

# C O N S U L T A N T S'

# O R N E R

**WINTER 2013**  
**Volume 15 Issue 2**

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SD School for the Blind  
and Visually Impaired

## Family Fun

The Family Support Group met in December at the School just prior to the Christmas Program and lunch. The parents and grandparents who attended were able to make a tactile ornament for their child to hang on the tree. We also looked at several materials from the American Printing House. Parents were able to check out items to use at home with their child.



An additional opportunity for parents will occur on February 15, 2013 from 1-3 pm with a special emphasis on Braille. If your child is or will be a braille reader this will be a must-attend event! What a great opportunity for you to meet other parents and learn some basic braille skills. If you would like more information about any of these events, contact Amy Scepaniak at 605-626-2580 or toll-free at 1-888-275-3814 or by email at [scepania@sdsbvi.northern.edu](mailto:scepania@sdsbvi.northern.edu).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Braille Workshop for Parents and their Children**

Feb 15, 2013: Aberdeen, SD

### **Council for Exceptional Children Annual Conference**

March 17-19, 2013: Aberdeen, SD

### **AER Dakotas Chapter Conference**

May 8-10, 2013: Grand Forks, ND

### **SDSBVI Family Weekend**

June 8-9, 2013: Aberdeen, SD

### **SDSBVI Summer Program** (<http://sdsbvi.northern.edu>)

Aberdeen, SD: June 9-June 28, 2013

July 7-July 26, 2013

### **SDSBVI Annual Family Swim Party**

July 26, 2013: Aberdeen, SD

## EVERYDAY CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

Children who are visually impaired need to have more hands-on experiences to help them learn. Below are some suggested activities that are simple, inexpensive, and don't take much time. Activities are taken from everyday events in our lives that are easy to access.

### FEBRUARY

- ☞ Put one shoe on, leave the other off. Walk around.
- ☞ Rearrange the living room.
- ☞ Ride on a sled. Tip over on purpose.
- ☞ Make a valentine for a child.



### MARCH

- ☞ Leave some bread out on the counter. Look at it later. Discuss "stale" and "dried out."
- ☞ Ride in the car as it goes through the car wash. Look at the dirt before and after.
- ☞ Look at all the tables in a fast food restaurant. Which one will you use?
- ☞ Look at all the pennies in your bank. Plan how the money will be spent.



### APRIL

- ☞ What is a weekend? Plan something for the weekend.
- ☞ Dig in the garden. Find twigs and worms.
- ☞ Find a bug. Let it crawl. Push it away.
- ☞ How and why do we use soap?



### MAY

- ☞ Find some railroad tracks. Look at them, carefully walk on them, listen for trains.
- ☞ How are you different from a friend? Compare feet, hands, and weight.
- ☞ Make a picnic lunch. Eat it at the park. Feed the animals there.
- ☞ Shop for new shoes. Look at all the shoes available at the store.



For more ideas or to borrow the complete set of Everyday Activities Calendar, contact your Outreach Vision Consultant. Everyday Activities Calendar is available from APH (American Printing House for the Blind).

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## **iPad Accessibility Options (free)**



### **Join Me**

An application that allows a teacher to share something projected computer screen directly onto the students iPad. From there a student can pinch and zoom in real-time as the teacher presents material to the class on the interactive white board. Our science teacher has been using this app with her students since the



beginning of the school year and her students have really benefited. She said "It's great because it allows each student to adapt the material so they can best see it."

### **HOW TO JOIN A MEETING**

- ☞ First, download the app. You're now ready to join a meeting from anywhere as long as you're connected to the Internet via 3G, 4G, or Wi-Fi.
- ☞ Next, direct your friends, colleagues or clients to <https://join.me> to start a meeting. Then click the "share" button to generate a nine-digit code in order to share their screen.
- ☞ You type that code into the join.me mobile app and presto! You're on the same page, even if you're hundreds of miles away.

## National Braille Literacy Month

January is National Braille Literacy Month, chosen because January 4 was the day Louis Braille was born. To help promote Braille Literacy here are some activities for your enjoyment.



### BRILLE TRIVIA

- ⇒ An asteroid was recently named in honor of Louis Braille.
- ⇒ The simple six dot cell created by Louis Braille is used all over the world by people who read many different languages.
- ⇒ People who read braille can send and receive braille materials, books, and equipment free of charge through the U.S. Postal Service.
- ⇒ Research has shown that the fastest Braille readers use two hands, and using two-hands makes it easier for beginners to stay on the line.
- ⇒ According to the University of Texas, adults as a whole read at an average rate of about 250 wpm; the average rate for Braille readers is 125 wpm. Source: American Council for the Blind.

