

Bullet Point

From

Familiesandsen.com

Incorporating

The Home Educator

Hello and Welcome

Bullet Point celebrates this time the journey we are all taking in our understanding of low vision and its impacts upon children, young people and their families. Bullet Point exists for everyone.

Bullet Point is independent with a remit to inform in an accessible and unbiased way. With your help it can further become a user friendly forum for exchanging ideas. Please send Bullet Point via the communication box top right of the web site's front page your thoughts and help make the next edition full to bursting.

If you would like a back copy of the magazine use the same communication box.

Join us and help create an environment for all those with low vision.

Rgds

Clive

Education: The Great Equaliser!

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Development During Pre-School Years

Important Aspects Relating to Play and Learning

Play equals learning!

Often parents just give their children toys and then leave them get on with it. Your visually impaired child however will often need more support. A child with low vision may not be able to depend on a toy to attract and hold her or his attention. S/he may not know how to use it.

Toys and some of the ways they can be used may need describing. Then, afterwards, your child is better placed to discover ways to enjoy them.

An Expensive Plastic Toy v Jam Jar with Lid!

Often the appeal of a toy occurs not in looking at it but instead what your child can do with it. Many children with low vision prefer toys they can use actively. Toys of this kind can be found around the home; that is, something that has an interesting,

- Feel
- Taste
- Smell

For example,

- A stack different sized cans or beakers; that is, stacking one on top of the other
- Jars and bottles with lids that can be used for,
 - a. Matching
 - b. Screwing and unscrewing
 - c. Filling and pouring

And,

- Nuts and bolts that can be screwed and unscrewed

Starting Out

For those just starting out try,

- Different types of rattles. Plenty of different ones are available to buy. However, make your own using,
 - a. A sock with bells sewn inside
 - b. Containers with dry macaroni or beans inside

Importantly, ensure the rattle is easy for your child to hold.

Often, furry or toys designed to be cuddled do not have the same appeal to someone with low vision as someone fully sighted. Try sewing a bell to a cuddly toy in order to make it more appealing.

Bath Time

Make bath time even more interesting by attaching stick toys to the bath's side. Toys for pouring and floating will stimulate interest and fun too.

Tuneful Toys

Try for short periods of time,

- Wind chimes
- A variety of bells
- Music box

However, if used constantly their sound becomes a noise, ceasing to be stimulating and may block or mask information.

Mobiles

Make your own mobiles using coat hangers, nylon thread and a variety of visually stimulating and sound making objects. Hang it low enough over the crib so your child can hit it with random movements.

Variation on the mobile theme could be to tie cord across the crib or baby carrier. Attach to the cord(s),

- Bracelets
- Bells
- Rattles
- Spoons

Homemade balls and a box with your child sat inside can be a stimulating, safe whilst sitting in a controlled environment.

Remember also that most children have some sight so visually stimulating objects can be used. If using light to increase the visual stimulation remember it can get hot with its beam disabling vision too.

Moving On

As your child gets older interests will change. Toys as an education resource though still apply. Your child can now learn about concepts such as,

- Size
- Shapes
- Numbers

Examples here include toys which can be,

- Stacked
- Nested together

And,

- Shape puzzles with large pieces

Toys and Walking

Toys to push and pull are a lot of fun; for example,

- Little shopping trolleys
- Wagons with high handles
- Doll carriages

They can all help a child walk because s/he can put her or his weight on it whilst pushing it along.

Sound Toys

Friction cars often make an interesting sound whilst also encouraging your child to listen and follow its noise. S/he is therefore being encouraged to follow sound cues.

Musical instrument especially homemade ones are often loved by children although not necessarily by parents. Tin cans make great drums with wooden spoons excellent drum sticks too.

Homemade tambourines can add variety along with commercially available whistles – assuming you can't make your own. Try the university of Google for ideas.

0 Jigsaw Puzzles

Before moving onto jigsaw puzzles interlocking blocks may be easier for your child to manipulate.

Peg boards and stringing beads or buttons can help further develop your child's manipulative skills because they encourage her or him to use fingers rather than hands.

Dolls

Your child - boy or girl – will often find dolls enjoyable to play with. They offer an opportunity to learn about body parts whilst developing fine motor skills when dressing and undressing the doll.

A What's in It Box

Inside an accessible box put a variety of objects. Then, let your child take one out name and describe it. As usual, verbal and perhaps physical encouragement may be needed in the beginning along with plenty of praise.

Toy Safety

Avoid toys whether made yourself or bought that have sharp edges or points. Objects of all kinds to include toys will often end up in your child's mouth. A lot of information can be obtained that way. Therefore, toys should not have small removable parts which can be swallowed.

Ensure that a toy's colouring to include paint is not toxic.

When outdoors alert your child to apparatus which may be in motion; for example,

- Swings
- Roundabout

Nursery Rhymes

Your child will probably love the classic nursery rhymes. Try and act out the lines; for example,

- Whilst reciting 'Jack jumped over the candlestick' hold your child's hand and jump

A familiar nursery rhyme will often encourage a child to speak. If s/he has stopped suddenly before the last word the rhyme encourages her or him to continue; for example,

- Jack and Jill went up the hill to ...

