



*Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools*



## **Explorers Vision Group Mission Statement**

### **Who are we?**

- We are a weekly group for children with a Vision Impairment.
- We are parents, families of children, specialist teacher, specialist teaching assistants and other professionals with knowledge and experience of children and young people with sensory impairment.

### **Our Aims**

‘For children and young people with a vision impairment to have the best opportunities in life to thrive, succeed, reach their aspirations and have the best possible quality of life’.

### **How will we achieve this?**

We will set objectives for the children attending our group specific to their needs.

Our planning will be underpinned by relevant academic research in the field of vision impairment.

We will use assessment materials relevant to children with a vision impairment.

We will liaise with each child’s QTVI and work on the relevant skills needed to support their development.

We will use a range of activities and resources to enable their development.

Each child will:

- Develop early play skills to include children with vision and physical needs.
- Develop their sensory awareness using a range of sensory resources and activities.
- Develop children’s ability to explore their environment.
- Develop their speech and language skills through active engagement.
- Develop their social interaction skills within the group with adults supporting play between children and helping children develop a ‘sense of self’.
- Develop appropriate tactile skills in order to support their development
- Develop early literacy skills using large print books, tactile books, sensory stories, pre-Braille and Braille skills (depending on individual needs).



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## Lowenfeld's Principles

Loss of vision can affect all areas of development; children with vision loss miss out on incidental learning;

- Social development is affected as children are not able to pick up on non-verbal clues.
- Loss of vision can impact on motor development as a child may not be motivated to move towards objects which can't be seen. They can be encouraged to develop these skills through a range of strategies and activities.
- Exploration of the environment and materials is critical in cognitive development, therefore movement is important not only for motor development but for development of concepts.
- Speech and language development can be affected by the loss of vision. This can be improved through early intervention and quality interactions with both adults and other children.
- Independence in activities can be impacted as incidental learning through observation is reduced for children with vision impairment. Specific skills can be taught to children with vision impairment to help develop their independence.

Berthold Lowenfeld researched Vision Impairment for the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and devised three stages which students with vision impairment help them make sense of what they were learning:

### Concrete Experiences

Interacting with a real object is more meaningful for a child with a vision impairment e.g. playing with a plastic dog will have no meaning for a child with a vision impairment who has not already played with, touched, and smelled a real dog. It is important to talk about and describe in detail the parts of a real objects before a child has to transfer this knowledge to a toy.

### Learning by Doing

Children with a vision impairment need to be given more opportunities to understand their world and routines of their day. They need to be directly involved (where possible) in all parts of a process e.g. finding their coat peg and hanging up their own coat, holding their open bottle. Children with a vision impairment need to learn to be independent even more than a sighted child. They need to become problem solvers.



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## Unifying Experiences

Direct teaching of skills and concepts is important to extend vocabulary and skills beyond those experienced incidentally by sighted children.

The Explorers Vision group aims to achieve this by:

- Providing carefully planned sessions which include concept development e.g. body parts on myself, body part on baby, body part on an animal.
- Concrete experiences through a range of relevant activities e.g. Autumn walk
- Learning by 'doing' – encouraging children to engage in active learning and to become independent .
- Modelling specific skills a Vision Impaired child needs over and above their sighted peers – this is referred to as :

### **The Expanded Core Curriculum**

- compensatory or functional academic skills, including communication modes
- orientation and mobility
- social interaction skills
- independent living skills
- recreation and leisure skills
- career education
- use of assistive technology
- sensory efficiency skills
- self-determination