be introduced to tactile clues in order to recognise doors or different areas by clues on the wall; for example, a fire extinguisher.

Helping a learner to develop memory skills can help too; for example, encouraging a her or him to look back along a route and list land marks and actions. Remember also a return journey is a different route from the outgoing trip and should be addressed as such.

For some children using rhyme or a song can help to remember landmarks; for others a game like hide and seek or a treasure hunt can help with memory. Ideally all learners should be taught to ask appropriately for support when it's necessary.

Finally, to help some with orientation difficulties a strictly regimented environment may help; for example, a well laid-out and consistently laid out classroom or bedroom.

## **Next Time**

Next time and over the forthcoming issues of Bullet Point we will consider the everyday functional implications of,

- **The Act of Seeing**
- **A Squint**

Followed by,

- **Nystagmus**
- **Aniridia**
- **Albinism**
- **Glaucoma**

Then,

- **Coloboma**

And,

- **Cataract**

If you would like another condition covered please drop Bullet Point a line via the contact box top right of our web site's front page: [www.familiesandsen.co.uk](http://www.familiesandsen.co.uk)

## ***Other Disabilities, Syndromes and Conditions***

### **Autism and Visual Impairment - Teachers and Parents**

Following on from last time we will consider now,

- **Autism and the implications for teachers and parents**

It is important to recognise that the social world is more complex and less predictable for an individual with autism and therefore more stressful. Do not assume that simple exposure to peers will result in the acquisition of social skills.

A child cannot be pushed to acquire social skills. Begin with something,

- Short
- Structured
- Teacher directed

And,

- Success orientated

## Language Difficulties

A learner may be non-verbal or with other language difficulties even though very vocal. S/he may,

- Have difficulty following instructions
- Have poor receptive language
- Be prone to pronoun reversal
- Have echolalia. However, having echolalia can be positive. It shows that the s/he is,
  - a. Discriminating among phonemes
  - b. Sequencing sounds
  - c. Using a working memory

A learner may,

- Use words expressively but doesn't really understand their meaning
- Have difficulties,
  - a. Discriminating language sounds
  - b. Sequencing phonemes and words

And therefore,

- Unable to break the linguistic code

## Strategies

Try the following,

- Ascertain whether the child or young person understands what s/he is saying; for example ask her or him, 'what does that mean?'
- Use controlled language; for example, short and concise phrases with time between statements to allow for processing
- If s/he has relatively good vision try providing some information visually; if not, provide information in a tactile format

## Communication Problems

Communication problems may present when the child or young person,

- Sticks to one topic
- Shows no interest in other people's topics
- Stands too close or too far away when talking
- Says something unrelated to the conversation
- May become angry when hearing certain words

## Other Problematic Behaviours

If the child or young person,

- Can't apply rules in context
- Has problems with impulse control
- Is unable to take the perspective of another person as well as shifting attention

Should the above be the case try using,

- Direct instruction in the actual setting
- Identify clear, concrete rules that the learner needs to follow in specific situations
- Use social stories. These can be helpful with providing the learner with a script to follow

## Narrow Focussed Interests

If a child or young person,

- Needs sameness or predictability
- Focuses on parts of objects during play; for example, spins everything, flips a handle repeatedly
- Displays pretend play which is not age appropriate
- Has restrictive interests; for example, a collection of Lego bricks, CD titles, dog names

## Implications

The above four bullet points suggest,

- Difficulty getting meaning from the environment due to cognitive processing deficits
- Repetitive events are easier to understand and make sense of rather than multifaceted input
- Repetitive behaviour may be soothing

Therefore, recognise that,

- Routines and self stimulatory behaviour are the things that the learner understands best and may serve as a comfort zone
- The learner's reliance on such behaviours will tend to increase at times of stress and anxiety; for example, transition, lack of clear expectations and change. Ask why the learner is behaving this way now?

And,

- Identify a time when the learner engages in self stimulatory behaviour, tighten up the structure, schedule and/or routine to decrease anxiety and also increase non verbal information

## Hyper Sensitive Behaviour

Hyper sensitive behaviour may present when a child or young person,

- Over reacts to certain noises; for example, central heating or fan
- Has a strong dislike or disinclination towards certain tactile experiences; for example, certain foods or textures of clothes
- Often finds warm temperatures aversive
- May not react to bumping her or his head or falling down
- Stops listening to instructions when asked to open a book

## Implications

As a result s/he may,

- Have poor regulation of the auditory system; for example, rain drops sound the same as a gun going off but at other times not a problem
- Panic when a sudden loud noise occurs. Then, heart and respiratory rate does not return to normal for several hours
- Only be able to process one sensory input at a time
- Process temperature, texture and multi sensory things differently

Therefore,

- Be alert to how the sensory environment may be impacting on the learner
- Try keeping the environment as low key as possible; for example, visually clear and use sound absorbent materials to avoid reverberation and sound travelling
- Balance lighting
- Be aware of multi-sensory input issues and therefore balance teaching accordingly

## Next Time

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

- **Downs Syndrome**
- **Cerebral Palsy**
- **Rubella**
- **Bardet-Biedl Syndrome**
- **Lebers Congenital Amaurosis**

Then,

- **Retinoblastoma**

And,

- **Septo Optic Dysplasia**

Next time Bullet Point will cover,

- **Interpreting a Disability's Characteristics**
- **Multiple Disability**

And,

- **Downs Syndrome**

## *More Than One Disability*

Last time we considered important questions to ask when,

- **Assessing your child, family and child's environment with a view to compiling a plan of development**

This time we will continue this theme and,

- **Use the assessed information to compile a plan's content**

Then, after this we will,

- **Discuss how to encourage learning**

### **Using What You Know**

Having recorded what you learned about your child compile with your family a plan. Things to consider include,