Or,

- Papa bear said, 'Who has been eating my ...?'

You may wonder sometimes whether the story has value given its visual dimension. However, relating the story to your child and actually spending time with her or him is definitely of value.

Also, some children will sing when they are reluctant to talk.

The tune to 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush' can be used with many words; for example,

- 'This is the way we brush our teeth, wash our hands and go to bed.'

Any opportunity provided to help your child speak will help her or him communicate and interact.

Rhythm and Action Play

As your child grows s/he will often continue to enjoy songs and nursery rhymes. Ones that many have found enjoyable include,

- Pat-a-cake
- This little piggy
- One, two buckle my shoe

And,

- Row, row, row your boat

All of the above lend themselves well to actions accompanying words.

Developing a sense of rhythm is important. Try taking your child in your arms and dance around to music. Moving together will help her or him develop a sense of body movement.

Next Time

In the next issue we will dive into,

- **The Importance of Playmates**
- **Sleep**
- **Unwanted Mannerisms**

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. 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. 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

This time Bullet Point will offer information about Nystagmus and Aniridia and supporting the learning of those with these eye conditions.

Nystagmus

Nystagmus is a rhythmic involuntary movement of usually both eyes. It can occur on its own, but is more likely to be present with other visual impairments; for example,

- Albinism
- Aniridia

- Congenital Cataract

Children with Nystagmus have considerable problems, which may increase with stress, especially when visually fixating as there is no mechanism for holding their eyes still. Some learners may be helped however having learned to identify their null point. The null point represents an eye position or direction of gaze which the child or young person holds to significantly reduce or stop the eyes moving.

Educational Implications of Nystagmus

If a child or young person has Nystagmus s/he may benefit from,

- Line markers for reading
- Reading and writing materials with good quality bold print, contrast and with minimal visual distractions

It is important to remember,

- Close visual tasks for extended periods of time can lead to visual fatigue
- Many learners turn, tilt or nod their head to obtain the best focus. This should not be criticised or corrected

Aniridia

Aniridia is a congenital and usually inherited condition in which the iris has partially or completely failed to develop. What appears to be a black iris is in fact an enlarged pupil. Aniridia affects both eyes and is usually associated with other visual conditions such as,

- Nystagmus
- Photophobia
- Displaced lens

And occasionally,

- Cataracts

Glaucoma is often present and learners may experience discomfort and pain in the eye as a result.

Educational Implications of Aniridia

Problems when accessing learning may include,

- Photophobia, which can be a major problem
- The disabling effect of bright sun light. Learners should be encouraged to wear tinted spectacles (if prescribed) with proper absorptive filter lenses plus an eyeshade or baseball cap when outside in sunlight
- Natural lighting in classrooms will often need careful control; for example, blinds or net curtains will be needed to cut out direct sunlight. Addressing this may have financial implications for a school or college
- Any form of glare for example light coming in through windows and reflected off glossy surfaces will be uncomfortable. Learners may need to work in an area where there are lower levels of illumination

- A book stand or raised desk may be useful as the learner may prefer a close working position

Other implications associated with Aniridia may include,

- Visual fatigue, headaches or general discomfort may occur in the eyes following periods of intense close work
- A good contrast is needed between print and the paper
- Learners will benefit from the use of prescribed low vision aids
- If Nystagmus is present recommendations regarding this condition should apply (see above)

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will address the functional implications of,

- **Albinism**

And,

- **Glaucoma**

Other Disabilities, Syndromes and Conditions

Physical Disabilities

Some children or young people with physical disabilities will be easily identifiable whilst others are not; for example, those with a condition which affects stamina may not be readily identified with a physical disability but their ability to participate fully in life may be significantly affected.

Medication

Some physical disabilities are connected to medical conditions requiring regular medication which needs to be taken during the school or college day.

Missed Learning

Some physical conditions mean that a child or young person spends a lot of time out of school and this will inevitably impact on learning. Whilst home tuition can help, it is not the same or as effective as attending school.

Highlighting Need

If the child or young person has a physical disability or medical condition, there are a number of things which may require passing on to school or college and particularly to a child or young person's class teachers. It should not be assumed that necessary information will automatically reach those who need to know. Information to pass on might include,

- Is the child or young person on medication? If so, do the drugs affect a capacity to learn?

- Is the child or young person likely to miss a lot of school? If so, does the school need to set work to be carried out at home?
- How much is the child or young person's physical disability or medical condition likely to limit participation in school or college life?
- What can the child or young person do independently and when might s/he need support?

The skills and knowledge parents have about the child or young person will be extremely useful to teachers who don't know the learner so well.

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy results from injury to the brain before or after birth. It is permanent but not progressive. It affects the child or young person's ability to control movements. It can effect,

- Vision
- Hearing
- Mobility
- Speech and communication

Also,

- Manipulation
- Cognition
- Perception
- Eating and drinking

Epilepsy is sometimes present too.

How well a child or young person succeeds in education or training will depend on the condition's severity and whether other learning difficulties are present.

A child or young person may have to attend regular therapy; for example, physiotherapy or mobility training which will inevitably need building into an already busy timetable.