### ACTIVITIES

#### **Textured Matching**

Materials: orange juice lids, textured paper/material, and a peanut butter jar

- ⇒ Steps: cut out 2-3 circles each from the textured paper/material and glue onto the orange juice lids.
- Procedure: Have the child match, sort, name, and identify the different texture in a groups. Store the lids in the peanut butter jar.

#### **Story Boxes**

- ⇒ Build story boxes by gathering items from stories and store them in shoeboxes. As you read the story have the child locate the items from the box. Use the items to re-enact the story.

#### **Graph it!**

- ⇒ Use tactile graph paper. Put a letter in each square. Parent/teacher gives directions such as three down and two to the right. If the child identifies the correct letter, he gets a point.

#### **Missing Letters**

- ⇒ Give students a group of words with every other letter missing. Give the category (e.g., foods, games, famous people, state capitals). Students figure out the word and write it.

#### **Sentence Mix-ups**

- ⇒ Put a sentence with the words out of order on a flash card. Ask the students to unscramble the sentence and write it correctly. Make this more fun by giving the sentences a theme or having them tell a short story when they are all put together.



Check out these sites for more games and products:

- [www.braillebookstore.com](http://www.braillebookstore.com), [www.braillebug.org](http://www.braillebug.org), [www.nbp.org](http://www.nbp.org),
- [www.seedlings.org](http://www.seedlings.org), [www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu)

**COMING SOON!**

**New and improved SDSBVI web site... coming soon.**



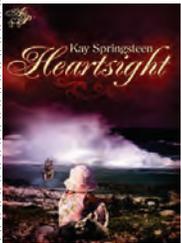
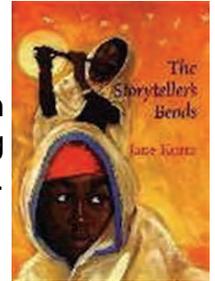
## Books Featuring Characters with Visual Impairments



**The Sound of Colors - A Journey of the Imagination** By Jimmy Liao  
 A young person who is losing her sight makes her way through the subway station. This book is filled with unexpected but delightful scenes. A book for both children and adults to enjoy! (Grades P and up)

### **The Storyteller's Beads** by Jane Kurtz

Rahel and Sahay are running for their lives to escape the political upheaval in Ethiopia. During their time together in a Sudanese refugee camp, the two young girls find out how much they have in common and form an unlikely friendship. (Grades 8-12)



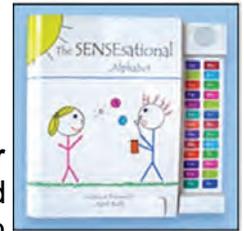
### **Heartsight** by Kay Springsteen

Dan Conway, a former U.S. Marine, is blind as a result of combat injuries. He has to overcome his fear and recall his training to search for Bella, a 6 year old child who has Downs Syndrome lost on the beach near his home in North Carolina. (Young Adult)

### CHECK THIS OUT!

### **The SENSEsational Alphabet Book** by April Rofe

This completely interactive ABC book is from **Seedlings Braille Books for Children** (<http://www.seedlings.org>). Each page has a unique feature and incorporates visual stimuli, movement, touch, smell, sound, braille, and Sign Language. It provides a basis for fundamental communication skill development.



## APH Educational Materials - Early Childhood

### Giant Textured Beads with Pattern Matching Cards and Tray

Using the giant textured beads with the Pattern Matching Cards will reinforce the tactile continuum from real object to raised-line graphics. Older students will be challenged by the increasing difficulty posed by the Platform and 3-D View matching cards.



### **Shape Board Revised!**

Learn to discriminate, sort, and classify different geometric figures according to size, shape, color, or position on a pegboard. This revised board has proportional shapes that contrast brightly against the yellow pegboard and aids in understanding up, down, right, and left.



### **Small, Medium, and Large Circles, Set I**

This frame has three recessed nests for holding six foam circles of various sizes. It will help to introduce the concept of fine size discrimination to the student.