- Activities for your child
- When to deliver activities
- Where activities will be carried out
- Who will do the activities with your child

All those delivering the programme should be aware of (it might be necessary to compile an information sheet),

- Your child's age
- Major elements of history associated with your child's circumstance. Base information circulated on a need to know basis; that is, if there isn't a need to know do not pass the information on particularly if it has a confidential dimension
- Your child's disability(s) particularly in functional terms; for example, along with mentioning your child's eye condition explain how it might impact on daily life
- Significant feature associated with your child's environment; for example, s/he can't walk but lives in a block of flats where the lift is constantly out of order
- Key elements of your child and family's daily life; that is, describe your child's life,

- a. Who cares for her or him
- b. The environment where s/he spends most of the time

And,

- c. Note if your child's activities and environments are different from the family's
  - Family wishes in relation to your child
  - Strengths and abilities of your child; that is, describe how s/he,
    - a. Communicates
    - b. Delivers life skills to include, domestic, recreational, social and vocational abilities
  - How well for example does s/he use her,
    - a. Arms
    - b. Legs
    - c. Vision
    - d. Hearing
    - e. Other sensory abilities
    - f. Mobility
    - g. Hand functions
  - The things your child likes and dislikes

Now, having pulled all this information together and probably produced an information sheet for all those working with her or him consider what should be included in a plan.

Setting targets and their value is discussed in much more detail within,

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

**It is available from [www.familiesndsen.co.uk](http://www.familiesndsen.co.uk) and costs,**

**£20**

**What should be Included in Your Plan?**

To make a plan,

- Identify the steps of an activity and describe them
- Decide whether the activity, equipment necessary and situation will be adapted
- Decide upon the strategies to be used to help your child learn an activity's steps
- Decide how you will motivate your child when learning the activity

To break an activity into steps,

- Watch your child whilst doing an activity
- Draw or write down how your child does an activity
- Try the steps of an activity yourself
- Change your record if the steps are unclear or incomplete

It might help when deciding upon the best way forward to,

- Observe others with a similar area of need
- Speak to others working with someone with a similar area of need

You may also need to describe,

- The time and place to carry out an activity
- What is required to prepare for an activity
- How will you,
  - a. Break the activity into steps
  - b. Help your child learn an activity
  - c. End the activity to include for example cleaning up and/or putting materials away
- What needs to be done after the activity is finished

## Adapting the Activity

If your child has a difficulty learning to do something you may need to,

- Adapt the way s/he does the activity; for example, crawl to the family dining table
- Modify resources; for example, wrap high visibility tape around a spoon so s/he can see it and grasp the spoon more easily
- Make changes to the environment in which an activity is carried out; for example, place bath items in an accessible place and in the order in which they are used

However, make adaptations only when they are necessary for your child to learn the activity and don't change a successful adaptation.

To decide on an adaptation you could do the activity together and observe,

- The steps your child can do independently
- Where s/he needs help and the kind of help needed
- If s/he can find her or his own adaptation or individual way to manage a task

If necessary,

- Look for a modification that will enable your child to do an activity independently; for example, provide a cushion so your child can sit and eat independently

Having done this, place a description of the adaptation into your plan.

As you make your plan think about,

- How you can help your child solve problems during an activity
- How quickly s/he must learn to do the activity
- How accurate must s/he be when carrying out an activity

And,

- How can you make the activity,
  - a. Simpler
  - b. More interesting

Consider also,

- What materials and equipment are used in the activity
- What opportunities will your child have to learn the activity in different situations

## Activity Plan Sheet

In order to have a record and monitor development, adapt and modify the plan and, pass onto others, record the activity. Headings might be,

- Name
- Period
- Activity
- Where
- Purpose
- With Whom
- Steps
- Teaching Suggestions
- Adaptation ideas

## If Unable to Completely Learn the Activity

If your child cannot complete all of an activity's steps continue if it's important to her or his,

- Family
- Community

S/he can learn some steps independently whilst being supported during others. This will increase the number of activities s/he can enjoy; for example, someone who cannot lift her or his arms above head height will always need support to put on a T shirt. However, helping her or him learn some of the steps independently, such as pulling the shirt down over the chest will develop,

- Independence
- Satisfaction
- Self esteem

## Next Time

Next we will cover,

- **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 concentrate on,

- **Help with Therapy**
- **Movement and Coordination**
- **About Your Child's Condition**
- **What Happens Next**

## A Cautionary Note

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

## 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.

## Help with Therapy

Tick the **Yes** box if your child,

- Needs to be visually stimulated on a daily basis
- Requires speech therapy and especially if you deliver a programme devised by a therapist
- Is learning Braille requiring support at school and home
- Has a learning support teacher at school
- Is monitored by an Advisory Teacher for the Visually Impaired or other specialist disability teacher if your child is multi disabled and visually impaired
- Receives any other intervention from a therapist which involved exercises

## Help with Medical Equipment

Tick the **Yes** box if applicable.

This might include,

- Patching an eye
- The management of a prosthetic eye

## Blackouts and Seizures etc

This section is self-explanatory.

## The Child's Mental Health

In many cases perhaps most you should tick the **Yes** box.

Areas to consider include,

- Many visually impaired children panic in unfamiliar environments; for example if losing sight of a carer
- If your child experiences night blindness s/he may panic in dim lighting or when waking up at night
- Your child might get frustrated if unable to complete a task

Frustration can lead to physical and/or verbal aggression. Unlike fully sighted teenagers your child may not be able to storm out and slam doors. This can be a release of tension. Your teenager may then become upset and possibly aggressive.

