



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Best Practice

Welcoming a visually impaired student (2) Preparing for the arrival of Visually Impaired child Section of the module / R

Contact: Pascal Bahu SESSAD APAJH

1/ Context

Welcoming a visually impaired student can raise questions and stir concern. Some tips that can promote a good welcome.

This presentation is often made before the reception of the visually impaired student in the classroom with teachers and / or caregivers.

2/ Goals

Proposing information about visually impaired students working "in black" (an expression used by blind people to designate the writing of persons who can see) to promote good inclusion.

This information given to teachers and caregivers can help raising awareness of the difficulties encountered and putting in place essentially practical aids.

The objectives are, on the one hand, to remove the anxiety caused by the arrival of a special pupil, on the other hand, to provide pedagogical and technical aids when setting up learning situations.

Sources

[http://media.eduscol.education.fr/file/ASH/35/7/guide élèves déficients visuels 116357.pdf](http://media.eduscol.education.fr/file/ASH/35/7/guide_élèves_déficients_visuels_116357.pdf)

3/ "Best practice" conduct

Preparing for the child's arrival

It is better to have a progressive presence, especially for the youngest. It is important to speak of his arrival to his comrades in moderate terms, to avoid rejection or overprotection. He will have to be introduced to people he will meet, and help him find the relevant clues that will allow him to identify them easily (size, build, characteristic silhouette, voice).

It is good to allow the child, before his arrival, to become acquainted with the future places of schooling and its different spaces (corridors, covered playground, toilets, premises of the lunch-room, playground ...), of the class so that he can take his bearings in peace, away from the hustle and bustle of a large number of children.

It may be interesting to materialize for him, with different landmarks identifiable by him (enlarged, tactile, etc.), the strategic points of the school, to identify with him the existing pitfalls and provide the means to bypass them.

A personal corner could be arranged where he will be able to organize more easily, and where his material will always be arranged in the same way.

It will be important to anticipate with him his participation in recess; this being often a source of anxiety, one can imagine a progressive approach, as well as an accompaniment by a comrade or an adult.

✓ The organisation of the classroom setting

It must bring a maximum of visual comfort to the child at different levels.

For that, one must think of:

- the location in the classroom: as close as possible to the blackboard (if he can see the blackboard), but not isolated from his classmates;
- Lighting: of classroom, blackboard, but also of the child's desk; individual lighting is often essential (except for photophobics);
- The inclination of the child's table, an inclined desk must be provided in order to avoid harmful and sometimes painful attitudes for the spine;
- The display of writings in the classroom: they must be at children-eyes level, it is necessary to avoid placing them above the blackboard.

✓ Preparation of the sequence

• Choice of written documents offered to the child

Some documents proposed in the classes can't get used by a visually impaired pupil:

- the letters are too small;
- the line is not thick enough;
- the lines are insufficiently spaced.

They must therefore be enlarged but in reasonable proportions (120-130%), since a too much enlarged document is multiplying the difficulties of visual exploration and decreasing the amount of information perceived by the gaze.

To find the most suitable enlargement for each child, it is recommended to submit several types of enlargement, he will choose the one that suits him best right away.

It is important to specify that some work supports should not be enlarged, for example coloring, recognition of geometric figures, some could even be reduced, for example measurements and plots exercises.

It is also useless to enlarge a fuzzy document because it will remain, despite the enlargement, of little use to the child.

Above all, the quality of these documents is of particular importance:

- Readability of types;
- Accentuated figures-ground contrasts (stencils are to be avoided);
- Sufficiently spaced-out lines;
- Significant marks (points, commas, etc.) reinforced to facilitate identification;
- The use of computers by teachers makes it possible to achieve this objective;
- Neat handwriting, letters must be particularly well formed;

Example: **d** can be perceived as **cl** and not as **d**, and disturb the child who doesn't see, for lack of a normal visual field, the continuation of the word that could give him the solution.

This particular care given to the quality of the writings takes all its importance when learning reading, each difficulty of visual perception being able to compromise the taking of clues necessary for this approach.

- Adapted work surfaces

The visually impaired child takes a long time to take visual cues in a written medium of which he doesn't have a global vision.