### **Small, Medium, and Large Circles, Set II**

Facilitates perception of three dimensions, while strengthening manipulative, matching, and discrimination skills. A base has three pegs for sorting three sets of four circles with holes in their centers. Circles are in four different colors, and as circle diameter increases, thickness decreases. Print instructions.



## Transition Trails

By Karen Gerety, Transition Specialist

I'm so excited to be part of the SDSBVI staff, and am looking forward to working with the students here in Aberdeen and across the state. It has been a fairly busy fall so far. There are four on-campus students working jobs through Project Skills at this time. (For those of you who might not be familiar with it, Project Skills is a paid work experience program for students with disabilities in South Dakota. It is a cooperative agreement between the state vocational rehabilitation agencies and local school districts.)



**April Dominick** is working as the pizza maker for Aramark Dining Services, providing delicious pizzas to hundreds of Northern State University students and staff each week. **Taylor Killspotted** is also working for Aramark at NSU, as a dishwasher. Every day, he is responsible for making sure hundreds of dishes are washed, inspected for cleanliness, and returned to the shelf for continued use. April and Tylor both say they are really enjoying their jobs, and like being a part of the team at NSU. Their supervisors report that they are both doing a fantastic job, setting the bar high for future Project Skills students! **Courtland Collins** and **Jeremy Neuheisel** are doing Project Skills at the Kids Against Hunger thrift store in Aberdeen. Courtland works on unpacking and sorting donations, as well as some light maintenance such as sweeping and vacuuming. Jeremy also helps with unpacking and sorting, as well as some office work such as folding mailings and stuffing envelopes. Both of these young men have become a valuable part of the staff at the thrift store. All of the students have been pleased to meet new people while gaining work experience.



On October 11, Jeremy, April, Tylor, and Courtland, along with Kendra Terkildsen, Michael McMillan, and Jordan Harkless, attended a morning speaker and luncheon hosted by the Mayor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities in Aberdeen. Motivational speaker John Robinson shared his experiences growing up as a person with a disability. "Born a congenital amputee, John has no hands. His arms stop at his elbows. His lower legs are attached to his hips without knees. He is 3'9" tall. As a child, John's parents had many worries: Would he be able to go to school? Could he hold a pencil? Could he ever support himself?" (<http://www.wmht.org/page/get-off-your-knees-the-john-robinson-story-34.html>). John currently works as a marketing executive and is married with three children. The students visited with him after the luncheon and were very impressed with his story. To read John's story, go to: <http://rt.com/usa/news/one-man-s-victory-against-all-odds/>.

On October 25, the Transition students attended a forum hosted by Transition Services Liaison Project ([www.tslp.org](http://www.tslp.org)). The purpose of the forum is to provide students, parents, and teachers information on local, regional and statewide resources available to assist them in transitioning from high school to college, technical school, or work. The students reported that they all enjoyed the forum and received some valuable information. The students in Jodi Carlsgaard's Transition class have been working on job and career exploration this semester. They are also putting together resumes and cover letters using South Dakota MyLife (<http://www.sdmylife.com/>), a website that is becoming popular in schools throughout South Dakota. The MyLife website has a great deal of information about different jobs and careers, as well as tools students can use to see if their interests and abilities match their chosen jobs and careers. Using templates available on this website, students who have participated in Project Skills work experiences can build a resume that shows they can be competitive with their peers when it comes to jobs after high school. Beverly Werner, Director of Career Development at NSU, visited the class recently to talk about resume and cover letter tips. Students learned a few new ideas and received confirmation that they are putting the right information in their own resumes and cover letters. Throughout the rest of the school year, students will continue to work on career exploration and job shadowing.

## Learning Outside of the Box

### “Shoe-In” for Something Fun”

Incidental learning is learning that takes place without any intent to learn. The participant is not aware that he or she is learning. It has no curriculum and is not professionally organized, but rather originates accidentally or sporadically in association with specific occasions. This method of learning is very difficult for children who are blind or visually impaired. Therefore, these children need to be taught about their environment through hands-on learning experiences.



☞ Give your child some “feet-on” experience with the huge variety of shoes that are available!

☞ Taking your child to a shoe department or a shoe store is the best way of seeing the huge variety of shoes available.

☞ First, there are the various categories of shoes: boots, tennis shoes, sandals, slip-ons, and slippers. Within each category there are many different styles: tie-up, Velcro, zip, button, straps, tall or short versions, open or closed toe, steel-toe, and very plain to very decorative styles, and even shoes that light up!