S/he may become withdrawn if excluded from activities with her or his friends; for example when,

- Cycling
- Ball games
- Social gatherings

In the box focus on the help your child needs from you or a carer if s/he,

- Panics
- Gets upset
- Etc

## Movement and Co-ordination

Visually impaired children will often have poor hand to eye co-ordination. Your child may therefore need the assistance of a carer to play with a ball; for example, catch or kick it.

Also,

- Does your child have poor balance?
- What support does s/he need?

## Moving About Indoors

Tick the **Yes** box.

Even if your child copes in a familiar environment s/he may not in one that is unfamiliar; for example, when in someone else's home where the layout and furniture is different.

Other considerations include,

- Can s/he judge the depth of stairs?
- To avoid accidents do you have to ensure stairs are kept clutter free?
- If unsupported does s/he bump into door frames or collide with the edge of doors if left half open?

Answering these questions may seem like repetition as the issues were addressed in an earlier question. Nevertheless, repeat the information here. This point is relevant throughout.

### **When the Child Is In Bed at Night**

Again this seems a repeat of a previous question. Check what you wrote earlier and write it again.

### **Helping the Child when Going-Out Day or Evening**

The questions are asking what your child does (with support) or would do if supported.

Suggested examples of activities include,

- Swimming
- Going to the library
- Soft play groups
- Brownies, Guides, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Youth Clubs
- Birthday parties
- Playgrounds in parks
- Shopping
- Theatre or cinema
- Events at your church, mosque, synagogue

### **Anything Else?**

Address here,

- The name of your child's eye condition and explain briefly the effects it has on her or him
- If the eye condition is,
  - a. Variable; that is, it fluctuates depending on circumstances such as fatigue, stress, dim or bright light
  - b. Unstable and/or getting progressively worse
- If your child is registered mention it here even if you did so earlier

In a mainstream school or college your child may be poorly supported. Greater demands may exist for you in relation to making learning accessible; for example,

- Making resources accessible which aren't made available or not at the same time as fully sighted peers
- Not enough classroom teaching assistant support is made available consistently
- Accessing the learning environment generally may be difficult

You might like to express an opinion about your child's changing and future needs.

Add anything else here you believe might help your application. Try and avoid being too wordy. Use bullet points if necessary.

## About Your Child's Condition

This section is self-explanatory

## Declaration

This is important. Don't forget to sign and date your application in **Section 1 and Section 2**.

## Finally

- Attach information on your child's eye condition. Obtain this from the internet, a charity or specific eye condition group specialising in your child's eye condition
- Remember the decision maker may not have any knowledge about your child's eye condition particularly in functional terms or visual impairment in general
- Attach an up-to-date medical report on your child's vision
- Your child's Advisory Teacher for the Visually Impaired or optometrist at the eye clinic may be able to provide a report for the DLA application

Then,

- Photocopy the whole of Section 2 for your own records
- Make sure you return the form within the time limit

## What Happens Next?

Your application will be acknowledged. If you don't know your child's National Insurance Number this will be on the acknowledgement form.

The time between applying and receiving a decision varies from region to region. It could be as early as two weeks or as long as four months. You can monitor progress by phoning the Benefit Office quoting your child's National Insurance Number.

## What If You Disagree With The Decision?

You have a right to ask for a 'revision' within one month of the date you were sent a decision. You must address the decision and respond within the time limit.

A 'revision' means that another decision maker will look at your application.

Therefore, put your request for a review in writing and state straightforwardly that you disagree with the decision and would like a review. Keep a copy.

If you have only been partly successful then only challenge the part you are unhappy about; for example, the rate awarded for one of the components.

## Next Time

Next time and in the future Bullet Point will expand upon answers to questions in Section 2 in relation to specific age groups; next time between,

- **Twelve to sixteen years**

## Do-It-Yourself Education Advocacy

This time we will explore meeting techniques. It is worth repeating from last time:

- Many find these situations difficult

## Meeting Techniques

One often under estimated aspect of having a disabled child is a need to attend meetings. Getting your point across accurately and in an appropriate manor can be difficult especially if the child being discussed is your own. This applies also to those who attend a lot of meetings as part of a profession.

To be effective there are a few basic skills. You should ideally be articulate and able to,

- Spot an issue
- Sort out the relevant from the irrelevant
- Present an argument
- Explain points clearly

These skills can be helped or hindered dependent on a sixth skill: preparation. Preparation is essential. No matter how good a speaker you are thorough preparation is still necessary. Always avoid winging it.

## Reports

If reports are to be presented request copies two weeks before. Give the chair a copy of points you wish raised two weeks before too and request a copy of an agenda.

## In the Beginning

Your first step is to thoroughly familiarise yourself with the issues, research where necessary and sort out the relevant from the irrelevant. Emphasise your strong points and minimise your weak ones. Try to anticipate the argument of your opponent and prepare a response.

## Be Concise

Keep your argument concise but develop your points where necessary. Therefore,

- Be clear about what the meeting is about

- If necessary, write your questions and points down
- Stick to the points you wish raised and arrange another meeting to discuss others emanating from the discussion

Avoid if possible reading out notes, speak naturally and with authority. This will be easier if familiar with the information. Also,

- Before a meeting always try and speak with the child or young person's school (teacher) about the issues
- The school should always be open and responsive to parental concerns
- Avoid giving the impression that your concerns are based on bad teaching
- Try to stay calm and polite when dealing with the placement and/or local authority. You will need to work with them after the meeting and angry and aggressive behaviour may impact on the way your child or young person is treated in school or college
- Be clear and exact about difficulties experienced. If necessary for example, research the disability and seek advice about presenting information about it

Be clear about,

- The child or young person's needs
- What you want the placement and/or local authority to do in order to meet need

Present information clearly; for example, about why the school cannot or is not meeting the learner's needs. Remember, you are describing a difficulty with learning or a disability that hinders the child from making use of educational facilities.

