

Program for Students who are Visually Impaired or Blind

Ideas for Learning in Place

Note: The resources included may not be applicable for every student as each student needs different access methods. We will continue to provide updated resources as well as accommodations and modifications to parents individually, as needed. Please don't hesitate to contact the Teacher of the Visually Impaired that works with your child with questions. Emails for each teacher are below.

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Overall Resources

Paths to Literacy:

<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resources>

Information for families – Perkins:

<https://www.perkinselearning.org/scout>

General Information – WonderBaby – for parents of young children with VI and those with multiple impairments:

<http://www.wonderbaby.org/>

Activities

Educational shows on Netflix for ES, MS and HS:

https://www.weareteachers.com/educational-netflix-shows/?utm_content=1584278383&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR1x-2xTYM8ERi9mQj5K9wC1vd35GAH0ScqQmjUKwqU3Bpr7YnUgFGdK9gE

Hands on activities:

<https://www.weareteachers.com/hands-on-activities-for-families/>

Braille courses for parents and students:

<https://hadley.edu/showCourseListing.asp?program=FE>

Videos for Learners with CVI (young):

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-wZA4w-Lz4-N71vCzXLA>

Video Clips for Blindness Tips – Washington State School for the Blind – great tips for teaching students and parents tips on things like art acces, buttoning, tying shoes, folding clothes, etc.:

<https://www.wssb.wa.gov/welcome-to-wssb/services/video-clips/>

Virtual Fieldtrips:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SvldgTx9djKO6SjyvPDsoGlkgE3iExmi3qh2KRRku_w/preview?fbclid=IwAR2eJEtpHIPuMXUYAtdAdW74Ya0pXB9WYY8MTqgvthDUfePUUBSkpDe6W7A&pru=AAABcQQ2Gh8*m4nTQdM_FJY6B2Zc0ejfgg

Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) – Free described videos that teach - <https://dcmp.org/>

Stay at home activities (ES and Multiple Impairments) - <https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/blog/stay-home-activities-children-visual-impairments>

Webinars:

Zoom Meetings for parents of children who are deaf or deafblind: Schedule – these meetings are all from 3-4 and take place every couple of days: <http://marylanddb.org/2020/03/30/spring-2020-webinars-for-families-providers/>

Free audiobook, “Meet Me Accessibly – A Guide to Zoom Cloud Meetings from a Blindness Perspective”:
<https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmosen.org%2Fzoom%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cacolaizzi%40nps.k12.va.us%7Cd09f564abf7a4a04fb6808d7c9ef9e59%7C0c3b3cb60d6a4d31b043f61fb69363d3%7C0%7C0%7C637199903308286830&msdata=x5QRSSx1%2FSfgKnrzmTSiADIOpljTHjAYxvTctYgM%3D&reserved=0>

Virtual Expanded Core Education Learning (Excel) Academy for Students with Visual Impairments – Paths to Literacy:

<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resources/virtual-excel-academy>

Free Resources

Learning to Type – Free download while school is out – Typio by Accessibyte:

<https://www.accessibyte.com/stay-safe>

Screen Magnification Software - Zoomtext – Free download while school is out -

<https://portal.freedomscientific.com/SponsoredSoftware>

Screen Reading Software - JAWS – Free download while school is out -

<https://portal.freedomscientific.com/SponsoredSoftware>

App for learning braille – Brailliac – great for parents to help kids:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.lukeneedham.brailletutor&hl=en_US

Online E-books (free) - Bookshare:

<https://www.bookshare.org/cms/help-center/learning-center/learning-at-home-parents> - note that some students have accounts already. Contact the student’s Teacher of the Visually Impaired if you need that.

Online Books (free) – Audible:

<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Online Books (free) – myON – great site for books that are read by a human voice and includes sound effects! Here is the login information for your myON Shared Account, to share with your students and community:

Login page: <https://www.myon.com/school/readathome>

- School Name: **Read at Home**
- Username: **readnow**
- Password: **myon**

HEY! WHAT'S COOKING? A Kitchen Curriculum for the Parents of Visually Impaired Children

by Franziska Naughton and Sharon Sacks

downloaded 4/7/2020 from

<https://www.tsbvi.edu/instructional-resources/1070-hey-whats-cooking-a-kitchen-curriculum-for-the-parents-of-visually-impaired-children>

Introduction:

In the average family, the kitchen is the most important room in the house. It is a natural gathering place during meal preparation. Even when the kitchen is tiny, family activity swarms around the cooking center. During clean-up time and after meals, someone is always in the kitchen. This is the place to come for talk, comfort, sharing, and togetherness. The child quickly discovers that the kitchen is a good place to be! Except the blind child. Personal experience and recent research reveal that the kitchen is not the most important room in the house for the blind child. The severely visually impaired student selects the bedroom as the most important room in the house. The bedroom is often the room in which the blind child spends most of his time. From early childhood through school years the blind child spends more time in the privacy of the bedroom than other children.