☞ The style of shoe leads to the various ways of putting the shoes on and taking them off, which can be challenging to some children.

☞ Discuss weather-appropriate shoes and shoes for various occasions or sports and what style of shoe is appropriate for various outfits.

☞ Give your child an opportunity to play dress up or spend some time at your local store to browse the shoe aisles and allow your child to try on some various shoes; even if you don't buy anything, the experience will be worth the trip.

☞ Additional shoe experiences could include discussing various shoe accessories such as shoe horns or laces, how to store shoes, and how to clean shoes.

☞ So kick up your heels and have some fun learning about shoes!



Children's books about shoes:

“Shoe-La-La” by Karen Beaumont and Leuyen Pham (age 4-8 years old)

“Birdies Big-Girl Shoes” by Sumean Rim (age 3-6 years old)

“Never Walk in Shoes that Talk” by Katherine Applegate and Brian Biggs (age 7-10 years old)

“Centipede's 100 Shoes” by Tony Ross (age 4-8 years old)

### RECIPE:

#### Happy Feet Snack

##### Ingredients

- ◆ Oreo cookie
- ◆ Candy Corn
- ◆ Hershey Kiss
- ◆ White icing or frosting - optional



##### Directions

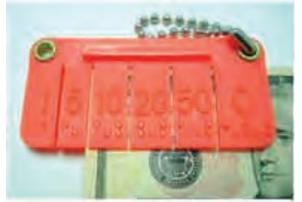
- ⇒ Divide the Oreo into two pieces.
- ⇒ Break or cut (with serrated knife) the half that does not have the icing on it.
- ⇒ Unwrap candy Kiss and push the flat part into the frosting of the Oreo cookie.
- ⇒ Take the two halves of the other part of the cookie and place on icing with curved sides facing the center.
- ⇒ Use two pieces of candy corn to make the feet

OPTIONAL: Eyes can be added using small pieces of icing or with a little bit of frosting on a toothpick.

## Are you Money-Wise???

Even at a young age, children are already beginning to learn about and use money. Coin and dollar bill identification can be difficult for children with reduced vision or no vision. Each coin has a different feeling, so it can be identified by its texture and size. For example, a quarter has ridges and a nickel is smooth on the edge. Dollar bills can be folded in different ways to assist in identifying what value the paper money has:

- ☛ One dollar bills: leave flat
- ☛ Five dollar bills: fold short end to short end
- ☛ Ten dollar bills: fold long end to long end
- ☛ Twenty dollar bills: combine the folding of the five-dollar bill and ten dollar bill
- ☛ Any method can be used as long as it works for the individual.



Pocket money braille

There are devices to assist in organizing and/or identifying your money. Multi-compartment wallets or divided coin purses/organizers are available. Bill reader devices will scan and verbally state the value of a paper bill. Applications for your iOS devices, such as EyeNote, will scan and read the value of the paper bills. And for Braille readers, a pocket money braille will allow them to Braille the value of the bill right onto the paper bill.



Items like these can be purchased from companies such as Independent Living Aids ([www.independentliving.com](http://www.independentliving.com)), Maxi Aids ([www.maxiaids.com](http://www.maxiaids.com)), or LS&S ([www.lssproducts.com](http://www.lssproducts.com)). It is important to sit down with your child and a handful of money, and practice---they will always have opportunities to use those skills!



## iPad App

**EyeNote®** (free) was developed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) for the blind or visually impaired to use as a tool to increase accessibility to Federal Reserve Notes (U.S. paper currency). EyeNote® is built for the Apple iOS to allow the user to scan a bank note and communicate its value back to the user. It runs without any special filters or background material. A data connection is not required for the app to work.

### Features:

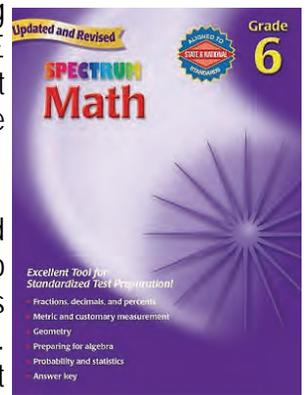
- ☛ OneTouch, hand-held operation
- ☛ Face or back of note to camera
- ☛ Partial note recognition (note can be handheld)
- ☛ Any circular orientation
- ☛ No equipment modification, special background materials or special lighting required
- ☛ Camera flash is not required
- ☛ No data connection required - all processing on device
- ☛ Currency designs from Series 1996 and forward
- ☛ Note can be on a complex background
- ☛ 2-4 second response time

User selectable spoken output English or Spanish, based on device language setting. Spoken mode also indicates the front or back of note to assist in vending use. Simplified on screen instructions (read aloud when device is set to VoiceOver in Accessibility mode).