At the beginning of a meeting everyone should introduce themselves. If this doesn't happen ask those present to do so. If you are not sure what a person's does, ask.

If you do not understand a point say so, and ask the individual making it to repeat or rephrase it; ask for further clarification if necessary. Try not to over react though when responding.

Ensure the meeting is recorded and that you get a copy of the minutes.

After the meeting go over points raised in your mind and/or discuss them with someone. If necessary, ask for issues to be clarified with the chair later. Ensure once again that everything is recorded.

## **Answering Questions**

One of the most difficult things to do in meetings is answer questions. This can be difficult because you may not know with certainty what questions will be asked. This will therefore involve you thinking on your feet although often questions can be predicted. Avoid panicking and if necessary take a few moments to think about your response; and, above all, listen carefully to what is being asked.

## **Ways to Influence Meetings**

- Submit your own report about what you want for the child or young person and provide as much evidence as possible to back up your views
- Try to get professionals to support your position regarding a learner's needs. Ideally get reports from those professionals who support your views and know the child or young person

- Ask the head teacher to request reports from those professionals who support your position and ask them to attend the meeting
- If professionals disagree with for example the head teacher's report get them to write to the local authority
- Get the learner's views about her or his education and support in writing (if possible) and get her or him invited to the meeting (if appropriate)
- Study closely reports submitted by professionals and write down questions to ask about the reports
- If you disagree with the minutes or report based on the meeting write your own report and submit it to the meeting's chair. Say on the first page that you want it attached to the report you disagree with

## Support at Meetings

Many people find it very difficult staying detached and focused during a meeting when the child or young person being discussed is their own. At times like these many find it best to be accompanied by a friend or advocate.

## Next Time

Next time we will consider another very important aspect of meeting techniques,

- **Being Assertive**

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](http://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***

### Adapting the Curriculum

If a curriculum is to be adapted it has to be done on an individual basis; for example, a learner who is blind is going to have different needs than one who has good residual vision. Consequently, if changes are necessary then a teacher should already know,

- Which senses the learner is using to gain information
- The extent to which any other disability affects ability and need.

A visually impaired learner may require extra support to develop educational potential. More specifically this could mean,

- Access to the curriculum on a par with sighted peers
- Age and ability appropriate expressive and receptive communication skills
- An appropriate sense of self and self esteem
- Age appropriate social skills
- Age appropriate autonomy (intellectual, physical, social)
- Genuine integration with in a peer group

Curriculum adaptations may be required involving,

- Deleting
- Modifying
- Substituting
- Adding to skills taught
- Materials used
- Time scale adopted
- Teaching skills used

## Materials

Following are a number of ways learning access can be adapted in order to help access.

## Colour Discrimination

Many curricula activities involve skills requiring colour discrimination tasks. These are often inappropriate and impossible to access for some blind learners. If the skill isn't to be dropped completely materials must be modified to incorporate different textures, weights or possibly smells so that discrimination can take place using these parameters rather than colour.

During the early stage of motor skills development the learner is often required to turn her or his head in response to visual stimuli. Sound, smell or possibly taste could be substituted here.

## Position in Space

Non-visually disabled learners may experience some problems in developing a sense of position in space, but these are likely to be less severe than the multi disabled visually impaired learner who cannot see the wall, floor and/or ceiling in a room. There will be particular problems if a physical disability precludes independent movement. Additional specialised equipment may be necessary to give the learner even a basic concept of finite space; for example, an artificially confined space or box may be necessary in which the learner is placed for a short time so s/he can feel the boundaries of an environment outside her or his own body.

For a severely visually impaired learner materials cannot only depend on sight for interest; for example, language programmes may use materials containing complex pictures. These need to be modified or dropped completely. A blind child is therefore unlikely to be able to describe the actions taking place in a complicated full colour picture or say if something was in front or behind something else.

## Prompting and Fading

Many schools who have adapted a fairly strict behavioural approach use techniques of prompting and fading. Usually this involves using gestural prompting as a half way stage between physical and verbal prompting. If the learner can't see the teacher's hand and arm movements then gestural prompting is clearly inappropriate.

## Learning through Imitation

A common and valuable teaching technique is to encourage a child or young person to learn through imitation. This may be missed if s/he has low vision. Without avoiding this strategy all together a teacher could physically prompt the learner during every desired action or skill or mix physical prompts with audible instructions. However, even if a learner has some functional sight s/he has limitations if you are trying to teach her or him to climb a rope or skip.

## Modified Language

Language is another very important teaching aid. Language though needs modifying for a blind child so it becomes more specific. The instruction 'go over there' accompanied by a point in the desired direction will have little meaning whereas 'go and stand next to the door' will give more clues for the learner to follow.

## Extra Skills

Blindness means that skills absorbed instantly by a fully sighted learner may need teaching to someone with low vision; for example: mobility and orientation skills are extremely important in order to access a learning environment independently. Often therefore these skills need teaching and adding to an already busy National Curriculum so a learner can find her or his way in the,

- Classroom
- Play ground
- Home environment
- Community more generally

Extra skills may require teaching in a sequence designed for the fully sighted; for example, during a teeth cleaning programme it may be necessary to teach a learner strategies for locating the tooth paste and brush before getting on with unscrewing the tooth paste cap, squeezing the tube, scrubbing the teeth and not swallow the tooth paste and water but instead spit it out.

## Order and Neatness

Order and neatness skills for a blind learner are important beyond what is generally expected; for example, if a blind learner is taught to take off her or his clothes s/he must also be told how to pile them neatly in order to find them again.

## Sound

Identifying objects by sound is a common strategy taught in many placements; for example, as a part of the early learning of receptive language. This, together with the location of sound sources and the recognition of individuals by their voices represent a vital skill for a visually impaired learner.

