

> CONNECTING ABILITIES

Group 5: Vision Impairment

Vision impairment can range from complete blindness or very low vision to an inability to see particular colours. Vision impairment can occur at any age. Some conditions can result in short term vision impairment; however, most remain the same throughout life. Other conditions worsen over time, these result in poorer vision or blindness as an individual ages.

Low vision is when a student can't see all the things, they should be able to see for their development milestones. They may have low-to-no vision, blurred vision or loss of side (peripheral) vision. They may not be able to see colours - this is colour blindness.

Strand	Suggestions to Adapt	Tips
Hazards and Personal Safety	<p>It is important to have additional resources in order to open the discussion for students who may have vision impairments.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. This may include PECS cards or photographs of hazards and signage.2. If it is possible, take the class for a walk around the aquatic centre and show them the hazards of the aquatic environment.3. Introduce students to additional Aquatic staff that may be present in the facility such as Lifeguards.4. For a student's own safety be aware that they may have their own prescription goggles therefore wearing them for any activity may be safer than doing any activity without them.	<p>Teach students about their learning environment as well as the ones outside the facility they learn in.</p>
Entry and Exit	<p>A student with a vision impairment may become very familiar with the entry and exit that they regularly use. However, it is important to introduce and teach them that there are different ones they may need to use in different situations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Regularly revise different entries and exits of the pool to avoid complacency with a regular exit or entry.2. Allow students time to become familiar with different surfaces and textures when learning about them for the first time.3. If you are aware any access is going to change for any reason, such as maintenance, ensure you inform the student and their parent or carer.	<p>The student or their parent or carer may arrive with an assistance dog.</p>
Flotation	<p>Flotation with a vision impairment can be disconcerting as water near the ears can remove the sense of hearing. Hearing can be a heightened sense to compensate for the loss of vision therefore it can be relied on more heavily with a vision impairment.</p> <p>For flotation for a beginner to an intermediate student it's important to explain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The situation, instruction and skill to be achieved.2. The sensation they may experience.3. What you as the as the teacher will do. (Once you have asked permission for a hold).	<p>Peripheral vision is a part of the vision sense therefore explaining what may happen and the sensation (especially for a beginner) will help tremendously when learning to float.</p>

<p>Swimming</p>	<p>The swimming strand will depend heavily on the range of vision the student has. It is important to understand this, a discussion with a parent or carer may help.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replicating techniques that are used at school that can also be used during swimming lessons, so the student doesn't have to learn a new system. 2. Discuss with the student appropriate methods for letting them know that they are at the end of the lane. For example, a light tap on the shoulder from the teacher. 3. It will be important for safety that students stay close to the lane rope rather than drift unknowingly across the lane. Depending on their sight, have them become familiar with what the lane rope feels like apart from just swimming next to it. 4. Self- awareness. Make sure students know if they have one side of their body that is stronger than the other. Working on the weaker side will prevent veering and improve swimming in a straight line down the lane. 5. Lights in the ceiling can be used by swimmers to assist with swimming in a straight line. 6. Allow plenty of space between swimmers and teach students how to create this themselves for safety reasons. 7. Consider putting markers such as noodles at certain points along the side of the pool, particularly if students aren't swimming the full length of the lane. 8. Use a brightly coloured marker, towel etc at the end of the lane or, if possible, a sprinkler or spray, that signifies the end of the lane. 	<p>The sound of your voice will assist a swimmer with spatial awareness.</p> <p>Let them know if you will be moving during the drill/activity so they can track your voice.</p>
<p>Underwater</p>	<p>Students with low vision may have challenges recognising distance underwater. Therefore, it's important to provide markers from the swimming strand underwater. This may mean:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilising items that remain at certain points and an instruction can be provided for this point. This might be a weight brick or a brightly coloured hoop which is tied to stay in place under the water. 2. Sinking items for students to pick up may need to be a certain colour for a student with a vision impairment to ensure they can see it the best compared to other students. 3. Tapping a student on the shoulder can also be used. 4. Avoid all students swimming and/or collecting sinking toys all at once if the student has low peripheral vision. 	<p>Depending on the level of sight of the student you may have to avoid certain group work, such as students racing in close proximity to retrieve items.</p> <p>If a student has low peripheral vision it is important to protect their sight. Therefore, placing them in the position where they may not be able to see in these activities is lacking in your duty of care as a teacher.</p>
<p>Lifesaving</p>	<p>As the lifesaving strand can be more of a process skill it is important to prepare students for the task ahead.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly communicate the activity. If any equipment is required explain the use of each and have other options available. 2. If there are different tasks involved in a group activity or pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain that each student will receive a turn. - Ensure each student has a turn in each position of the group or pairing. 3. Demonstrate and provide students with cards and steps to follow through the process of the skill or activity. Providing a visual reference will assist students in referencing the steps they need to accomplish. 4. Provide appropriate breaks. Whether these are attention, sensory or physical to allow for students to regroup and refocus. 5. If possible, have another student perform the activity first. 	<p>If a student with a vision impairment is working in groups, it is important to communicate this with the group (with the approval of the student). It is crucial to provide the student with a successful and supportive group that understands the situation.</p>

<p>Rescue</p>	<p>Students with vision impairments learning rescue may need clearer instructions and potential demonstrations of the required skill.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A student with vision Impairment may need to keep prescription goggles on for all activities. 2. Clearly communicate the activity. Provide any additional resources if needed including additional time. 3. If there are different tasks involved in a group activity or pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain that each student will receive a turn. - Ensure each student has a turn in each position of the group or pairing. 4. Demonstrate and provide students with cards and steps to follow through the process of the skill or activity. Providing a visual reference will assist students in referencing the steps they need to accomplish. 5. Provide appropriate breaks. Whether these are attention, sensory or physical to allow for students to regroup and refocus. 	<p>Refer to “Provide the Boundaries” Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p>
<p>Sequencing and Survival</p>	<p>Students with a vision impairment learning sequencing and survival may need clearer instructions and potentially demonstrations of the required skill.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A student with a vision impairment may need to keep special prescription goggles on for all activities. 2. Clearly communicate the activity. Provide any additional resources if needed including additional time. 3. If there are different tasks involved in a group activity or pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain that each student will receive a turn. - Ensure each student has a turn in each position of the group or pairing. 4. Demonstrate and provide students with cards and steps to follow through the process of the skill or activity. Providing a visual reference will assist students in referencing the steps they need to accomplish. 5. Provide appropriate breaks. Whether these are attention, sensory or physical to allow for students to regroup and refocus. 	<p>Refer to “Provide the Boundaries” Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p>