### Alternative Textbooks Options

by Colleen Kirby, State Librarian

For more than 30 years the South Dakota Dept. of Education (DOE) has been providing alternative format textbooks to South Dakota School Districts. Up until the present time DOE has been able to provide the textbooks at no cost to the schools. However, due to the budget cuts of the past several years, DOE no longer has the funding to cover the cost of alternative format textbooks.



Beginning with textbook orders placed for the 2013-14 school year, school districts will need to pay the cost of producing alternative format textbooks. School districts will continue to place their textbook orders through DOE. Textbooks will be provided from current collections at DOE's Office of the State Library, if they are available and at no cost to the school districts. If the textbooks are available from another state, DOE will try to borrow the material at no cost to the school district. If the textbooks have to be purchased from another entity, the school district will be billed for the textbooks. In order to ensure textbooks will be received by the beginning of the school year, orders must be placed by January 15 for the following fall term and July 15 for the following spring term. DOE will accept orders at any time, but we cannot guarantee the textbooks will be delivered by the beginning of the fall or spring term if the textbook orders are not received by the deadline dates. The sooner an order is received the better the chance that it can be borrowed from another state.



There are additional options for obtaining alternative format textbooks. Learning Ally, [learningally.com](http://learningally.com), can provide textbooks in audio format. Any title not available can be recorded on request. The books are complete,

including oral descriptions of all visually presented information. There is a membership fee for Learning Ally. Verification of disability is a prerequisite for service. Bookshare, [bookshare.org](http://bookshare.org), can provide textbooks in audio, large print, or braille format files. Textbooks are made available in two accessible digital formats, DAISY and BRF. Membership in Bookshare is free to students and schools. Verification of disability is a prerequisite for service. School districts can also use technology, such as the iPad, to make textbooks accessible to students. With the correct apps, the iPad can be used for audio, large print, and Braille. Other assistive technology devices include magnifiers, computer-screen magnification software, video magnification systems (CCTV), Braille translation software, and many more devices.

School districts can also request student ready digital files from publishers when purchasing textbooks. With the correct equipment and software school districts can produce textbooks in large print or Braille from the digital file. School districts can continue to order alternative format textbooks through DOE. When possible, the textbooks will be sent from our collection, borrowed from another state, or purchased through American Printing House for the Blind using federal quota funds. If these options are not available, the textbook order will be sent to the Braille and Graphics Unit at Pheasantland Industries in Sioux Falls. The cost of large print textbooks ranges between \$50 and \$900. The cost of Braille textbooks ranges between \$400 and \$15,000. The website for placing a textbook order is [library.sd.gov/BTB/educators.aspx](http://library.sd.gov/BTB/educators.aspx). Price lists are available upon request from the State Library Braille & Talking Book Program. If you have any questions about the new policy for ordering alternative format textbooks, please contact Linda Turner, Special Education Director, at [linda.turner@state.sd.us](mailto:linda.turner@state.sd.us) or 605-773-3327.

**Craft**

**Walk a mile in my shoes**

1/2 cup salt, 1/2 cup flour, 1/4 cup (give or take) water. Knead until dough forms.  
Make foot impression. Bake at 200 degrees for 3 hours

## FOCUS ON THE EYE      **CORTICAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (CVI)**

Cortical Visual Impairment is (CVI) is a neurological visual disorder. It is the fastest growing visual impairment diagnosis today.

- ☞ Cortical Visual Impairment, or CVI, is a functional disorder in the visual cortex and/or the posterior visual pathways leading to the brain due to damage to these visual systems in the brain.
- ☞ The visual systems in the brain do not consistently understand or interpret what the eyes see, resulting in a loss of vision in normal-appearing eyes.
- ☞ CVI is not an ocular visual loss, or eye disorder. The eye itself is normal and a routine clinical eye exam and acuities will be within normal limits with no evidence of any ocular pathology. However, it may coexist with an ocular vision loss, such as optic atrophy or optic nerve hypoplasia.
- ☞ It is a brain, or neurological, disorder. The part of the brain that is responsible for processing and integrating visual information is damaged.