## Time Scale and Sequencing

Even though the eventual aim is to teach a learner who is blind the same skills as a fully sighted peer a sequencing of objective to reach this aim and the time spent at various stages of learning may need adapting.

Adequate understanding of language may have to be established before a blind learner can be expected to attempt certain motor skills. The lack of ability to imitate will preclude the copying of movements. These might therefore have to be described to the learner in developmentally complex language.

## More Assurance

Learners with very low vision may need far more assurance before attempting certain motor skills. Leaping off boxes becomes very difficult if you can't see the ground and don't know where you are going to land. There needs to be a lot of trust in the adult requesting the action – and trust needs time to develop.

## Finger Feeding and Relationships

Finger feeding may be considered to be either a non desirable or a very transitory stage in a self feeding programme for a sighted learner. However, a blind learner may need to finger feed for a much longer period in order to learn about the properties of food, the relationship between the dish it is in and the mouth.

## Language and Concept Development

Language is vital for a precursor to many skills which a blind learner will be expected to learn. Also the development of concepts will often need much care and planning so the concept comes across in some sort of order rather than isolated bits of information. Learning therefore will have to involve highly structured and planned pre-teaching work which will have to include the programme plus everything else which goes on in the learning environment; for example, the concept of chair to a blind learner may involve many concepts,

- The whole action of sitting down
- My own chair
- Anything else you can sit on
- Something that is uncomfortable and pokes her or him in the back
- Something which moves a learner from place to place

## Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will address,

- **The Learning Environment**

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

If you think it of use pass this information onto your child's teaching assistant or classroom teacher. Previous and future articles may be of similar value.

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](http://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**

You are encouraged to explore the orientation, mobility and independence needs of your child or young person to identify the specialist standards, skills and attitudes required by those teaching her or him.

This time Bullet Point will again offer a few points to help you assess the situation. Observations will enable you then to argue for a mobility and orientation programme. Assessment will cover learners during,

- **Pre-school and infant school years**
- **Junior school years**
- **Secondary school years**

Next will come a few teaching points. After that you will be offered recommendations each time to pass onto those teaching your child independent travel skills.

### **Assessment**

To consider your child's development we previously recommended during pre-school and infant school years to consider how well s/he,

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

This time consider also how well s/he,

- Participates in physical activities in and out of school?
- Runs without stumbling?

Comment here:

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

This time consider also how well your child,

- Walks on rough ground or surfaces generally?
- Detects changes in floor surfaces or levels or gradients generally?
- Copes with fluctuating conditions indoors?
- Copes with fluctuating light condition outdoors?

Comment here:

During secondary school years can your child or young person,

- Walk up down stairs/steps/kerbs independently, safely and with confidence?
- Walk down stairs/steps/kerbs independently, safely and with confidence?
- Cope with fluctuating lighting conditions indoors?
- Cope with fluctuating lighting condition outdoors?
- Find her or his way across a large open space
- Manage distress during M and O; that is, does s/he display distress when lost or disorientated

This time consider how well s/he,

- Moves independently and not show dependency on others in,
  - a. A crowded environment?
  - b. A known environment?
  - c. An unknown environment?
- Socialises with peers when moving around?
- Identifies adults and peers when moving about?

Comment here:

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

## Indoor and Outdoor Travel Techniques

Following on from last time here are a few more issues commonly encountered when teaching someone mobility and orientation techniques. However, 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](http://www.familiesandsen.co.uk)**

**for,**

**£30**

### **Block Routes**

Block routes are a good way of introducing your child or young person to independent travel techniques in a safe and realistic environment. A few points to consider include,

- Ensure that s/he has the necessary skills and is able to recognise and react to information received through the cane or via other sensory input
- Walk the route initially using sighted guide asking your child to comment on any impressions or any landmarks s/he can pick up
- It may be necessary to break the block into stages and then build it up into a complete route

Also,

- Encourage your child to describe the block to you in her or his own words to ensure s/he doesn't need further input
- You may wish to ask your child to draw a diagramme of the block identifying features and landmarks

### **Familiarisation of an Unknown Area**

Familiarisation may be necessary when for example your child or young person,

- Isn't completely familiar with her or his current environment
- Moves into a new area

Points to consider include,

- Always begin familiarisation from a fixed and known point

To highlight issues Bullet Point will base things on your child learning her or his home environment.

- Begin by exploring left and right of her or his home making mental notes of landmarks

- Encourage her or him to describe any distinguishing landmarks. Ensure that any features noted are permanent. If vision is being used ensure s/he can manage at night when it's dark. If not, discover non-visual alternatives

At this stage your child should be able to describe any distinguishing feature left and right of her or his home. Then, follow up by,

- Walking to the nearest corner, exploring the space and noting a couple of clues. These should enable her or him to remember this point

And,

- Ask your child to walk back finding her or his own way. Repeat this stage as often as required

Use this method noting a couple of landmarks at each corner and gradually build up a route around the entire block. S/he should be capable of walking the route in either direction.

Further points to consider include,

- Continue building knowledge of her or his immediate area block by block
- It may be helpful to produce a drawing of the route, with raised lines if necessary or record it on tape
- Highlighting appropriate landmarks are often key to learning a given area.