Next Time

Next time we will look at,

- **Marphan's Syndrome**

And,

- **Rubella (German Measles)**

More Than One Disability

In this chapter we are considering those children and young people who have a visual impairment with one or more additional disability. More specifically our aim is to help you deliver activities and encourage your child's development at home and in the community.

Last time we ended by discussing ways to make learning easier. We will now begin offering suggestions to help you provide instruction and then move onto sequencing an activity.

Why Do The Whole Activity?

You should do the whole activity with your child so s/he,

- Becomes aware about what the activity is for; for example, help her or him turn down the heat when boiling an egg and control the cooking process
- Learns to combine each step to complete an activity
- Learns to do the activity as independently as possible; for example, if your child doesn't gather together the materials and prepare the water before washing hands and face s/he may not understand or learn the whole activity

Sequencing

While it is important to learn each step of an activity your child may,

- Learn easy steps first; for example, pull shorts up whilst being helped to put a foot into each leg
- First learn the step that helps understanding of an activity; for example, you can help your child scoop food whilst s/he independently lifts the spoon to her or his mouth. Once s/he masters this step you can teach the scoop

As your child begins learning new steps allow her or him time to do each one before helping. S/he may develop an individual way of doing things without support if given time.

Allow Independence to Develop

There are often many ways to carry out an activity. Therefore, if your child has enough problem solving ability help her or him learn in ways that suit. If this creates a problem then support by suggesting how a different strategy may help.

If there is only one way of effectively doing an activity you may need to jump in earlier. This may apply in particular if,

- Trying different ways is unsafe
- S/he has difficulty learning something new or different
- S/he cannot tolerate frustration

When Should You Change A Plan?

Change a plan when,

- Your child is not learning the steps of the activity
 - The adaptation is not helping your child do the activity
 - Your child is becoming frustrated and you don't know how to help
 - Your family is unable to do the activity,
- a. At a regular time or in the natural place
 - b. As planned

- Family members want her or him to learn something different or do it in a different way

When Is Your Plan Successful?

Because children with multiple disabilities often learn slowly you may need to do an activity for a long time. Your plan therefore is successful when your child learns to do,

- The activity as independently as possible
- Many steps independently but will always need assistance for part of the activity

Even if unable to complete an activity continue rewarding to maintain motivation.

What Helps Your Child Continue The Activity?

Your child should be able to continue an activity as independently as possible if the activity is,

- Part of her or his daily life
- Connected to other activities as part of a routine; for example, if s/he learns to wash and dress as part of a morning routine each activity will serve as a reminder to do the others

And,

- If continuing to do special activities together with your child

After your child has learned an activity continue watching to ensure s/he is still doing it well enough to be effective and safe.

What Helps Your Child Begin An Activity Independently?

Once your child has learned the activity you can help her or him remember the activity by,

- Identifying natural events that tell us it is time to start the activity. Therefore, choose events common to the situation; for example, an event could be,
 - a. At a particular time of day
 - b. When another person does an activity
 - c. At the end of an activity; for example, after spending time digging the garden you wash your hands
- Helping your child notice natural events as you begin the activity
- Choosing a special cue to use with an activity and only that activity

What Helps Your Child Remember How To Do An Activity?

Importantly, to help your child remember to do an activity,

- Always do the activity with your child in the appropriate place; for example, only help her or him dress and undress where other family members dress and undress

- Make going to the appropriate place part of doing the activity; for example, include travelling to the toileting area part of the steps of learning to use the toilet independently
- Help your child notice things related to the activity that are part of the place

If the natural event is not sufficient to help your child know where to do the activity, provide a special direction or event that is related to the activity and place; for example, hang a toothbrush on the wall outside the area where your family brushes her or his teeth.

If your child begins an activity in the wrong place take her or him to the appropriate place and continue the activity; for example, if your child begins undressing in the family eating area take her or him to the undressing area

What Helps Your Child Do The Activity If The Situation Changes?

Undertaking an activity with your child in the place it occurs, at the time it usually occurs, helps her or him learn. If the place, people or materials change s/he may not be able to do all the steps. You can help your child continue the activity if,

- The new person doing the activity with your child uses the same words and gestures as the usual person supporting
- Everyone involved helps your child notice similarities between the old and new places or old and new materials
- You plan helping your child learn the activity in different situations or with different people or materials only after s/he has learned the activity in one way

What Are Your Next Steps?

Because learning is a lifelong process your child must continue in the way described.

As everyone comes to know your child and s/he successfully learns some activities, you will need to,

- Update your picture of her or his abilities and role in the family and community
- Use new information to select the next activity(s)

Success in learning some activities is a starting point for learning new activities which will increase her or his participation in,

- The routines of daily life in the family and community
- All aspects of family life, such as play and family events

Continue offering your child opportunities to learn more of the skills required to participate in more community and family activities and eventually in all aspects of adult life.

Next Time

Next time we will,

- **Look at actual real life scenarios**
- **Consider ways to help your child develop**
- **Use this information and show how you might compile an information sheet for your child's personal circumstance**

Disability Living Allowance

Following on from last time we will continue covering points which may be necessary when filling out a DLA form for children or young people 12-16 visually impaired.

This time we will consider,

- **Information about your child or young person's development**

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 forthcoming 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.