### MAJOR CAUSES

Asphyxia, Perinatal Hypoxia Ischemia (Hypoxia is a lack of sufficient oxygen in the body cells or blood. Ischemia is when there is not enough blood supply to the brain), Developmental Birth Defects, Hydrocephalus, Head Injury, Infection-Meningitis / Encephalitis / Cytomegalovirus (CMV) / Periventricular Leukomalacia (PVL).

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CVI

- ☞ Children with CVI are complex.
- ☞ Not all children with CVI will exhibit all the characteristics, nor will they all exhibit the same characteristics.
- ☞ CVI can range from a mild loss to a severe loss to total blindness.
- ☞ CVI can be temporary or permanent.
- ☞ Eyes appear normal – children with CVI generally do not look blind.
- ☞ Eye movements are smooth, but often aimless – lack of fixation / lack of visual tracking.
- ☞ Eye contact is poor.
- ☞ Visual threat response is lacking.
- ☞ Blink response is lacking.
- ☞ Nystagmus (rapid eye movement) is absent, unless there is a coexisting congenital ocular disorder.
- ☞ CVI often coexists with an ocular vision loss, making diagnosis of CVI more difficult.
- ☞ Blank facial expressions are common.
- ☞ Many children with CVI experience improvements in their vision, especially with early intervention.
- ☞ Fluctuating vision is common – from day to day; hour to hour; minute to minute. A child with CVI may be able to see an object one day, but not the next, or be able to see one object but not another. These fluctuating changes in vision often make it frustrating and difficult to determine if a child's behavior is due to motivation or attention or if it is neurological. As a result, children with CVI are often thought to be lazy, malingering, easily distracted, or inattentive.
- ☞ Peripheral (side) vision is often better than central vision. Often children with CVI will look at objects out of the side of their eye or will turn their head to the side when reaching for an object.
- ☞ Vision may be better when either the child or the object is moving.
- ☞ Color vision is usually normal, though red and yellow seem to be more easily perceived.
- ☞ Some children with CVI are photophobic (abnormal sensitivity to light), but more are light-gazers (compulsive staring into lights for longer than 15 seconds).
- ☞ Spatial confusion is common; for example, being unable to locate a chair even though it is seen.
- ☞ Children with CVI are able to avoid obstacles and navigate within their environment, but are unable to use their vision for near tasks.
- ☞ Children with CVI are aware of objects in the distance, but are not able to identify them.
- ☞ Children with CVI have difficulty with depth perception, often demonstrated by inaccurately reaching for an object.
- ☞ Children with CVI have difficulty with figure-ground, differentiating between background and foreground visual information in a picture.

(Continue on page 10)

**FOCUS ON THE EYE****CORTICAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (CVI)**

(Continued from page 9)



- ☞ Children with CVI have difficulty with crowding or clutter in pictures; for example, a picture with 5 objects versus 2 objects.
- ☞ Visual learning is fatiguing.
- ☞ Children with CVI are visually inattentive.
- ☞ Children with CVI exhibit a short visual attention span. They look at objects only momentarily and see little.
- ☞ Visual curiosity is lacking. A child with CVI does not want to look at objects, will avoid looking at objects, will listen rather than look, and will often turn away from people and events.
- ☞ Children with CVI may close their eyes while listening or when visually moving from one object to another. Sometimes they will close one eye so they can better see objects/people.
- ☞ Children with CVI prefer to use their sense of touch.
- ☞ Children with CVI will turn their head away as they tactually explore an object with their hands.
- ☞ Children with CVI will look at an object momentarily and then turn away when they reach for it. They may be using their peripheral vision when turning away in order to pick up the object. Or, they may be turning away until they understand what their hands are doing or what they are seeing.
- ☞ Close viewing of an object is common in order to magnify the object and/or to reduce crowding or clutter.
- ☞ Children with CVI are often attracted to bright, shiny, reflective, moving objects.
- ☞ Children with CVI tend to ignore black and white pictures/objects.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH CVI**

