



Visual impairment support

Habilitation (mobility and independence) training for children with a visual impairment

About this fact sheet

This fact sheet provides information on mobility and independence training, which is known as 'habilitation' training. This training promotes and develops the independence of a child with a visual impairment.

What does habilitation training do?

A qualified habilitation specialist will work with a child with a visual impairment to help the child develop the necessary skills and experience in order to promote early movement, sensory, spatial and body concepts and ultimately independence. This may include cane training, route learning and independent living skills. This training can take place in the home, at nursery or school, or out in public settings as appropriate. The specialist will take into consideration the child's individual mobility requirements and any additional needs the child may have.

Advice will always be provided to parents and teaching staff.

What is the referral process?

A qualified teacher of the visually impaired will refer a child for this training following discussion with the parents and school.

What happens once a child has been referred for habilitation training?

A habilitation specialist will contact the child's parents and ask them to sign a consent form giving their permission for a habilitation assessment and then for training to take place. The relevant school's permission will also be required.

What re the benefits of habilitation training?

The training:

- Promotes and encourages a child's movement and exploration within safe environments.
- Helps to develop a child's body, spatial and social awareness.
- Promotes concept development.
- Encourages self-help and independence skills, for example feeding and dressing.
- Promotes sensory awareness.
- Teaches a child specific mobility and orientation skills to assist independent movement.
- Provides a child with familiarisation training prior to a school transfer. This will encourage and promote safe, independent movement within school.
- Mobility training can provide a child with experience and familiarisation in their local community including travel training using public transport.
- Can teach road safety and specific crossing skills.
- Can help a child to learn to travel safely in poor lighting conditions.
- Can also provide appropriate independent living skills education. This may be offered as an ASDAN Qualification (this is age dependent).

Additional tasks may be carried out by a Children's Mobility Instructor. These include:

- Risk Assessments.
- Possible involvement with environmental audits.
- Possible production of map models to assist mobility programme.

More information

The visual impairment service is part of Dudley Disability Service. We are a team of qualified teachers of the visually impaired and specialist teaching assistants.

We provide advice and information to parents and teachers. We help teach and support children with a visual impairment of all ages and abilities. We also assess children's vision. In addition we support and advise on the use of specialist equipment and train in the use of low vision aids, provide Braille and enlarged or modified learning materials, provide training independence and mobility training and teach touch typing and specialist software. We will also liaise with other professionals such as social care, healthcare and RNIB.

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