## 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 canes and cane techniques.

- What is 'echo location' and how can it be used in mobility? Answer: it is the ability to pick up clues via the reflection of self generated sounds rebounding off the environment
- What is it called when sound is blocked or muffled by a large object for example a bus shelter? Answer: sound shadow
- What is the difference between haptic and tactile discrimination? Answer: haptic is hand discrimination; tactile is feet or cane discrimination
- Name 4 types of cane? Answer: long can, canadian cane, symbol cane, guide cane
- Name 2 different cane tips? Answer: long tip, roller tip
- What is the 'golden rule' when carrying a cane whilst being guided? Answer: the cane should remain within your user's body space
- In what situations might a diagonal cane technique be useful? Answer: indoors over a short distance, confined areas, trailing around a car
- What are the limitations of a diagonal technique? Answer: it doesn't for warn about obstacles on one side
- What grip do you adopt when walking upstairs with a cane? Answer: pencil grip
- What should you do on reaching the top or bottom of stairs? Answer: sweep and move away

- What problems might someone experience using a cane to travel up or down stairs? Answer: the cane might trip other people; it might snag in the right angle between riser and going; hand rail on the wrong side
- What problems might someone experience using a cane to travel through a doorway? Answer: your child may be holding the cane on the wrong side in relation to the hinge; the door is too heavy to be opened with one free arm
- What principals of sighted guide also apply to using a cane when going through a door? Answer: the cane goes through first
- What safety precaution should always take place when moving through a doorway whilst using a cane? Answer: sweep and don't linger in the doorway

## Recommendations

This time Bullet Point will set out a list of policies a local authority might like to adopt. Could a group of you get together and recommend the following?

To begin, it is recommended that your local authority review and audit provision currently offered. It should then be shared with and agreed by everyone involved in mobility and independence training to include children, young people and parents.

The curriculum emerging should make explicit reference to for example,

- Definitions and descriptions of all aspects of the mobility and independence curriculum
- Referrals, assessments, environmental assessment, programme design, intervention, review and completion
- Policies in relation to pre and post school programmes, transition, programmes for multi disabled learners and issues surrounding cultural background
- What is expected of those delivering programmes

As mentioned last time consistency is needed in mobility and independence training. We recommend therefore that key concepts and skills are adopted which 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.familisandsen.co.uk](http://www.familisandsen.co.uk) and costs,**

**£30**

All of the above to include 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,

- **A few more assessment points**
- **Additional techniques before moving onto road crossings**
- **A quiz**
- **Under the heading of 'Recommendations' Bullet Point will consider 'Assessment and Programme Design'**

## Independent Living Skills

This time we will spend time looking at techniques to use in the kitchen and then for younger learners offer information on preparing the sleeping area and sweeping areas around the home.

By way of variety and interest Bullet Point is drawing upon experience whilst in India. General points raised however apply to families living in a 'developed' country although the sleeping area requires different considerations.

## Tips

First up, here are three teaching suggestions. More will follow in forthcoming issues. Many of them are likely to crop up within other issues of Bullet Point – they work and thereby warrant repeating. Therefore,

- Throughout, endeavour to teach your child consistent personal organisation techniques
- Store equipment in a tray or cupboard which is always accessible to your child
- Try and use the same area for teaching, learning and delivery generally and thereby avoid where possible different orientation and mobility issues
- Where possible use standard equipment and adapt it to meet individual need. Specialist equipment is often more expensive and may not do a better job. Standard equipment will not single your child out as being different and you are likely to have the equipment already at home. Therefore, adapt by using for example,
  - a. Electrician's tape
  - b. Hi-mark
  - c. Bump-ons

Both 'b' and 'c' are likely to be available from your local 'Society for the Blind.'

## Cutting, Chopping and Slicing

When introducing knives begin by spending time discussing safety; that is, their,

- Use
- Maintenance to include washing and sharpening
- Storage; for example, blade tips stored in the same direction

Importantly and perhaps ironically sharp knives are safer to use than blunt ones. They require less force when used and thereby less likely to slip.

You and your child may prefer to use scissors in place of a knife. Other alternatives include,

- An auto chop gadget
- A grater with a slicer attachment

And,

- A wheel pizza cutter. This can be used to cut for example cabbage and sliced meat

To avoid slipping during the cutting process hold food in the cutting position using a,

- Dycern mat
- Spike fixed to a chopping board

Or,

- Fork

## Pouring Hot Liquids

This is another potentially difficulty skill to teach. Almost inevitably though, it will arise at some time. Begin by explaining potential hazards. However, do remember there is often a fine balance between highlighting concern, whilst avoiding making your child so nervous s/he will not undertake the activity.

The need to poor hot liquids can sometimes be avoided by,

- Measuring the liquid cold and then heating using a microwave
- Using a liquid level indicator. However, be aware that coating the wire with fatty substances like milk may interfere with its sensitivity and, be sure to wash it thoroughly afterwards and before reusing

## Preparing a Sleeping Area

As mentioned above the following strategy was devised for use by a family living in India. Teaching techniques do apply in the UK. They are not only designed to improve independence but also develop gross motor skills along with concepts of space.

### Steps

1. When it is time for bed tell your child 'lets make up your bed'
2. Go to where the woven mats are stored and remove a mat
3. Find a sleeping platform or floor space and place the mat there
4. Locate a pillow and blanket and place them beside the mat
5. Locate a mosquito net and bring it to the mat
6. Unroll and spread the mat
7. Put and pillow and blanket on each end of the mat to keep it from rolling up again
8. Locate nails in the wall and attach the net to the wall

9. Drape the net over the mat
10. Get inside the net and tuck the ends of the net under the mat
11. Sit on the mat and unfold the blanket
12. Say goodnight to the family

### Teaching Suggestions

- Break down the task carefully and teach it step by step
- Use simple language and have your child help with all the steps until s/he masters each one
- Ensure that the mat is rolled and the blanket and mosquito net are folded in a way that makes it easy and consistent for your child to undo
- Always position materials in the same place and in the same way
- Talk to her or him about what s/he is doing and praise frequently
- Point out the things s/he is doing correctly and how you know that; for example, put the pillow and blanket in the correct place and feel to ensure the mat stayed flat
- Have her or him gather all of the materials and put them on the floor in the order s/he will need them

### Clearing Up and Putting Away Toys

This exercise is designed to help your child contribute actively to family life. It will also help develop orientation and mobility whilst encouraging her or him to complete a task.