- ☞ Provide materials, such as pictures, that are simple with minimal clutter or crowding.
- ☞ Provide high contrast in materials; for example, placing a yellow object on a dark background or an object/picture on a plain background.
- ☞ Present objects one at a time.
- ☞ Provide space or distance between objects to avoid crowding.
- ☞ Present objects in motion, such as toys. Children with CVI seem to more easily see objects when they are moving.
- ☞ Use color. Bright, fluorescent, reflective colors, such as yellow and red, and colored Mylar materials seem to be easier to see and generate visual response.
- ☞ Good lighting is important. Try different lighting situations to determine what gives the best conditions for visual tasks. Be aware of glare.
- ☞ Use a light box to illuminate objects and help the child focus on the objects.
- ☞ Use illuminated toys or sparkling light sources.
- ☞ Be aware of refractive errors and field losses.
- ☞ Try different visual fields to determine where the child's best viewing may be.
- ☞ Allow lots of time for the child to respond to the presented materials. A child with CVI requires much more time to find and to look at objects. Wait! And then wait some more.
- ☞ Use familiar objects to avoid confusion. For example, if the child uses a yellow bowl at home, indicating it is time to eat, use a yellow bowl at school.
- ☞ Use real objects rather than abstract symbols, such as an orange versus a circle.
- ☞ Use a multi-sensory approach when presenting objects by providing verbal and tactile cuing about what to look for and where to look – pairing touch with vision or sound with vision. However, it is important that the auditory or tactual information does not shut off the visual information. Many children with CVI are unable to attend to both an auditory or tactual modality simultaneously with their vision modality. Allow them to look first and reinforce looking with verbal and touch clues and information.
- ☞ Activities need to have a clear beginning and a clear ending.
- ☞ Teach systematically – whole concepts first, then parts.

(Continue on page 11)

**FOCUS ON THE EYE****CORTICAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (CVI)**

(Continued from page 10)



- ☞ Repetition and routine is important. If changes are necessary, make them slowly and allow time to adapt.
- ☞ Visual learning is very fatiguing for children with CVI. Provide instruction in small increments of time, keeping activities short. Allow for breaks.
- ☞ Positioning is important. Accommodate all other disabilities first so that the child's available energy is focused on the visual task. Using energy to see should be the only task of the child.
- ☞ Provide head support if needed so the child's visual field does not change.
- ☞ Allow children with CVI to turn their heads when looking at an object or to move closer to the object.
- ☞ Reduce environmental noise, visual clutter, and other outside sensory information. Such stimulation can be distracting and confusing.
- ☞ Keep the environment familiar and consistent.
- ☞ Be consistent in all learning environments, including materials, language, color, and methods.
- ☞ Learn to interpret subtle responses – shifts in gaze, closing eyes, blinking, shifts in body position, changes in breathing patterns, etc.
- ☞ Outline and color-code numbers / letters / pictures.
- ☞ If applicable, enlarge print, increase space within and between words, and skip lines on pages.
- ☞ Be aware that visual learning may be very slow. Patience!
- ☞ Be creative.
- ☞ Re-assess and re-evaluate regularly.

SDSBVI Outreach Vision Consultants  
Updated December 2012

**SOURCES**[www.aapos.org](http://www.aapos.org)[www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)[www.blindbabies.org](http://www.blindbabies.org)[www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu)

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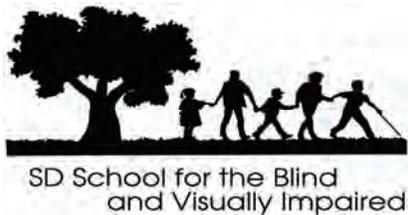
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CONSULTANTS' CORNER, WINTER 2013 Volume 15, Issue 2. Published three times during the school year by the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 423 17th Ave SE, Aberdeen, SD 57401. Printed by the SDSBVI at a cost of 47 cents per issue.



**Family Weekend - June 8-9, 2013**

Mark your calendars as the Outreach Staff are planning for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family Weekend on June 8-9. This is the weekend that precedes our first session of summer school so your child can be here and ready to start the 1<sup>st</sup> week of summer school. Plans are to arrive in the afternoon on the 8th and depart on the 9th. Those students staying for the first session of summer school can check into the dorm. We will have activities for the whole family, guest speakers, hands-on experiences, and much more. Look for more information in the near future.



**Annual Family Swimming Event on July 26, 2013:**

After summer programming is over we invite families to swim together in the afternoon at the Aberdeen Aquatic Center.

If you would like more information about any of these events, contact Amy Scepaniak at 605-626-2580 or toll free 1-888-275-3814 or by email at [scepania@sdsbvi.northern.edu](mailto:scepania@sdsbvi.northern.edu).

