

Top Tips

Young people with VI and complex needs

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you are keeping safe and well. The Visual Impairment team have created some general tips and hints during these unprecedented times. We hope you stay safe and well.

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The main thing is to encourage me to use and enjoy my vision throughout the day as part of my everyday routines, my motivating and enjoyable activities and social interaction. Below are just a few tips

- Give me time to process information visually. It can be tiring when using my vision and I will probably let you know when I need a break
- When using my vision positioning is important as advised by my physiotherapist – try different positions and when comfortable it helps make sure that “seeing” is the only task I have to focus on. It can also help if I am using any Eye Gaze Technology, screens, I-pads etc.
- The simpler more consistent and more predictable the visual information the easier I can process it.
- Keep toys, objects and the environment simple and uncluttered. It can be helpful to use a black background/mat to present objects. If using books/pictures try to use one clear picture on a contrasting simple background.

- Use real objects, activities, favourite toys/ lights one at a time. Familiarity and simplicity are very important.
- Repetition is helpful – using the same objects, same processes, consistent language provides familiarity and security. This will also help my visual memory.
- I am often able to see better when told what to look for ahead of time and use a consistent name for objects, etc.
- Introduce new and old objects via touch and verbal description.
- Try different lighting situations to find out best conditions for viewing. Try locating a light source behind and/or to the side of me and avoid glare
- Try slowly moving any target that you want me to see: try different visual fields- to the right, left, and midline. I will first learn to track to the centre from either side. Then comes tracking horizontally across midline (centre of the body), then vertically, next diagonally, and finally in a circular pattern.
- Sometimes, if you let me assist you in holding the object as it is moved, it helps me to know where it is. Repetition and doing it very, very slowly may help me be able to do this. As I get better at tracking, help me to also track a target as it approaches me, from distant to near, to distant again.
- I can also make choices by using my vision by visually attending to the preferred book, object, photo, symbols, pictures, for example when you show me a few.