Information about Your Child or Young Person's Development

Has your child or young person's acquisition of physical and sensory skills been delayed? Set down here ways you may compensate for this; for example,

- A huge amount of information comes via sight. Your child or young person's low vision may mean a lot of extra work is needed to present accessible information. The responsibility may be yours
- Your child or young person may also require extra skills to compensate for low vision. Once again this might mean more input by you; for example, it may be necessary to present the world audibly or via other senses. This again requires your input
- Your child or young person may require verbal encouragement and/or activities adapted by you into a tactile format. Again this requires more than might be necessary for someone fully sighted
- Sometimes children or young people visually impaired have problems with hearing and speech. You may therefore have to provide tactile and auditory stimulation to compensate

Also,

- Does your child or young person require and receive mobility training?
- Does s/he require the extra support provided by a teaching assistant or specialist low vision teacher at school?

Has the development of learning skills been delayed; that is,

- Many experiences which fully sighted children and young people receive will need delivering in a hands on way to a learner with low vision. Do you encourage your child or young person to explore their world?
- Learners with low vision often miss non-verbal communication; for example, if someone points, nods or shakes a head or, waves good bye. Consequently, does your child or young person need your support to explain and understand the non-verbal responses of others?
- Is your child or young person unable to follow instructions given non-verbally? Does s/he require the help of someone to alert her or him to a required response?
- Is it necessary for you to encourage your child or young person to explore the world by bringing items to her or him and then enable exploration of her or his world
- A visual impairment restricts a child or young person's understanding of the world. Does s/he need the world described by you or a carer to raise awareness; for example, during a firework display or television programme?
- When shopping do you have to describe and suggest items of clothing in relation to colour and style? This might also apply to fashion more generally to include an age appropriate hair style or makeup?
- Do you have to explain concepts such as the weather, clouds and/or stars in the sky?
- Do you have to continually encourage and stimulate so s/he reaches her or his potential; for example, by reading, talking about and/or exploring the environment?

Has your child or young person's development of social skills been delayed; that is,

- From an early age children begin learning basic daily living skills to include independent travel techniques. Do you spend a lot of time teaching these skills?
- Is your child or young person at ease with strangers or is s/he shy and insecure?
- Is it necessary to constantly help your child or young person to develop and maintain relationships with peers or people in general?
- Is it necessary to continually explain and develop her or his understanding of the surrounding world?
- Does your child or young person spend the majority of time alone and not interacting with peers?
- Do you help your child or young person develop independent living skills at all times in order to prepare for the future?

Does someone need to help your child or young person develop through play?

- Is it necessary for you to provide a lot of support to stimulate your child or young person's use of sight, hearing and touch in order to raise awareness?
- Does s/he need help with hobbies and activities?
- Does s/he require the encouragement of a carer to complete tasks?
- Do you have to assist your child or young person find household items if s/he drops or misplaces something and is unable to see it?
- At home have you been given a programme of therapy/activities for your child or young person's development? Do you carry out activities allocated by a specialist; for example, a physiotherapist or teacher in low vision?
- Do you have to regularly explain and/or describe using familiar language items and then allow your child or young person to touch and explore them in order to develop links between language, item and/or activity so s/he understands their relevance to her or him?

- Do you have to continually use language to explain and explore the environment and ensure s/he is stimulated?
- Do you have to constantly ensure the environment is safe for her or him to explore?

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will cover,

- **Waking, Getting Up and Going to Bed**
- **Washing and Bathing**
- **Getting Dressed and Undressed**

Do-It-Yourself Education Advocacy

Children and Young People Without an Education Health and Care Plan

You may be concerned about your child or young person's progress at,

- School
- College
- In the wider community

You may believe s/he requires specific and quantifiable support set out in an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). How do you request an EHCP assessment?

There is no formal structure or distinct way of triggering an Education Health and Care Plan needs assessment within the 2015 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice's 'graduated approach' in response to meeting need.

A 'graduated approach' involves potentially an eternal process of,

- Assess
- Plan
- Do
- Review

Here therefore are a few general questions to ask when starting to compile evidence when considering a request for an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment.

- Does the pre-school/school/college think the child or young person is having any difficulties?
- Has the learner been set any targets to address any areas of need?
- Is s/he at the same level as most other learners of the same age?
- What do the results of the learner's assessments mean?
- Is the child or young person already getting extra and/or enough help?
- If the individual is getting any extra help describe precisely when and where this extra help takes place
- What does the extra help involve?

Collecting Evidence

Areas worthy of note when collecting evidence include,

- Class size: how many learners are in the class?
- How many in the class,
 - a. Get extra help?
 - b. Are working to a series of targets?
 - c. Have an Education, Health and Care Plan?

- How many teaching assistants support the class?
- Is there enough teaching support in the class available to the learner?
- Does the learner always get information s/he can access?
- Does s/he get accessible information at the same time as nondisabled peers
- How often and when does a specialist teacher visit
- What does the specialist teacher do when s/he visits; for example, works 1-1 with the learner, adapts resources and/or speaks to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator
- What do other people think about the learner's situation; for example, Educational Psychologist, Ophthalmologist, Paediatrician, GP? Keep in mind though that the opinion of educationalists will carry more weight than medics in the learning environment.