New parents of a visually impaired child frequently leave the child in the bedroom because it is a safe place. Later, the child is kept in the play pen for the same reason. The kitchen, with all its equipment, is not a safe place. A visually impaired child is discouraged from spending time in the kitchen. What a loss to the child. This room is the focal point of family living. It is the richest learning source in the child's home. No child should be discouraged from spending time in the kitchen. The visually impaired child, more than others, needs to enjoy and learn from the kitchen smells, kitchen textures, kitchen sounds, and kitchen tasks.

In the kitchen curriculum we have attempted to put together suggestions to help parents keep a visually impaired child in the kitchen with them. We begin with general guidelines for introducing the child to touch, taste, sound, and smell. These are basic to growing and learning. Then suggestions are provided for helping the child experience the kitchen environment. Included are daily tasks for the visually impaired child so that he is a helping member of the family work force. Finally, early cooking and clean up responsibilities are listed. The purpose of this outline is to ensure that the visually impaired student has an equal opportunity to share in the pleasure and skills of kitchen living. Protecting a child from the dangers of the kitchen is like protecting from life itself--the protection can be more damaging than the risky experience. A child who is deprived of experience does not continue to seek new experience. Curiosity decreases and the motivation for learning diminishes. The opposite occurs when the child is encouraged in new experiences, especially in a secure and happy home. Personal feelings of worthwhileness are enhanced with the responsibility of being a contributing family member. The skills of cooking, like other competencies, add to the total self-concept and the child is more confident as well as more skilled.

Guidelines

1. Omit or reduce background stimulation (TV, radio, record player). Meaningless stimulation has no useful purpose, reduces early auditory discrimination and may delay developing close personal relations within the family.

2. Talk to infant always--spontaneous, natural sounds and words stabilize the auditory environment.
3. Touch and talk to infant--touch and talk are basis of relationship and are crucial for the establishment of basic trust.
4. The more persons in the household, the greater the importance of omitting extraneous auditory stimulation so that the child quickly recognizes individual family members. The foundation of learning is a secure and familiar environment and the enjoyment of close human relationships.
5. Touch, tickle, caress, cuddle, and pat as **often as possible**.

3-4 Years

1. Household Chores:
 1. Teach child to fold napkins.
 2. Bring utensils to table.
 3. Return dishes to kitchen table.
 4. Push food scraps off plates into wastebasket. This is good early training for searchexploring techniques essential to a wide range of activities.
2. Assist in cooking.
 1. Stir batter, salads, vegetables, etc.
 2. Shred lettuce
 3. Mix powder with liquid, such as chocolate milk, pudding, etc. Child will need to check progress of mixing with fingers. Fingers are a most efficient tool and a blind child learns to substitute touch for sight. The wise parent quickly accepts what might appear to be messy and unsavory as an essential learning step. During child's third year he is also gaining independence in washing his hands. Helping in the kitchen provides many opportunities to clean hands, too!
3. Use cooking and baking activities to become aware of time.
 1. Baking cookies
 2. Cooling pudding
 3. Freezing ice cubes.

Use a kitchen timer to alert child to time period. Adapt timer for visual impairment by raising dots or enlarging minute signs with nail polish or glue, etc.

4-5 Years

1. Household chores:
 1. Learn correct table placement and help set table.
 2. Put cheese on crackers; meat on bread.
 3. Spoon out jelly on bread. (This will probably be messy but will • prepare child for later tasks and is a tasty job.)
2. Use left and right side orientation skills. The knife goes on right side of plate. The fork goes on the left side. Cup goes in front of the knife. Chair goes behind the plate.
3. Set standards of appropriate table behavior. Because of the importance of practice, the family of the visually impaired child will benefit if meals are regularly scheduled together and high standards of behavior maintained. Learning good manners is important for later socialization away from home. **Socially acceptable eating habits and manners are the right of every blind child.** They don't come naturally. Good habits are taught.
 1. Use "please" and "thank you" regularly.
 2. Pass food around table rather than always serve child. For example: teach child to take one roll--not to feel every roll.
 3. Wait for child to ask for helping--don't anticipate every need.
4. Introduce fork. Use of spoon is now well established. In teaching use of fork, identify and maintain appropriate use. For example: insist that fork is used for meats and pancakes. Do not let child revert to

fingers. A stabbing motion (enjoyable) is used until child is comfortable. With greater practice, the child should be encouraged to use a slower, smoother, rhythmic movement. At this age child will use one hand to locate bite size food and the other to pierce food.