Your child will therefore clean up rubbish outside in the yard and put away toys. Note also that completing a task is an important part of employment and thereby an important employability skill.

### Steps

1. When asked by you your child locates a broom and dust pan for sweeping the yard
2. S/he places the broom and dust pan where sweeping is to begin; for example, next to the door
3. S/he walks around the area to be swept and removes large pieces of rubbish, toys or other objects and places them by the door
4. S/he then begins sweeping in one direction moving in a consistent pattern until one part of the area is completed (you have taught her or him previously how to divide the area up into manageable sections)
5. All dirt and small bits of rubbish are swept into a pile beside the door
6. Repeat 5 until all sections of the yard are swept
7. Gather all rubbish into one pile and sweep into a dustpan and then empty into a bin
8. Place larger bits of rubbish into a disposal area
9. Return toys and other items to their place of storage
10. Check work and return broom and dustpan to their storage area

### Teaching Suggestions

- Use pathways or the house as a point of reference for setting a pattern for sweeping
- Teach her or him to do the task in a consistent pattern and ensure that spots are not missed

- As your child masters the task place objects in the area to be swept to help problem solving and learning

## Visual Limitations

- Teach your child to use the broom as a sources of information about the environment; for example,
  - a. Edge of the garden
  - b. Path
  - c. Building
  - d. Piles of rubbish
- Teach sweeping in a specific pattern or direction

## If S/he Uses a Wheel Chair

- If able to move the wheel chair teach her of him to sweep the area within reach. Then, move the chair forward
- Teach your child about enlisting assistance in order to pick up large objects and rubbish

## Difficulty Remembering

- Make a map or task sheet highlighting the sequence and then have your child mark parts that have been completed

## Next Time

Next time we will offer,

- **Teaching tips**
- **Ways to,**
  - a. **Use a Kettle**
  - b. **Drain Boiling Liquids**

Also,

- **Working in the Family Business**

And,

- **Lighting the Stove and Cooking Rice**

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

All of these issues and strategies are addressed in detail within,

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

It costs,

**£20**

Also via [www.familiesandsen.co.uk](http://www.familiesandsen.co.uk) check out,

**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**

**Recipes for Beginners and Experts**

It is estimated that there are six hundred million vegetarians living in India. This time Bullet Point invites you to join them.

Along with a few more tips you are offered multi cultural recipes covering,

- **Hummus**
- **Salsa**

And,

- **Stuffed sweet potatoes**

**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.

**Stuffed Sweet Potatoes**

**Ingredients**

4 large sweet potatoes  
3 mixed peppers  
2 medium red onions  
1 green chilli  
2 garlic cloves  
100g tin of sweet corn drained  
1 x 390 tin black beans  
200g salsa  
100g hummus  
1 ripe avocado  
1 lime  
8 black olives  
2 tsp paprika  
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper  
40ml Olive oil

## Method

- a) Pre-heat the oven 200c/Gas Mark 6
- b) Wipe and then prick the potatoes several times with a fork
- c) Put potatoes on a baking tray and bake for 45 minutes until tender

## Stuffing

- a) Peel and finely chop the onion
- b) Peel and mince the garlic
- c) Finely chop the peppers discarding any white pith and seeds
- d) Finely chop the chilli. Remove seeds as desired to reduce heat
  
- e) In a large frying pan or wok sauté the onions, peppers, garlic and chilli in olive oil for about 15 minutes until tender
- f) Sprinkle over the paprika and season with salt and pepper
- g) Cook for another 10 minutes
- h) Peel the avocado, remove the stones and scoop out the flesh
- i) In a bowl mash the flesh with a fork
- j) Add the juice from half of the lime and mix
- k) Add the hummus and mix
  
- l) Cut the cooked sweet potato length ways and scoop out some of the flesh
- m) Add the sweet potato flesh to the frying pan mixture and blend
- n) Fill the sweet potato skins with the frying pan mixture and top with the avocado and hummus mixture
- o) Top each half with an olive and drizzle with olive oil
- p) Serve with a lime wedge

## Hummus

### Ingredients

400g of cooked chickpeas (1 x tin)  
4 tablespoons of lemon juice  
4 gloves of garlic  
2 tablespoons of cumin seeds  
Sea salt  
200ml tahini (sesame seed paste)

8 tablespoons of water  
4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
2 teaspoons of paprika

## Method

- a) Peel the garlic and crush using a garlic press
- b) Grind the cumin seeds
- c) Combine chickpeas, tahini, garlic, 2 tablespoons of lemon juice, cumin and salt
- d) Blend ingredients to a creamy puree using the back of a spoon or a food processor
- e) Add and blend in the remaining lemon juice, cumin and salt to taste
- f) Turn out into a serving bowl and drizzle with olive oil
- g) Sprinkle over a few chick peas and paprika

## Salsa

### Ingredients

250g tomatoes finely chopped  
1 small onion finely chopped  
3 mild chillies finely chopped  
Salt to taste  
Lime juice to taste  
1 tbsp spoon of water

### Method

- a) Combine all the ingredients together in a bowl and serve immediately

### Next Time

Next time Bullet Point offers you a few more tips and a couple of recipes. You will be able to try,

- [Jamaican Chicken Curry](#)
- [Rice and Peas](#)

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 this web site 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*

Under this heading we are considering skills needed to find, sustain and succeed during employment. Last time we covered,

- **Managing Information**

Now you are invited to consider,

- **Being Responsible**

And,

- **Using Numbers**

As mentioned last time 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.

