

Overall

- Have **high expectations**
- Work toward **independence in learning** for the child (don't do the work for them).
- Do not allow them to do less because of their vision.
- Make genuine accommodations to allow them to access print or fine work, using their vision efficiently. If they can access this on their own, they will be more independent.
- Allow them short breaks from concentrated work, or do alternate work to rest the eyes.

Parents – prepare your child for school

- Encourage them to be inquisitive and ask questions, create and explore.
- Ensure their basic safety, but let them be free to try things and make mistakes.
- Connect with organisations that may be a source of advice and practical assistance.
- Ensure you have orientation and mobility (O&M) support and advice for the child and school.
- Model and encourage reading and story telling (read to them too, or use audio books).
- Ensure they have basic movement skills – other children learn these by watching others (to climb, jump, skip, hop, throw, catch, hit) but yours may need explicit teaching.
- Work with the child and teachers to understand how you can best support the child at home with their learning.
- Give the child the opportunity to explore, practice and apply skills that are learned at school (both core curriculum and Expanded Core Curriculum).
- Connect with other parents of children with low vision or albinism, to share information and give each other support.

Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) – additional low vision skills to be learned.

- Usually introduced to the teacher and child, by the Visiting Teacher for low vision.
- These skills should be seen as something that **MUST** be taught and learned, as they will help the child with low vision or albinism cope with learning and daily life.
- Both parents and class teachers should have the opportunity to learn and be involved in teaching or reinforcing these skills.
- **How and when to use vision aids** – glasses, domes, magnifiers (several types for different purposes), monoculars and technology when it becomes available (especially the “accessible” features. Children will use different aids at different stages.
- **Organisation skills** – how to organise their belongings and plan their routines or activities, so that they know where things are and what they are doing.
- **Orientation and Mobility (O&M)** – teach them the best way to move around in unfamiliar places and how they can do things safely. This may include long cane use. Teach small children how to “map” a room, use their hearing and support a book on a stand. How to safely travel around the school and the community in all conditions.
- **Social skills** need to be taught as they miss out on facial expressions and a lot of other cues around them. How to listen for direction and expression in the voice, choice of words, to look at someone if they are speaking to you. Personal space and how to join a group conversation. How to ask others to explain what is going on or what the conversation is about if they are unsure.
- **Student Self advocacy** – how to explain to others what they see, and how others can assist them to know what is going on - in a positive way. How to ask for help when it is needed and at the same time let others know how they cope and what they **can do**.

(continued over)

Reading print or figures

- Know how big the print needs to be, for the student with albinism (or low vision) to see comfortably at normal reading distance.
- Ensure they can scan efficiently along a line to read for meaning. If they can only see a small section of the print, they lose meaning. Provide text in narrower columns rather than across a full A4 page.
- Make sure they can see all the setting out for a problem in maths and make out all diagrams or pictures in any subject. Remember that they cannot see fine detail.
- Ensure all reading materials are positioned so that good posture is maintained, preventing neck and back pain. Use a see through slope or stand so that they do not have to lean over the book, but rather look forward, and see beyond the stand.
- Allow them to tilt their head to accommodate the null point (where they see better).

At School

- Seat them close to the front, with any light source (windows etc) behind them.
- If they are light sensitive/photophobic, make sure they always wear a broad brimmed hat, sunglasses and sunscreen outside (long clothes on high UV days). Allow tinted glasses and peaked hat inside if necessary.
- Do not make assumptions about student's vision and what they actually see. Ask them how close they need to be, get them to demonstrate, ask them what they see etc.
- Ensure they have handouts or books of their own with large print, or access on personal technology at the same time as other students.
- Always have their vision aids available in class (magnifiers, large print, iPads etc).
- Encourage them to do things for themselves when possible (do not do things for them).
- Give them time to complete things, even if they may be slow to start with.
- Allow them to try things for themselves, even if they make mistakes.
- Have them sit with other students where they can feel part of the group.
- Give them a chance to practice special ECC skills in the classroom.

Tests or assessments of any type

- They must have accommodations (large print or use of vision aids, extra time, rest periods), otherwise they are not relevant and serve no purpose.
- Print should be enlarged, have no serifs and have good contrast against the paper.
- If accommodations cannot be made to overcome low vision– the test should not be administered, as it will not meet accessibility policy or guidelines.
- Are informal assessments made to measure progress in the individual goals set?
- There should be regular feedback from the teacher to the parents on the child's progress (and to the child if they are older).

Individual Learning Plans or Parent Teacher Meetings Check List

- Is the Education Policy on Inclusive Education being met?
- Are Support Group meetings being held regularly (at least once a term) and Education/Individual Learning Plans developed and reviewed.
- Is the child involved in all or part of the meeting (depending on age/capacity)?
- Is the child involved in goal setting and review of progress?
- Are realistic, achievable goals set for the child at each meeting?
- Do plans include the skills required to accommodate low vision (ECC)?
- Is progress monitored between meetings and reported at the next meeting?
- Are parents involved in goal setting and monitoring progress at home?