5-6 Years

1. Household chores:
 1. Increase independence in completing previous tasks
 2. Fill glasses with assistance (during early years buy quart containers or transfer from larger containers to pitcher).
 3. Spread butter, peanut butter, jelly.
2. Table manners:
 1. Serve own food at table. Practice appropriate amount on spoon.
 2. Discourage use of hands to eat. Use spoon and fork. Don't rush. Allow extra time at family meals. Make the dinner hour a pleasant family sharing time allowing plenty of time for child to carry through good manners. (Blind child needs time for eating. An extra 15 minutes built into each mealtime really pays off.)
3. Supplement cooking tasks by discussing the different textures of foods through changing conditions. Example: Cookies changing from soft to -- hard through baking--cooling process, renew and review touching, molding, smelling, tasting with more emphasis on change. Making pudding and ice cubes become part of child's science education. Later, ask Dad or brothers or sisters to share these activities and talk about chemical and physical properties.
4. Begin simple cutting tasks: celery, carrots, bananas.
5. When liquids are spilled, child mops up with sponge, cloth or paper towel. Keep equipment in place and in easy reach. Child learns to find sponge, or cloth or to take paper towel from roller. Wiping up can be fun. Keep this job pleasant. Don't strive for perfection!

6-7 Years

1. Household chores:
 1. Set the table automatically.
 2. Help make salad or other vegetables, such as dicing carrots, slicing beans, breaking up cauliflower.
2. Squeeze orange, lemons, limes. Convert to fresh orange juice and make preparation a special job. Good opportunity for recognition (and freshly squeezed orange juice is special).
3. Table manners:
 1. Begin cutting easy food at table (cooked vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, broccoli, asparagus; ground meats).
 2. Introduce soup.
 3. Continue introduction of varied signs, shapes, and textures of food.
4. Teach table wiping techniques. Start with crumbs scattered on a small amount of surface. Sweep up crumbs with hand into one place. Sweep into hand or crumb tray and put in wastebasket. Then introduce sponge or cloth and gradually expand task to include larger expanse of table.
5. Empty small wastebasket into larger trash container. Alert child to small objects that miss the larger container. Finding the "dropped" object provides a practical, meaningful reason to develop search and find techniques. Methodical and efficient sweep and find motions are learned through trial and error in relevant tasks.

7-8 Years

1. Household chores:
 1. Dry dishes.

2. Put away dishes.
3. Use can opener.
2. Fix hot dogs.
3. Make lemonade from frozen concentrate.
4. Prepare Koolaid.
5. Table manners: Practice particular skills of eating unusual foods.
 1. hot dogs--keeping bun turned up so condiments don't fall out.
 2. tacos--same problem.
 3. ice cream bars--rate of eating.
 4. spaghetti (introduce--requires a lot of practice).

8-9 Years

1. Household chores: Washing dishes is a daily job present in every household from infancy through adulthood. It can be an easily accomplished, pleasant task that is completed as a matter of course. Dishwashing can also be viewed as an unpleasant or menial task. It is worth spending family time to insure that this valuable skill is learned in a pleasant way in an atmosphere of good will and fun techniques:
 1. Prepare sink or pan with hot soapy water.
 2. Prepare second sink with clean water.
 3. Wash dish with sponge or cloth, feeling the surface with hand, checking for grease or grit. If plate is not squeaky clean, it should not be rinsed.
 4. Rinse and drain.
 5. Allow plenty of time and plenty of help. Child first learns to dry and put away. Assign washing first as a helper. Then gradually increase responsibility over a period of years. At age 8, child can wash easier dishes and someone else can finish pots and pans. When dishes are put in rack unclean, cheerfully ask child to redo. Maintain standards and cut down on quantity if child has difficulty.
2. Assist food preparation and baking by measuring required amounts: 1, 1/2, 1/3, 1/4 measures needed. Use only level dry measurements in beginning.
3. Practice cracking eggs in bowl for scrambling eggs.
4. Table manners:
 1. Encourage good posture while eating.
 2. Establish clues to appropriate distance from food. Head should not be above table over food. Head should be upright and hands moved from plate to mouth.

