



Derby City Council

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Date 21 April 2020

A message to Parents/ Carers from the Vision Impairment Team during the Covid-19 pandemic

This message is for parents/ carers of children with Vision Impairment who were being supported by the Vision Impairment Team prior to the lockdown/ school closures.

Dear Parents / Carers

We hope this finds you well and safe during these unusual times. If your child is of school age, we hope you are coping with home schooling and are finding the support and materials provided by your child's school helpful.

We are still working and here to support you

As you may be aware, the STePS Vision Team (Sue Harvey, Jane Shipway, Alison Doyle-Stevenson and Adrian Farnsworth) are still working during the school closure period but support is limited and we are unable to carry out any face to face visits. We are available by phone and email. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns relating to your child's vision during this period. For quick reference, our contact details are listed at the end of this letter. There is also a list of websites and resources attached which are specific to children with VI which you may find helpful at this time.

Home schooling

Teachers have had very little time to prepare for this scenario and some schools are still open for a small number of children. If your child is finding it difficult to access materials provided by their school, for example if they aren't modified for your child's vision, please contact the school initially to resolve this. It may be that your child's teacher is ill / in isolation and materials have been provided by another teacher who isn't as aware of your child's needs.

STePS | People Services | The Council House, Corporation Street, Derby, DE1 2FS
www.derby.gov.uk

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There is an overwhelming number of online resources provided for parents during school closures but we know that much of it won't be accessible to many children with a vision impairment. Don't feel pressure to be a teacher as well as a parent or to provide a full timetable / curriculum for your child, particularly if you are managing more than one child and working yourself. Spending time with your children doing practical activities and having fun playing together can be really valuable for teaching them social skills, independence and life skills. Maybe try some of the following, depending on your child's age:

- Take time to develop independence and practise (age appropriate) self- help skills such as dressing / doing zips and buttons, washing, doing hair, making bed, folding and storing clothes and other belongings, tying laces, putting on make-up.
- Learn some simple kitchen skills whilst enjoying cooking or baking together – again age appropriate. For example preparation / food hygiene and hand washing, making own drinks or breakfast, laying the table, using the kettle safely, chopping fruit and vegetables, using the microwave, weighing and measuring ingredients and washing / drying pots!
- On your daily walk take time to teach some independent mobility skills. For younger children this could include spotting landmarks to help them learn a simple route such as home to the corner shop or bus stop. For older children this could be learning safe road crossing. Listening walks are also fun – see what sounds you can hear in different places or how many different voices, vehicles or birds you can hear.

Eye care

The hospital eye clinic isn't doing routine appointments but they are still open for eye emergencies and the orthoptists are still available by telephone if you have any concerns. (01332 785659)

If your child has glasses it is important these are worn as prescribed and are well fitting and in good repair. If your child breaks their glasses, contact your optician – some are still open for repairs or are doing telephone or online appointments.

VI team contacts

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