

## Resources for Families of Children with Visual Impairment

The following information was created to support individuals and families with visual impairments through general recommendations, routine supports, and in-home learning activities.

*\*Children with a visual impairment have varying degrees of functional vision. A functional vision assessment (FVA) will identify the child's range of visual function and help determine the level of support needed as well as the appropriate modifications and instructional adaptations to their learning environment.*

### **General Recommendations**

Routines are an important part of a child's life and even more so for a child with a visual impairment who may find it difficult to observe what's going on in the world around them.

Children with a visual impairment miss out on important visual and social cues that need to be explicitly described during a typical routine. Describing the routine in detail and allowing the child to help identify and gather necessary objects for a routine makes the experience more meaningful.

Establishing a series of clear predictable steps with objects associated to those steps can be a fundamental way for children with a visual impairment learn important concepts and skills related to; communication, tactile skills, sequencing, positional concepts, anticipation, cause and effect, and understanding about objects and their functions in the environment. Routines also provide essential information about cause and effect, helping children develop patterns of behavior, develop sequencing skills (beginning to middle to end), and can help develop confidence.

Routines are an important part of any child's life because they give children the information and experiences necessary to complete tasks with increasing independence. When things are predictable—happen in a certain order at a certain time of day—children are reassured that the world is a safe place in which they can learn to make their way.

### **Lunch Time Routine:**

1. Tell child that it is almost time for lunch.
2. Describe to them what they are going to be eating. Is it soft, hard, crunchy, wet, hot, or cold? Tell them about the taste too.
3. After talking about their food talk about what they will be having to drink too, water, milk, juice? Ask them if they want ice or not and tell them about the type of cup they will be using. Does it have a straw, sippy cup, open lid, screw off top?
4. Now it is time for lunch, tell the child it is time to go to the table, tell them where their chair is and if they need to pull it out or not. (For a child in a highchair be sure to tell them when you are picking them up, and how they will be moving into the chair. Tell them what you are doing when you put the straps on and why you use them; to keep them safe.)
5. Once they are at the table tell them that their food is directly in front of them. Tell them if their drink is to the left or right and use hand over hand if needed to help guide them to the food or drink.
6. If they have more than one item in front of them (i.e. Sandwich and fruit) tell them where each item is. If they are using a spoon or fork to feed themselves talk to them about where their utensils are and guide them through finding their food. (If spoon feeding an infant talk to them

about each bite, be consistent with language and how large each bite is. Tell them what the food is and if you switch types of food let them know that too. As they start to be more independent and want to use the spoon themselves use hand over hand and help them scoop up the food onto their spoon.)

7. Once the meal is all over tell them that it is time to clear their plate and cup to the sink. If needed pull the chair away from the table and have them climb down using the table and chair as a guide.
8. Remind the child where their plate is and talk to them about finding the sink and placing it up and into it. (For an infant, talk to them about how you are getting them out of the highchair, tell them when you unstrap them that you're about to pick them up and then carry them with you to go and put their plate in the sink.)
9. Time to wash hands! Talk to the child about washing hands, have them get a step stool if needed and always put it back in the exact same place as before so they can always get it. Have them stand on the stool and reach for the faucet – talk to them about hot and cold water and how it will feel. Have them pump soap in their hands or do it for them. Talk about how it feels slimy and wet! Once hands are washed dry them and go play! (For an infant hold them in your arms to wash, talk about the feelings, temperature, where the faucet and soap is and how to dry hands. Help them scrub their hands together.)

## Home Learning Activity Plan

**Name of activity:** Shape Hunt

**Author:** Holly, Meagan, Taylor, Wendy

**Ages:** Adapted for Birth-5

**Community:** Laramie/Pinedale

**Wyoming Early Learning Standard(s) addressed:** Mathematical Skills (Geometric Shapes), Language, Logic and Reasoning, Physical Development (gross motor and fine motor)

**Learning Outcomes:** The learning outcome for this activity include recognizing and naming common shapes, increasing expressive language, reasoning and problem solving, using hands to manipulate objects, understanding how the body moves – awareness of space and directionality. Infants: Becoming familiar with shapes and position words.

**Materials in the home:** Anything that is the shape of a circle, rectangle, square and triangle big or small (plate, bowl, cup, food, blocks, pillows, tables, books, CDs/DVDs, etc.) with various textures (hard, soft, rough, smooth).

**Activity description:**

Ask your child what shape they would like to hunt for by giving them a choice between circle, square, rectangle and triangle. (Infants: Show the child some shapes that you will be placing around the room, start with 1 or 2 shapes and use lots of language. Let the child feel and explore the shape on their own)

- The hunt can take place throughout the house or you can limit the hunt area to a specific room like the living room.
- When your child finds a specific shape, describe in detail the shape (a rectangle has four sides, count the sides – two sides are short and two sides are long; the triangle has three sides, count the sides).
- Increase the amount of shapes to be found (find 2 triangles, 3 circles, etc.).
- As your child become more proficient in finding the shapes, add a specific texture to this hunt (find a soft rectangle).
- While your child is searching for the shape, you can suggest they look “on top” of the table or “under” the blanket to increase their problem solving and body movement skills

**Multiple ways to recruit your child’s interest and engagement:** Make the hunt an exciting and special time (“Help me find three circles”, “Let’s get the flashlight to spot out two triangles”, “I hid a square, can you find it?”). While eating lunch, play “I spy” and include shapes in the game. Infants: Get excited, find multiple of a shape and talk about how they are the same.

