



Fact Sheet

Encouraging Exploration

Children with combined vision and hearing loss may need to be encouraged to explore their environment using all their senses. This exploration will help the child build skills in all areas of development. *You can encourage the child to explore his or her surroundings in the following ways:*

1. Work with a certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist who can provide guidance on movement activities that promote exploration and independence, as well as the need for mobility devices specific for persons who are blind/visually impaired.
2. Remove dangerous and valuable objects from the area, so the child will not fear getting hurt or getting in trouble. If you need to say “No” too many times, the child may not want to explore further.
3. Attach objects to the child’s chair, car seat, stroller or wheelchair to allow contact with objects. They can be placed next to the child’s body without touching his hands or face. The child may just allow them to be there at first and later will explore them with his hands.
4. Games with objects can also be played, placing objects inside the child’s clothing to encourage the child to search for the object. Be sure to avoid those very sensitive areas of the child’s body and begin the games with body parts where he allows touch.
5. Place objects a few inches away from the child’s hands to make it easier for him to find the objects. He may accidentally bump into it and explore it further.
6. Combine the use of senses by adding light to noisemakers, vibrations to sound, and interesting textures to brightly colored objects to encourage the child to use his remaining vision or hearing. An example would include feeling the vibration of a piano, placing a musical toy on a lighted surface, etc. These added senses will help to attract the child’s attention.

Adapted from Sternberg-White, S., Chen, D., Watts, J., 1992, Developing Social-Emotional Skills, INSITE, Utah State University, Logan, Utah

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*Fact Sheets from the Colorado Services to Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project are to be used by both families and professionals serving individuals with vision and hearing loss. The information applies to children, birth through 21 years of age. The purpose of the Fact Sheet is to give general information on a specific topic. More specific information for an individual student can be provided through personalized technical assistance available from the project. For more information call (303) 866-6681 or (303) 866-6605.
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