**Pointers for Students with Visual Impairments in Physical Education**

**Definition** provided by IDEA: impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

**General** **Pointers**:

* Wide variety in residual vision, student may or may not use a cane.
* Physical fitness is below that of sighted peers.
* Balance development is impaired.
* Fundamental motor patterns and skills are delayed (locomotor and object control).
* May demonstrate poor posture, low frustration level, fear to try new things.
* Speaking louder isn’t going to enhance the lesson, however do introduce yourself or excuse yourself every time you come in or leave the room.
* Be organized, use auditory signals, and emphasize what the student can do.
* Mannerisms such as rocking, waving of hands, ducking head, twisting the body can be minimized by providing activities.
* Provide an orientation of a new space such as the gym or field, as well as equipment.
* Know the student’s name and medical diagnosis, including possible restrictions.

**Modification Suggestions**:

* Use other sensory modalities to provide information: Auditory presentation, tactile exploration, assistance by moving their body through the motion (ask permission and explain what you are doing before touching the student).
* Auditory presentation needs to be short but descriptive. Information can also be presented in Braille. An example would be: 5 feet forward instead of ‘over there’; describe the activity before the student tries – be descriptive but concise.
* Use partners for social development and assistance during games. (Sighted guide).
* Special equipment: audible goal locators, beepers, radios, audible balls, bells, guide wires, rope taped to the floor, talking pedometers, etc.
* Space is clear of obstacles, boundaries are defined (rope, incline/decline, different floor texture), doors are fully closed or open.
* Proximity to the teacher, look at the teacher. (This sounds out of place for VI however it is normal speech.) Personal space is marked (poly spot they can feel).
* Bright colored, larger equipment. Orange and yellow work well but ask the student. Use contrast between figures and background. Softer or lighter materials to minimize fear.
* Spend extra time on body and spatial awareness, balance and gross motor skills.
* Play games in slower motion, in running games use one direction to travel, limit the size of the playing field.
* Require plastic guards for glasses when students participate in vigorous activities.
* Please, no background music, it makes it hard for students to hear what they need to hear.
* Ask the student what they need to participate; what they can see; how the activity can be modified.

Compiled by Jolanda Hengstman (APE, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools)

NC Adapted PE Advisory Council 10/26/2011