Establishing Skills for Independence

During the intermediate grades (latency age) and junior high, the student's world is moving outward from the home into the school and community. The student measures his skills and accomplishments in comparison to his peers. During these years it is vital that the visually impaired child acquires comparable competencies. He needs to develop as much independence as possible. The kitchen skills introduced in the primary years need further practice and growth toward independent living. If the student is not now familiar with cooking and clean-up, use earlier suggestion and move along toward the independent skills listed for later years.

9-10 Years

1. Start range cooking. The adult's fear of being burned must be reemphasized. Learning to use heat is an essential skill. A person cannot cook without heat. Using an electric or gas burner is a skill to be learned like any other skill. **Everyone, sighted or unsighted, is burned at one time.** Don't protect a blind child from using the stove. Burns are part of learning process. Introduce range, pointing out location of all parts. Teach first the use of top burners. Feel all four burners, front and back, left and right. Ask student to find right burners, left burners, left front, left rear, etc. (This is a difficult concept for many

children and requires a lot of practice.) Identify the knobs which turn on the heat. Depending on level of knowledge, it is important to explain connection of switch to source of power. Correlate each knob with each burner (omit oven knob for time being). Turn knob on.

- **Gas:** Place child's hand under yours near burner, but not close enough to scorch. Listen for sound of pilot igniting burner. Feel intensity of heat, moving hand away and toward burner.
- **Electric:** Burner takes longer to heat up and change temperature. Some cues that might help: on some models, a click can be heard as knob is turned) levels of heat are determined by position of clock hands - as the knob is turned counter-clockwise, heat level is increased.

When burner is off, practice placing various size pans on the burner. Remind child that when cooking, the food must be in the pan before turning on the burner. Teach appropriate burner levels for particular cooking jobs.

Oven cooking. First mark or raise the spots on circular temperature range. (250°, 350°, and 450° is recommended). Then place raised sign on pointer. Teach child to match pointer with degree of temperature (at or between raised spots). Experiment with the feel of low - medium - and high oven settings Particularly important is practice in experiencing the heat felt on opening oven door.

Keep pot holders at easily accessible location to oven. With cold oven, practice putting various sized pots and pans in oven. Some pans require one hand, others two hands. After practice with cold oven, start baking projects, following directions.

2. Table Manners:

1. Continue cutting skills at table with more difficult meats such as sliced beef, pork and lamb.
2. Insure that child routinely uses napkin independently. Teach child to unfold napkin and cover lap. Napkins can be secured under belt or over top of pants. Alternately, if desirable, child learns to tuck napkin under collar to cover front of shirt or dress.
3. Ice cream cones and popsicles. Check on eating techniques. These popular foods can and should be eaten in a presentable way. Emphasize that to be acceptable this is a timed job, the time limits being set by the temperature. Try a little scientific experiment Leave 3 popsicles in different locations:
 1. the refrigerator
 2. kitchen table
 3. a sunny spot.

Ask student to check rate of melting and why. Also, make your own popsicles.

10-11 Years

1. Household Chores: Sweep floors. Push brooms are easier for the blind child. Using same techniques as table wiping, implement a methodical approach. Push toward one central wall and then into one pile. Use a damp paper towel to pick up debris.
2. Peeling fruit: By this time, child is peeling his own banana and orange and independently disposing of peel. Introduce paring and dicing of apples and pears. A corer is a useful tool for fixing more than a single apple and pear. A peeling knife is a difficult instrument to use well. A large amount of practice on fruit is preferable before trying to pare potatoes. Paring is an optional skill as there is a trend to use skins as much as possible. Fruit salads are a delightful opportunity to use cutting, dicing, coring, washing, and peeling skills with pleasure for all eaters.
3. Transferring Liquids: Disposable hot liquids should be drained through a colander, such as excess liquids on noodles. Ladling soups and sauces requires more practice. Remove soup pan from stove. Place soup bowl next to pan. (Try technique with cold and warm soup before attempting hot liquid.) Place finger on rim of bowl to gauge correct position of spoon and height of liquid in bowl.
4. Provide increased opportunities to measure dry and liquid foods.
 1. Recommend metal cup measures with handles. Bend handle so that it becomes a scooper. Scoop measure into bin and level with finger (experience) and then knife. The same technique applies to measuring spoons. Place salt in full-mouthed container or learn to pour over sink.