Information collected should be designed to show the learner not progressing or developing adequately. This should ideally be backed up by professionals who know your child or young person.

Addressing Concerns

Keep examples of school or college work the learner can't access; for example,

- Home-work
- Class work

Ask her or him if there are times when 1-1 support was needed but not available; for example, learning resources not,

- Modified and adapted
- Delivered at the same time as your child or young person's peers

Ask a specialist in disability, for example low vision, to interpret findings in terms of function; that is, based on the presented information ask the specialist to interpret what the learner actually sees and, ask her or him to comment on individual need.

Write down your queries in relation to these points and then speak to the learner's

- Teacher
- Placement Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

Or,

- Head teacher

Ideally the Principal of the pre-school/school/college will support your concerns. However, this is not essential.

Next Time

Next time we will consider,

- **Compiling your case if a local authority refusing to carry out an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment**

How to address this is set out more 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

Specialist Educational Support for Low Vision Learners

What can a specialist support teacher, sometimes called a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired (QTVI) offer? Following is a list in a variety of settings.

Preschool Children

A QTVI can,

- Monitor and promote the development of functional vision
- Provide on-going advice to parents
- Advise on what toys, equipment and strategies to stimulate development
- Contribute to a Education Health and Care Plan

Early Years

S/he can,

- Help find a suitable Early Years setting
- Advise and support Early Years staff on providing
 - a. A suitable environment
 - b. Appropriate activities
 - c. A stimulating environment

- Advise on safety for the visually impaired child when attending an Early Years setting

Primary School Children

Here a QTVI can,

- Provide training for all those interacting with a learner
- Advise on safety
- Carry out assessments of functional vision, explain results and the implications to everyone working with the child
- Advise on integrating the child into the setting
- Advise on meeting the educational needs of a visually impaired child in the setting to include during extra curricula activities
- Provide on-going support and advice to class teachers and learning support assistants
- Advise on the learning environment regarding meeting the child's needs in relation to the visual impairment; for example, making learning accessible by modifying and adapting resources and equipment, lighting and optimum seating position
- Provide training for the learner and staff on specialist equipment
- Advise on PE and games regarding access, integration, equipment, environment, safety and possible alternatives
- Advise on exam and test access and the special provision available

Secondary School Children

In secondary school s/he can,

- Advise on a transition plan between primary and secondary and secondary and post 16 provision
- Advise on the learning environment regarding access and safety
- Provide training for all those working with the learner
- Carry out a functional visual assessment
- Advise on accessible learning resources
- Support and advise classroom teacher and learning support assistants
- Advise on exam and test access and the special arrangements available

Above all a QTVI can support the visually impaired learner throughout her or his education and training.

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will offer,

- [More Points to Remember When Teaching a Low vision Learner](#)

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

This time Bullet Point will hone in on a number of key issues which should be recognised by those responsible for mobility and orientation.

This issue more specifically will cover,

- **More suggestions to help you assess your child or young person's M and O skills**
- **Crossing the road safely**
- **A quiz**
- **Recommendations: here we will suggest explicit references by the local authority in its policy document covering mobility and independence**

Assessment

Previously Bullet Point recommended you consider during pre-school and infant school years 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?
- Turns towards a noise or voice accurately?
- Walks without exhibiting an unusual gait/posture?
- Participates in physical activities in and out of school?
- Runs without stumbling?
- Walks on rough ground or rough surfaces generally after the age of 5 years?
- Detects changes in floor surfaces after the age of 5 years?

This time consider also how well s/he,

- Copes with fluctuating lighting conditions indoors?
- Copes with fluctuating lighting conditions outdoors?

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?
- 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 conditions outdoors?
- Goes independently to selected destinations in a familiar room when requested; for example, goes to her or his seat?
- Goes independently to other rooms in the building as necessary?
- Follows instructions to a destination in a known area?
- Moves independently around the outdoor play area?

This time consider also how well your child,

- Protects her or his body in anticipation of obstacles to include other children or people moving around more generally?
- Participates in playground activities to include your local park?
- Participates in activities involving movement; for example, PE, drama and games?

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 conditions 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
- Move independently and not show dependency on others in,
 - a. A crowded environment?
 - b. A know environment?
 - c. An unknown environment?
- Socialise with peers when moving around?
- Identify adults and peers when moving about?
- Participate fully in activities involving movement; for example, PE, drama and games?
- Familiarise her or himself with a new environment?
- Motivate her or himself to use routes independently?

This time consider how well s/he,

- Travels independently within the school or local environment?
- Travels to school independently?
- Uses routes required for work experience?

Comment here:

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

Crossing the Road Safely

Road crossing are a point of stress for many. Conversely others can be blasé and a danger to themselves and others. Both groups require an assessment of abilities. You need to ascertain what your child or young person needs to know or able to do before attempting a crossing.

You may believe it safer where there is some control over traffic flow. However, controlled crossings are often positioned because they are necessary at that point; that is, traffic is generally heavy.

This increased volume can make it difficult to discern accurately the proximity, speed and direction of traffic. Also, a vehicle that has stopped but has its engine running can mask the sound of another moving vehicle.

Consequently, your child has many more decisions to make regarding their own safety.

