

VISION SUPPORT STRATEGIES AT HOME

The School District of Philadelphia encourages parents and caregivers to find ways to keep their children engaged in educational activities during this extended period of school closures.

The District is making Learning Guides available as a resource during this time. These optional Learning Guides (K-12) are offered for personal use. The Learning Guides are aligned to areas of support for students with disabilities, parents and students may select which Learning Guides to use.

Included within this learning guide are supplementary resources related to the area of vision support.

If accessible, please review your child's 504 plan or IEP goals to determine what strategies might be necessary to complete the suggested home activities

Vision Support Activities - provide ideas and engaging activities around scanning, tracking, visual-motor, self-advocacy and life skills as well as Apps for the Visually Impaired

VISION SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Tracking Activities

- Write out several lines of letters, numbers, pictures or words and have student track left to right and top to bottom while identifying each image
- Encourage using a pointer finger when tracking
- Read books regularly and practice tracking lines of print
- Practice identifying a series of objects in a row

Scanning Activities



- Look at a book and scan left to right and top to bottom while searching for a specified image (letter, number, word, image)
- Look at a book and scan left to right and top to bottom while searching for a specified color, picture, image in a picture
 - Look at fun maps like a map from a zoo and scan the map for specified exhibits, colors, images, words, etc.
- Have student scan their environment to locate a series of items (5 red objects, 4 balls, 3 books, etc.)

Visual Motor Activities

- Practice writing letters and numbers, lower and upper case
- Have student verbalize a sentence or story. Parent writes the story and the student copies onto their own paper.
- Copy words from a story or magazine (find 10 words that start with the letter 'S' and write them on your paper)
 - Encourage proper letter formation, spacing and sizing of letters and words
- Use any kind of craft activities that allow student to cut (use a black marker to make lines darker), glue, tear (ripped up paper collage)
- Coloring while staying in lines (make lines bold if you need to), filling in white space and adding a variety of color
- Stacking blocks (big and small)
- Playing throw and catch with a variety of different sized balls

Technology Activities

- Typing (create a free account with typing.com)
- Creative writing typing while developing your own stories or research topics
- Practice using magnifiers and monoculars (telescopes) while reading, playing, writing, viewing images outside, etc.
 - If you have an Apple device, take a picture of a document and enlarge it on the device for viewing

Self Advocacy

- Talk about student's vision impairment and what it entails, how it affects student, etc.
 - Have student practice explaining vision impairment to others
 - Have student make a list of ways vision impairment affects them and strategies to overcome those affects
- Use internet to research visual impairment
- Research famous people with same visual impairment
- Practice caring for and cleaning eyeglasses, magnifiers and other devices



Daily Living Skills

- Help out with chores around the home as much as possible (sorting clothes, folding clothes, sorting and putting silverware away, preparing food with supervision)
 - Pick out outfits by matching colors and patterns
 - Practice tying shoes
 - Zip up coat
 - Practice with buttons and zippers
 - Help with cleaning around house
 - Memorize and recite personal information such as name, address, phone number, etc.

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Daily Living Skills

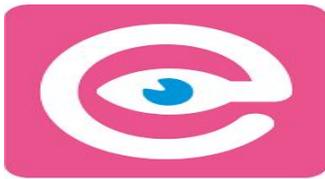
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Vision Support Ideas

Magnetic Fishing – Have your child kneel on a chair. Using a “fishing rod” made of a magnet dangling from a ruler or mallet or dowel rod, cover one of your child's eyes with

a patch or blindfold and have the child pick up 7-10 paper clips or other small magnetic objects, one at a time, from the floor. Cover the other eye and have them repeat the activity. Alternate which hand you ask them to fish with; one day have them fish with the same hand as the eye you covered, and the next day require them to fish with the hand opposite to the covered eye.

After a day or two of simply catching the “fish”, place a bucket on the ground in the middle of the fish and ask your child to use their non-fishing hand to remove each “fish” from the line and drop into the bucket.



Concentration – Have your child hold one small object in each hand (or one sticker stuck to each thumb). With their hands stretched in front of them at arm’s-length (resting on a table if necessary for support), tell the child to look at one of the objects. Have them continue to focus on that object until you tell them to switch. Vary your length between about 1 and 8 seconds.

A variation on this, included in a later exercise, is to have the child focus on a single object and follow it with their eyes (only the eyes—NOT moving the head) while you move it. To start, it may help them to keep a finger on the object as it moves (or even a whole hand, if they really struggle—though you’ll need a larger object like a playground ball). Eventually

you can ask them to draw their finger away from the object and follow it at a distance, and finally to follow with their eyes alone. Move the object both from side to side (about shoulder-width for the child) and up and down (child’s chest to top of child’s head). Also try moving the object closer to the child’s face (10 inches or so) and farther away (2-3 feet). Watch whether both eyes can remain focused; if one eye turns away at a certain

distance, continue to work on the skill at that particular distance until progress is noted.



Hats work as a great substitute for blindfolds!