2. Use the same metal measures for liquids. If measuring from a large liquid container, measure can be used as a scoop. If pouring liquid is preferable, place measure in larger bowl or plate to handle overflow.
5. Introduce cutting meat away from bone. Begin with removing only main portion of chop or, chicken breast. Let child finish by eating off the bone. Gradually raise standards.

11-12 Years

1. Label can goods and boxes in braille (or large print) so that student can easily find foods for himself and mother.
Note: Purchase **Braille-On** and type braille sign; to attach to boxes, cans, frozen foods. A more convenient and reusable system is to attach Braille-On tapes to small magnets. The magnets can then be attached to cans. When can is used, place magnet in small container for re-use.
2. Inform student on gristle and fat. Allow plenty of time to handle fatty meat by hand. Instruct on how to use fork to identify softer, fatty edges if child does not like fat. Practice trimming chops and steaks as needed.
3. Broil meats. Follow guidelines for introducing burners and oven. Introduce uncooked meats. Broiling can begin with hot dogs and hamburgers before solid raw meat. Raw steak and chops should be experienced and the changes noted similar to cooking tasks described in #3 under 5-6 years. Note fat and practice trimming raw and cooked.
4. Begin paring potatoes and carrots. For introduction to peeling, see fruits - age 10-11 - Under #2.

Ages 12 and Up

1. Establish a braille (or large print) cooking file. The first section is standard package directions frequently used, such as directions for preparing orange juice, TV dinners, pot pies, hamburger help, macaroni and cheese, etc. Another section is recipes, starting with the easiest (hot dogs, popcorn) and accumulating as child gains experience. As interest increases, cooking becomes not only a rewarding experience, but also a life-long interest and hobby.
2. Introduce electrical appliances. It is preferable to introduce electrical appliances after a child has experienced and/or mastered the mechanical motion himself. Safety rules are easily understood if action is thoroughly experienced. Then the only difference is the speed of automation and safety rules.
 1. Can opener
 2. Orange juicer
 3. Mixer
 4. Blender
 5. Ice crusher
 6. Coffee maker
 7. Hot dog maker
 8. Hamburger maker
3. Table manners: Good table manners are always important for socialization. Eating with fingers is inappropriate.
 1. Use a knife or roll to push vegetable or meat to fork in an attractive way to clear plate. The knife is more difficult but is always available. Knife skills are attainable and desirable.
 2. When a plateful of food is presented without identification, student should politely ask another person to explain location of food on plate. At home, with family, this routine is accepted practice. Occasionally forget to provide information so child will learn to ask. Then in restaurants and other homes, he will do this naturally without embarrassment.
 3. A part of adolescent social life includes stopping at ice cream shops and hamburger drive-ins. The blind child needs this experience with family so that he is comfortable ordering and eating

in public places. Insure as much independent practice of these important social skills as possible.

4. Grocery shopping: Everything we have said about exploring and experiencing kitchen foods, smells, temperatures, etc. applies to shopping in your local grocery. If the student has been going to the store regularly, he is familiar with the organization of the store. Now is the time to teach more specific shopping skills if it hasn't been done already.
 1. Encourage child to feel each item purchased. Let her feel surrounding items.
 2. Categorize foods according to type of food, Storage conditions, etc. For example, bacon and prepared meats of many different textures and types of packages are in the cooler. Touch and talk about all the different products. Don't hesitate to squeeze a squeezable product! Encourage the child to explore all the details of texture, shape, temperature, and size.
 3. Gradually assign more responsibility during shopping trips.
 4. Send to store on own. Use wagon or cart to carry groceries home.
 5. Increase number and variety of errands so that student becomes familiar with all the shops.
5. Organize for independence. It is helpful to organize the refrigerator, freezer, and cabinets so that foods can be found easily. It discourages independence and initiative if a large part of finding a snack or preparing a dish depends on locating what you want. The frustration of locating needed foods can be avoided by systematic organization. It's a touch, ongoing job to keep a refrigerator separated into specific food sections, but it's a worthwhile effort.

The suggestions we have made are not rules to be rigidly followed. Each child in each situation is different. With creative thinking, you as parents can provide appropriate experiences and opportunities for individual growth. We welcome additions and revisions to the above suggestions and would be delighted to hear from you.