Some documents are "unreadable" for him, because they are too rich in various information unorganized in space.

Example: It often happens that several exercises appear on the same sheet. This sheet can be divided into several parts and the child can be given the exercises one after the other, or the sheet can simply be folded to isolate each exercise.

Net documents must be prepared, free of unnecessary information, in order to facilitate the collection of information.

He must use notebooks with clearly visible lines; for first graders (at Primary school), lines can be drawn with a fine marker on an ordinary notebook.

It is better to adopt the notebook rather than the file, since the use of the latter results in additional difficulty due to the necessary storage.

It is necessary to provide, if necessary, the necessary technical aids (highlighters, magnifying glass, tape recorder ...).

- ✓ In the course of the sequence

- During large group activities

On the blackboard, it is essential to write big, to avoid too long lines, it is often better to use yellow chalk.

The whiteboard is more readable, but sometimes dazzling for photophobics.

It is essential to verbalize as much as possible by using a precise spatial vocabulary and always the same one. For example, I write instructions at the top left of the board.

It is often necessary to give the child an individual work support, for any work presented or done collectively on the board.

It is during these activities that one must particularly ensure that he doesn't become isolated:

- by soliciting him;
- by questioning him;
- by encouraging him to get closer to the source of information: the teacher or the board, which he will not do spontaneously.

- During individual activities

• At nursery school

The child make experiments, manipulates varied games and objects, builds and dismounts, discovers through observation.

During these activities, one must:

- ensure that the supports used for his investigations are within reach of his eyes, the visually impaired child will not want to explore what he doesn't see precisely;
- encourage him to go towards information;
- monitor, with careful observation, that the intended goals have been achieved.

In preparatory activities for reading and writing, one must:

- ensure that the supports are visible and legible by the child;
- compensate the poor eye / hand coordination by working longer, and separately, the gesture and the trace it produces;
- use, for writing, marker-pens and large media (sheets and then narrower and narrower paper strips) longer than for the others before being able to write inside the lines;
- lead learning more slowly and without skipping steps.

During listening activities, it is essential to encourage active participation, as the precision of one's auditory perceptions is an important factor in compensating for one's low vision.

• At elementary school

The visually impaired child is noticeably slower than his peers in completing his written schoolwork, and this is a direct consequence of his visual impairment. He reads more slowly, writes more slowly, and has to constantly look back and forth between the essential elements of the exercise to be performed.

For these reasons, the amount of written production needs oral responses. It is good to avoid too long or repetitive copies.

Examples:

- During a conjugation exercise, the visually impaired child may be allowed not to copy all the sentences, but only the verb whose spelling changes, which will enable him to focus his attention on the essential of the sequence's purpose;

- Similarly, one is entitled to demand a copy without mistakes and properly written provided that it is short and made from a model readable for him (printed and appropriately enlarged).

Avoid too long fixation times which may increase the phenomenon of nystagmus.

Measurements and geometrical plots can be made, but it is necessary to use adapted instruments, not to require too much precision and to recognize its visual limits (impossibility to perceive the millimeters for example).

The visually impaired child has trouble exploring the page of a text since he does not see it in its entirety, he can't easily find information. He also has difficulties in finding it.

It is particularly difficult for him to work on his manuscripts or those of others (corrections, operations) often unreadable for him. The use of computer and calculator takes here all its meaning.

One can, in class, foresee, the help of a "secretary" who can be a master or a comrade, in particular for activities of documentary researches.

Finally, he can be granted a longer time for the performance of his work, especially during control activities. The texts provide, at the time of the examinations, a third of additional time.

Care must be taken to ensure accuracy and clarity of note taking (lessons, homework).

Moreover, it is impossible for him to memorize a text written by his care, all his energy being mobilized by the deciphering of his writing, it is imperative to provide him with a printed text.

✓ In outdoor activities

The visually impaired pupil is a priori not exempt from any activity. Motor activities for the youngest, physical and sports education later, are on the contrary particularly beneficial for its development and the conquest of his autonomy. It is necessary, however, to be well informed about possible contraindications for the practice of certain games or sports and possible adaptations.

It has often been found that what is implemented to enable a visually impaired child to learn more easily (clarity and clearness of documents for example) is beneficial to other children.