Points to Consider

All of the above issues are comprehensively addressed within,

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

Here however, points to consider include,

- Be clear about your child's abilities; is s/he ready to tackle a crossing?
- Is s/he familiar with this crossing or is revision necessary?
- When surveying the crossing think about,
 - a. Landmarks necessary to find the crossing?
 - b. Where should your child wait ready to cross?
 - c. Do many other people use the crossing? Can they provide assistance or might they complicate things by interrupting your child's concentration?
 - d. Is the road busy all or some of the time, at certain times and if so why?
 - e. What clues are there for your child to use when crossing or getting ready to cross?
 - f. Is there an island? If yes can s/he locate the island; cross the road safely all in one go; have a right of way having reached the island?
 - g. How fast does your child move? Can s/he cross in the time available?

- h. If at a pelican crossing with sound how long is the bleeper phase as opposed to the whole time needed to cross
- i. Are there barriers? If yes does your child walk straight enough to find the opposite gap?
- j. Is your child assertive and clear about rights or is s/he apprehensive and nervous? Has s/he had a bad experience?
- k. What sort of people most often use the crossing; that is, adults, children elderly people? Are they likely to have an effect when addressing the crossing?
- l. Are there signs warning drivers about children or elderly people using the crossing?
- m. Do drivers have a clear view of the crossing? Or, is it on a corner, by a junction or surrounded by delivery vehicles. All of which obscure a driver's view

Next time we will cover more on crossing a road safely.

Recommendations

This edition continues helping you take control of your child's mobility and independence training. It will highlight intervention and review.

Intervention

Roles and responsibilities for both professionals and parents should be set. Specialist knowledge of the mobility and independence instructor is of course necessary. However, reinforcement and practice may be carried out by parents and teaching assistants under the guidance of the instructor. Consequently training will be required.

Aspects of a mobility and independence programme can take a long time. This requires quality time allocated to address learning although this may differ depending on a learner's ability and circumstance. It will almost invariably mean missing lessons. Much however can be achieved if holiday time and continuity between home and school is maximised.

Reviews

A child's or young person's programme should work towards a long-term goal rather than a series of ad hoc interventions. This will invariably mean monitoring a learner's developmental needs.

Reports should be given to parents and other agencies involved with the child and young person to include recommendations about further input. Everyone should be informed on a need to know basis.

After the child or young person has achieved a mile stone in mobility and independence, accreditation of some kind should be awarded. This is not only good for the development of self esteem but also acknowledges the hard work required to achieve independence.

For a lot more on this topic 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 and costs,

£30

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

Next Time

Next time we will cover,

- A few more assessment points to help you take control
- More about crossing a road safely before moving onto, accessing public transport

And,

- Look much more closely at specific issues in relation to pre-school independence, multiple disability and cultural background

Independent Living Skills

In this edition of Bullet Point,

- Two more teaching tips
- Ways to,
 - a. Use a kettle
 - b. Drain boiling liquids

And,

- Meeting friends at a small eatery

Teaching Tips

- Establish in your child a sound safety knowledge and ensure s/he fully understands. Do this by using a hands on approach where possible and don't rely on verbal explanation alone; that is, show your child what is meant instead of just telling her or him
- Remember that your role is one of support; that is, promote as much independence as possible and step in to prevent danger or increase chances of success

Using a Kettle

- When using a kettle measure the amount of water required and then pour it into the kettle. Overflow will thereby not be an issue; for example, a mug full of water to make a pot or mug of tea
- Alternatively, use a microwave where possible and fill a mug before heating. This method will avoid having to pour hot liquids

Using an Oven

When accessing ovens,

- Use oven gauntlets rather than gloves as these protect to the elbow with the extra protection giving your child confidence
- To avoid a side opening door swinging open pull out a shelf to hold the door open
- Practice putting items into the oven when it's cold. This will build confidence and increase safety
- Gauge the size of a dish going into the oven and then adjust a shelf's position accordingly

Also,

- When removing cooked contents from an oven ensure that,
 - a. Space on a work surface is available
 - b. The passage to the work surface is clear
- If a dish and its content are heavy wheel them on a trolley
- Use the oven from cold if the recipe allows it

Meeting Friends at a Small Eatery

Over the next three editions Bullet Point will offer strategies to develop social interaction and integration. This time we will consider,

- Social interaction
- Functional orientation and mobility
- Money management
- Waiting
- Sequencing
- Choice

Steps

Before attending a small eatery and meet friends steps to think about and possibly practice include,

- Considering the money required
- Walking to or catching public transport to a venue
- Entering the venue, locating friends and moving to the table
- Sitting quietly or talking with companions until a server comes to take your order

- Greeting the server and requesting for example a drink. If unable to read the menu ask for it to be read and make a request
- Having finished and ready to leave ask how much you owe

Then,

- Ask for the bill
- Place money on the bill and waiting for change
- Thank the server and picking up the change
- Say goodbye to friends and leaving

Teaching Suggestions

- Check the environment and try the task
- Try to ascertain where your child or young person may need to make decisions or a choice; for example,
 - a. Waiting for friends to arrive
 - b. When no seats are available
 - c. There are people queuing
 - d. A spillage occurs
 - e. Not having enough money
 - f. A drink s/he wants is unavailable
- Add steps to the task analysis and address where necessary issues a-f
- Give her or him sufficient time to carry out each step before offering support
- As s/he masters each skill begin to remove yourself from the task; for example, meet at the table rather than walk there together