Cut It Out – On a half-sheet of white paper, use a black marker to draw four polygons (straight-sided shapes)–two pairs of two. (So two triangles and two hexagons or two rhombuses and two trapezoids.) Cover one of your child’s eyes with a patch or blindfold, and ask the child to cut out one of each type of shape. Switch the blindfold to the other eye, and ask the child to cut the remaining shapes. Encourage your child to stay on the lines, and point out if they begin to deviate.

Bounce-and-Catch – Attach several pictures to the wall in front of your child, roughly shoulder-height. Hand them a small ball and ask them to throw it at the picture you name, attempting to catch the ball as it bounces back at them. Repeat for 5 minutes

- if this activity is too difficult for your child, a larger ball or simply a game of catch can be useful substitutes, both requiring the same

- focusing and tracking skills as the original activity.



Color Reading – Choose five colors your child can easily recognize. Take an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper turned to landscape orientation and divide it into three horizontal sections. In each section, draw a row of five colored dots, using all five of your colors and varying their order. Make sure the dots are large enough to be seen from far away. Attach the paper to a wall at your child's eye-level. With your child standing 8-10 feet away from the paper, have them "read" all three lines of colors (name each color in each row in order) three times.

- Other exercises mandated the use of objects ("read" the pictures by naming each one in each row) and random letters (much like a vision test). In fact, my OT friend said she was told simply to have her middle-school students read a longer page of letters daily for six weeks, and that alone resulted in impressive progress.
- For a more complicated variation, start your child 10-12 feet away from the paper and ask them to take a step each time they name a color, stepping as they speak. This will force them to not only continue focusing on a seemingly-moving target, but also to divide their attention between color identification and body movement.

Bead Stringing – Cover one of your child's eyes and ask them to string ten beads on a thread. (Thin elastic for bracelets works well, as does yarn with tape wrapped tightly around the end to keep it from fraying. Pipe cleaners are a good option for younger children who struggle with the floppiness of string.) Now



cover the opposite eye and ask the child to string ten more beads. Continue for about five minutes, with the goal of having both eyes demonstrate equal proficiency at the task. Consider timing to see if one eye performs better than the other; if so, repeat the task daily until both eyes perform equally well.

Mystery Picture – Cover all but a corner of a picture and slowly uncover it. Tell your child to name the picture as soon as they can tell what it is. This can also be done on the computer by zooming in on one portion of a photo before your child sees it, then slowly zooming back out again while they watch. Repeat several times, aiming to take 3-5 minutes on the activity.



Here's my improvised set-up for the Bead Drop exercise.

Bead Drop – Gather large beads or similar objects in a few different colors. Place a matching-colored cup for each bead on a tabletop Lazy Susan. Begin rotating the Lazy Susan at a reasonable and consistent rate, and hand the child one bead at a time to drop into the matching cup. Continue for five minutes.

- I got creative for this setup: I just placed more of the same color bead in a cup so the kids could tell where each color should go, and then I placed each cup on our cake-keeper base balanced atop a Home Depot bucket. I grabbed one of the cake-keeper



handles and used that to turn the base in circles; the bucket was the perfect size, so the rim around the cake-keeper base fit perfectly around the bucket and kept it in place as I turned it.

Visualization and Focus – Have your child sit comfortably with their eyes closed. Name an object in the room, and ask them to visualize the object in their mind and then point to where the object is without opening their eyes. Once they have pointed, ask them to open their eyes and check their accuracy. Have them ensure they are pointing to the right object, then ask them to drop their arm (no longer point) while continuing to focus on the object for 2-5 seconds, at which point you have them close their eye and picture a new object

Cheerio Pinch – Sprinkle a handful of Cheerios or similar-sized white or light-colored objects on a black paper. Cover one of your child's eyes with a patch or blindfold. Have your child use their pointer finger and thumb on right hand and place a bowl by their left knee. Ask them to pick up the Cheerios one at a time and drop them into the bowl. Switch to the left hand and the bowl to the right knee and repeat the task. Alternate which eye is covered so both eyes get equal exercise. (Complete activity using one eye per day)

Memory – Create a tray of 5-10 objects (depending on your child's age and ability). Show your child the tray, allowing them to look at it for 2-3 seconds per object. (So a tray with 7 objects would be shown to a child for roughly 14-21 seconds.) Cover the tray with a paper or cloth and see how many of the objects your child can name. Repeat this exercise with three different groups of objects

- You may have to adjust either your number of objects or your amount of time to accommodate for your child's ability. If they need more challenge, provide more objects or less time. If they're struggling, help them achieve some success by allowing more time or showing fewer object

Loopy Maze – Draw four pictures at the top of a page and four at the bottom. Connect each top picture to a bottom picture using a wavy line, making sure each line crosses



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Office Name

Suite Number

440 North Broad Street

Philadelphia, PA 19130

another line at least once. Hang the page at your child's eye-level and have them stand 8-10 feet away and tell you which bottom picture is connected to each top picture.