### **Being Responsible**

How well does the child or young person,

- Set goals and priorities balancing work and personal life
- Plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals
- Be accountable for her or his actions
- Be socially responsible and contribute to her or his community

### **Using Numbers**

When using numbers how well does s/he,

- Decide what needs to be measured or calculated
- Observe and record data using appropriate methods, tools and technology
- Make estimates and ensure calculations are correct

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,

- **Working Safely**
- **Working With Others**

Shortly we will offer 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](http://www.familiesandsen.co.uk) Independent Living Skills and Mobility and Orientation.

**It costs,**

**£30**

### *Something for Teaching Assistants* *(Home Tuition)*

A lot of parents and especially now with the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, are supporting their child's learning at home. Here are a few suggestions.

#### **Care of Glasses and Low Vision Aids**

Glasses are normally worn at all times – even during PE. Some learners may need reminding and encouraged to wear them.

Some children or young people, notably those who have had cataract operations, will have two pairs of glasses – one for near vision and reading and the other for distance work. It may be necessary to check that the learner changes them appropriately.

Glasses should be washed daily.

If glasses are taken off they should not be placed face down as the lenses are likely to be scratched.

Magnifiers are particularly liable to scratching. They should be kept in a suitable container; for example, felt bag. They should also be dusted regularly and washed frequently.

## Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will cover,

- **A Visual Impairment Impacting On Support**

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

If you think it of use pass this information onto your child's teaching assistant or classroom teacher. Previous and future articles may be of similar value.

## Underpinning Issues

Last time we began discussing the setting up of an independent parents support group along with some aims and objectives. This time we will consider,

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

### Building Membership

Building a membership is not easy. Generally speaking, the broader a group's interest the easier it is to attract numbers.

Ways to drum up support include,

- Contact specialist teachers and ask them to pass on your group's details
- Visit paediatric hospitals in your area and ask for a poster to be pinned up highlighting the group, where and when it is next meeting. Staff too, can pass on the group's details
- Community based professionals like social workers or health visitors can be asked to pass on information
- A local newspaper can publish a letter about your group and may even send a reporter to interview you
- Your local radio station might give you air time or at least pass on your details under the heading of 'Community Announcements'
- Pin posters up in for example specialist (eye) clinics, your local child development centers or local charities involved with children and young people

## Meetings

Early on, meetings can take place at home but as the group grows a bigger venue may be needed; for example, a church hall, community, health or day centre. Keep in mind though some members might find certain settings housing for example health or education off-putting.

In the beginning, the cost of hiring a venue might be an issue.

Choose venues near public transport and with,

- Parking
- Access for disabled people
- Refreshment facilities

Since the onset of COVID-19 virtual meetings have become popular. Although many don't like them they are nevertheless a substitute for our current situation.

Arrange meetings to take place on a regular basis. Weekends and evenings are often best with plenty of notice in order to arrange child care. If children attend then someone may be needed to manage them whilst you discuss business.

A meeting designed for parents can represent an opportunity for children with a disability to meet too. However, arranging and supervising this can significantly complicate things.

## Chairperson or Facilitator

Choosing a Chairperson will be one of your first jobs. Importantly, control should always remain in the hands of parents.

## Suggestion

Avoid your local authority becoming too influential. Whilst the close involvement of local authority professionals and facilities may seem beneficial it can threaten independence. Do try co-opting professionals though in an advisory capacity.

## A Programme and Communication

Plan a programme carefully and start with a 'getting to know you' session. During this session encourage everyone to share a little about themselves and their children.

Give notice about what you plan covering during a meeting and circulate an agenda. Minutes should be circulated afterwards too, with everyone encouraged to comment further if necessary.

Guest speakers from education, health or social services are often popular. This also raises the group's profile within these teams.

Later, you may also have more stories of interest for your local media and this will help spread the word.

## Next Time

Moving on, we will cover next time,

- Fundraising
- Maintaining momentum
- The Next Step
- Campaigning

And,

- Falling Attendance

## 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 tell us about that too.

## Letters

### An Enjoyable and Interesting Read

I would like to take the opportunity to say how much I enjoy Bullet Point. It is always packed full of interesting items and no matter how rushed I am I always find time for a quick scan on the day it arrives. WS Wolverhampton.

### Growing with RC

Following on from the last issue of Bullet Point one of our readers RC has written again offering a few more gardening ideas. She writes,

Last year I had a pot of scented stocks next to the seat where we sit in the garden. This year I'm going to be more adventurous by trying to fill a large pot with plants that will give perfume from spring through to late summer. I'm planned having richly scented, rose pink Daphne Cneoruem in late spring to be followed by the perfume on one of the many varieties of Alpine Pink in early summer. The bulb Liliun Regale will not only look beautiful but will have a lovely fruity smell in high summer and the annual Nicotiana Alata should carry the perfumes through to the beginning of autumn.

If my pots don't live up to expectations I know that one of my favourite plants Hesperis Matronalis (Sweet Rocket) will. During the spring/early summer, its white or lilac flower becomes almost luminous and fills the air with a lovely perfume making a walk with my daughter delightful. RC Norwich.

### Warning

A note of warning from RC: Daphne Cneoruem has dark shiny berries following flowering which are highly poisonous.

## Tell Bullet Point

Tell Bullet Point 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 for us 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 March 20<sup>th</sup>.*

*Don't forget,*

*Many of the subjects covered have been expanded in books available via my web site. They contain much more about accessing learning and the development of valuable skills.*

*Rgds*

*Clive.*

*PS,*

*For Xmas 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. Each book will be packed full of information for parents with a visually impaired pre-schooler.

## Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall.  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.  
All the King's horses  
And all the King's men  
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Remember,

If You Don't Do It Who Will?

[www.familiesandsen.co.uk](http://www.familiesandsen.co.uk)

To contact Bullet Point please use the contact  
form on [www.familiesandsen.co.uk](http://www.familiesandsen.co.uk)