Limited Vision

If your child or young person has limited vision,

- Suggest s/he goes with a friend and uses sighted guide and/or a cane

Difficulty Speaking

If your child or young person has difficulty speaking prepare prompt cards highlighting for example,

- The eatery's destination
- A desired order from the server

Unable to Use Money

If unable to use money,

- Show a friend the money and ask if it's enough
- Prepare the exact amount before going
- Request help from a friend

Difficulty Waiting Quietly

If your child or young person has difficulty waiting quietly,

- Take a book or other object to amuse her or him whilst waiting for friends

Physical Limitations

Things to think about and practice may include,

- Taking any equipment required; for example, low vision aid and/or cane
- Requesting items from a server; for example,
 - a. A straw
 - b. Cup with a handle

All of the above is developed extensively within the following books available from, www.familiesandsen.co.uk

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

Also via www.familiesandsen.co.uk check out,

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

It costs,

£20

Please note also as mentioned above we have moved into considering employment. This began in the last issue of Bullet Point under the heading of ILS when encouraging your child to complete a task.

Another book available from www.familiesandsen.co.uk will help further. It represents a comprehensive guide to finding and securing employment for someone visual impaired - specifically.

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

It costs,

£30

Next Time

Next time we will cover,

- **Top tips covering tried and tested suggestions to enable independence in the kitchen**
- **Participating in a youth club meeting**

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

Recipes for Beginners and Experts

Today in the UK experience shows us that foods from different cultures can be mixed. We consume ingredients and recipes not only derived from different continents but also different times in history.

Food is therefore about more than sustenance. It comforts whilst helping us feel connected. It reminds us about the present, who we were and where we have been. It connects us to childhood and family memories whilst deepening our bonds when eating with others. Yes, it sustains us physically and emotionally but it also unites us too.

This time we are concentrating on the much maligned sprout. For your pleasure we offer,

- **Garlic Roasted Salmon and Brussels Sprouts**

And,

- **Defo Dada Bread**

Garlic Roasted Salmon and Brussels Sprouts

Ingredients

Serves 4

500g salmon
600g Brussels sprouts
8 cloves of garlic peeled
60ml extra virgin olive oil
2 tsp dried oregano
1 tsp sea salt
1 tsp freshly ground pepper
175ml white wine

1 lemon cut into wedges

Method

- a) Grate 2 of the garlic cloves
- b) Combine the grated garlic in a small bowl with the oil and oregano, salt and pepper
- c) Halve the remaining garlic and place on a baking tray along with the Brussels sprouts
- d) Pour over the sprouts half of the seasoned oil
- e) Pre-heat the oven 200c/180c fan/gas mark 6 and roast for 15 minutes
- f) After 15 minutes stir the sprouts and place the salmon on top
- g) Roast for a further 15 minutes
- h) Add the white wine to the remaining seasoned oil mixture and drizzle over the salmon and sprouts before serving

Defo Dada Bread

Ingredients

1kg of plain flour
2 tablespoons of sugar
1 packet of dried yeast (fast acting yeast)
Sea salt
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
4 cups of warm water

Method

- a) Sieve the flour into a large bowl
- b) Add the sugar
- c) Add 1 – 2 teaspoon of salt to taste
- d) Add the oil and the yeast then mix together
- e) Pour in the water
- f) Mix with your hands, pressing the ingredients together and kneading
- g) Knead for 5 minutes
- h) You may need to add a little more water if the mixture is dry or flour if too wet
- i) Cover the mixture with cling film, put in a warm place and leave for 40 minutes
- j) Knead the mixture again for a further 5 minutes
- k) Cover again with cling film then leave in a warm place for 2 – 3 hours
- l) Put the mixture into a large greased baking tin
- m) Put the dough into a preheated oven 230C, 450F, Gas No 8 for 20 minutes
- n) After 20 minutes turn down the heat to 170C, 325F, Gas No 3 and bake for a further 35 – 40 minutes
- o) After 20 minutes check the bread to see how well it is baking, to include the inside. If necessary, reduce the baking time

Comments

- Test to ensure the loaf is cooked by pushing a skewer into the centre as it may look cooked on the outside. The loaf is cooked when the skewer comes out clean
- Ethiopians have a tradition of sharing food with neighbours and friends
- Defo Daba, a giant home-made bread plays an important role in festivals and celebrations

- It is always baked extra-large in order to serve as many people as possible

Next Time

Next time we are going to beam you over to France. We will show you two authentic French recipes,

- **Beef Bourguignon**

And,

- **French Apple Tart**

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 in employment. Last time we covered,

- **Working Safely**

And,

- **Working With Others**

Now we turn to,

- **Learning Continuously**

And,

- **Communicating Effectively**

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 it on and share.

