

Helpful Accommodations for Students with Visual Impairments for Activities at Home, Version 1

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There are a number of important areas to think about now that KDS students are participating in school activities at home.

Considerations for Setting up an Activity at Home:

Light: Is the overhead lighting or lamp fixture lighting at an appropriate level – are the overhead lights too bright? Is the room too dark? Is the student facing a window where there is glare?

Adjust lighting accordingly, Position student so that they are facing away from the glare of windows.

Noise: Set up the activity area in a room/area of the house that is quiet. Is there background noise from a television or radio? Are there people talking nearby on the phone? Is there distracting music in the background? Choose an area of the house where these auditory distractions are not taking place.

Color: What color and pattern are the walls in the room? Are they a single plain color like white? Position the student in a location in the house that has the least distracting details in the background behind the two of you. Feel free to drape a dark single-colored cloth or blanket behind you as you work with your child, to cut out distraction.

Consider what you will be wearing during the activity. A top made up of dark black color with no distracting patterns is best. Removing shiny or colorful jewelry or scarves also helps to set the scene.

Complexity: Clear all visual clutter from any nearby visual surfaces. Also, when speaking to your child during a learning activity, slightly stagger the timing of a verbal cue and any additional visual cues. Hold the item in the appropriate place in front of them, wait, and then speak after waiting. You can silently count to 5 or 10 seconds (or longer) while waiting, to cue yourself.

Familiarity: Feel free to create activities with items that are highly preferred by your child. Use of favorite items is really helpful, because they are familiar to your child. Approaching a learning activity with your child that has the same sequence of events/a consistent routine is also very helpful.

*For example – For many of my students, to signal the start of our session, I often start with

1. Singing a short song or playing a preferred recorded song to signal that our session is beginning.
2. Doing one or two preferred shared activities.
3. Ending with a short song to signal that our session is ending.

Many times, I will sing a song that goes like this – “Today is Friday (insert current day), today is Friday, and it is time for Vision (insert activity name - like reading). Vision with Cameron (insert teacher’s/adult’s name), vision with Cameron, it is time for vision.”

Time of Day: I am sure you are all aware of the most alert times of day for your child. Targeting these times for learning activities is helpful.

Visual Field: You may be aware that your child sees in a particular area of their visual field (left or right, or above their lower visual field, for example). Presenting items at eye level is often beneficial and important, in order for the student to see materials.