**Multiple ways to share information with your child:** During different routines throughout the day, point out the shapes you notice. For example, while making lunch, you can say I found a square - have your child feel the edge of the bread and ask them what shape the bread is, or the plate that lunch is going on is round, what shape is the plate? When reading a book to your child, explain what shape the book is.

**Multiple ways for your child to demonstrate what he or she knows and can do:** Your child can show their knowledge of shapes by pointing to the shape when you name it (where is the circle?). Your child can name the shape on their own (I found a rectangle). Infants: Continue to explore and use the shapes you have introduced, as they develop language listen for them trying to say the words.

**Ways to encourage language during the activity:** To encourage language, name the object and the shape (the top of your cup is a circle). Read a book about shapes. Make up a tune to hunt for the shapes, “We’re hunting for a square, we’re hunting for a square, hi ho the Derry-o we’re hunting for a square.”

**What did you notice about your child during the activity?**

**What did your child show you that he or she knows and can do?**

**What was most successful during this activity?**

**What would you like try next time?**

**What did you do well during this interaction?**

**What questions would you like to ask your child's teacher?**

## Home Learning Activity Plan

<b>Name of activity:</b> Cooking <b>Author:</b> Holly, Meagan, Taylor, Wendy	<b>Ages:</b> Adapted for Birth-5 <b>Community:</b> Laramie/Pinedale
<b>Wyoming Early Learning Standard(s) addressed:</b> Mathematical Skills (Geometric Shapes), Language (Positional Language), Social Emotional (Communicating with another individual), Physical Development (Fine motor skills)	
<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> The learning outcomes for this activity are limitless, but include gaining independence, becoming familiar with locating items in the kitchen, tactile skills, positional concepts, anticipation (hot melt cheese), learning mathematical skills. Infants: sensory input, language familiarity, social-emotional skills; learning to trust the adults helping them.	
<b>Materials in the home:</b> You will need, butter, bread, cheese, tomato soup, griddle, pot, ladle, spatula, knife, spoon, plate, and a bowl!	
<b>Activity description:</b> While preparing grilled cheese and tomato soup for lunch you will need to find butter, bread, cheese, and 1 can of tomato soup. It is important to keep everyday ingredients in the same location (e.g. Cheese in the bottom left draw in the fridge). Finding food item is a great way to explore shapes, textures, and use positional wording. After gathering the ingredients, you will then need a griddle and a small pot. Open the can of soup it and dump it into the small pot. Immediately fill the empty can full of water and dump into the small pot. Stir the tomato soup and water while counting to twenty. Place soup mixture on a back burner and turn the heat on low. Meanwhile, heat the griddle and grab to slices of bread. You will need to butter each side of the bread slices and place on the preheated griddle until slightly brown. When the bread slices are flipped, grab two slices of cheese and place them on one slice of bread followed by the other bread slice. Continue cooking on each side until slightly brown and cheese is melted. Cut from corner to corner twice to make mini triangle grilled cheese sandwiches! Remove from griddle and place on a plate (large, flat, circular). You can then find a bowl (small, circular) and use a ladle or spoon to dish the tomato soup. Place the plate and bowl on the table and enjoy! Infants: be sure to constantly use the same language, have them feel each item before cooking with it. Talk about how the bread feels soft and the butter is cold from being in the fridge. Encourage them to listen when you pour the soup in the pot and to listen when it boils.	
<b>Multiple ways to recruit your child's interest and engagement:</b> Providing your child choices during meal preparation will promote engagement. In this scenario, you could provide your child with the choice to cut the sandwich into squares or triangles. Being able to make decisions such as this will promote learning and engagement. Infants: Make sure they can be as independent as possible, have them play with their silverware while you are cooking to get them familiar with the space around them.	
<b>Multiple ways to share information with your child:</b> During the kitchen preparation process, it is important for your child to gain hands on experiences such as finding the cheese in the fridge with the help of verbal positioning words (i.g. The cheese enclosed in a plastic bag in the bottom left draw of the fridge.) Keep in mind that describing sounds and smells can be helpful in gaining more understandings of the physical surroundings. With children of all ages, including infants, you can share information with your child by showing what they can do.	
<b>Multiple ways for your child to demonstrate what he or she knows and can do:</b> Your child can show their knowledge by listening to verbal ques throughout the process. Another way your child can show their knowledge is through their play. An example of this might be your child pretending to make soup during imaginary play. Infants: they can babble about the food, if they are verbal, they will talk about what they like and dislike. Showing awareness of what is familiar already is a way to show what they know as well.	
<b>Ways to encourage language during the activity:</b> To encourage language during this activity, you could read a book about the meal that is going to be prepared, one book I would recommend is <i>Who Grew My Soup?</i> By Tod Darbyshire. You could also encourage language by sharing different shapes, letters, or numbers that come up naturally in the meal preparation process. Infants: Talk about what you are doing throughout entire meal preparation.	

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**What questions would you like to ask your child's teacher?**