Learning Continuously

Assess how well the learner is prepared to,

- Continually learn and develop
- Assess personal strengths and areas for development
- Set her or his own personal goals
- Identify and assess learning sources and opportunities
- Plan for and achieve learning goals

Communicating Effectively

How well does s/he,

- Read and understand information presented in a variety of forms; for example in words, graphs, charts and/or diagrams
- Write and speak so others pay attention and understand
- Listen and ask questions to understand and appreciate the point of view of others
- Share information using a range of communication technology; for example voice over the phone, via email or a meeting via Skype
- Use relevant technology, numerical knowledge and verbal skills to explain and clarify ideas

Now, assess in each of the important areas listed above 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,

- **Thinking About and Solving Problems**

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 Independent Living Skills and Mobility and Orientation.

It costs,

£30

Something for Teaching Assistants *(Home Tuition)*

How to Support Visually Impaired Learners

Following is a list of basic but nevertheless important strategies to adopt when working with someone experiencing low vision.

- Speak to make contact
- Mention your name, your face may not be recognised
- Use the learner's name when addressing her or him. This will help the child or young person know when information is being directed towards someone else in the group. Irrelevant information can then be ignored
- Ask if the learner needs support
- Ensure s/he is aware about her or his surrounds

Also,

- When giving directions don't point but instead give verbally descriptive instructions
- Don't assume that because a child or young person can see to do one thing s/he can see to do everything
- Don't shout – speak clearly
- There may be an optimum place for a learner to sit in the classroom; for example, somewhere with appropriate light, away from glare, near a power point, at a particular distance and angle from the white or blackboard

Visually impaired people do not have extraordinary hearing but may use it to a greater degree for accessing information than fully sighted people. Consequently, a visually impaired person may need help to identify, locate and interpret sounds to make sense about what is happening. Therefore, unnecessary noise in the classroom should be minimised and, sounds explained when occurring.

Next Time

Next time Bullet Point will address,

- **Reading, Writing and Generally Accessing the Curriculum**

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

Previously under this heading we have considered the impact on family dynamics when managing the needs of a visually impaired (disabled) child or young person. Bullet Point then offered a way of managing this by interacting with others in a similar position via the setting up of a parent group. Now, over the next few issues we will consider more on family dynamics and family culture whilst tying this into the development of children and young people.

Child and Young Person Development, Families and Culture

We will begin this topic by saying a little about,

- Family Behaviour
- Stimulation
- Parental Influences

Children develop within families and families absorb external cultural influences. This complex situation has a significant impact on a child's development.

Several aspects within the family in relation to the child and parental behaviour can be particularly significant here; these are,

- Emotional tone
- Method of maintaining control
- Patterns of communication
- Degree of cognitive enrichment provided

Family Behaviour

Families that provide high levels of warmth and affection, compared to those that are more cold or rejecting, have children with more secure attachments and better peer relationships.

Families that enforce their rules and expectations consistently appear to have children with the greatest,

- Self-esteem
- Competence across a broad range of situations

That is, families that set,

- Clear rules and standards
- High expectations of maturity

Children who are talked to frequently, in complex sentences and who are listened to in turn not only develop language more rapidly but also have less conflict and more positive relationships with their parents.

Stimulation

Parents who provide a rich variety of stimulation including toys and opportunities for new experiences along with responsive stimulation have children who show the most rapid cognitive development.

Parental Behaviour

Parental behaviour which is authoritative and high in warmth, control, communication whilst demanding maturity appear to be the most effective at producing children who are,

- Confident
- Competent
- Independent
- Affectionate

Parental Influences

Parents are influenced by a series of factors including the child's own,

- Temperament
- Level of development

Next Time

Next time we will turn our attention to,

- **Family Structure**
- **Poverty, Work and Stress**
- **The Influence of Other Institutions**

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

University

As requested, here are a few lines about my experience at University. I haven't mentioned the University although friends who attended other ones talk about the same problems.

Basically speaking, some colleges are better than others at providing support. This should be a consideration when deciding which one to apply for.

I soon discovered when I went up to University to study philosophy, politics and economics that the main problem was a lack of easily accessible information.

It was a case of me finding where to get it, then, getting it. There seemed to be nobody who was easily available to explain the new scene, which was puzzling to someone like me who can see little but light and shade.

It would have been really helpful to have a single contact who could direct me to the information needed. EN London.

DIY Equipment

Following are a few ideas from different readers of Bullet Point.

Textured Bottle Grip

To make a bottle easier to grip and more interesting to feel make a sleeve for it out of material which has an interesting texture. It can also be positioned to bring baby's hands to midline whilst keeping a firm grip at the same time. It should be easy to remove for washing later. CP Liverpool.

DIY Feely Toys

Make your own interesting feely toys. Don't throw away odd mittens or socks. Place sound making materials like bubble wrap or crinkly foil inside then sew the end up securely. They can also be attached to ribbons and hung on frames. JM Norwich.

Next Time

*The next edition of Bullet Point will hit the
internet on
21st June.*

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 the International Mango Festival in June 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,

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It costs

£30

If you would like a back issue of bullet point drop me a request via the contact box top left of the web site's front page.

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 baby.

This Little Piggy

**This little piggy went to market,
This little piggy stayed at home;
This little piggy had roast beef,
This little piggy had none,
This little piggy cried,
'Wee-wee-wee-wee-wee,'
All the way home.**

Remember,

If You Don't Do It Who Will?