Build trust with families, communicate effectively, encourage children's learning, and strengthen family connections through everyday activities for young and school age children with visual impairments and additional disabilities.

A Home Visiting Teacher’s Manual

Seeing Is Believing Project- Shanxi China - 2018

Perkins International
Lisa A. Jacobs
Min C. Perera
Ami Tango-Limketkai
作为“看得见的希望”山西 CHEER 项目协调员,我深感荣幸,在过去的 5 年中,这个项目一直鼓励和激励了我,（感谢渣打银行和国际帕金斯盲校 4 个国际防盲机构对山西儿童眼保健项目的支持,以及卫生、教育和残联的倾力合作促使了这个项目的成功开展,）这个 5 年的宏伟项目,让我们看到了“看得见的希望”能为孩子做些什么,特别是在视力残疾儿童教育和康复领域, CHEER 项目推动了山西省送教上门、残疾儿童家庭支持工作的开展,我曾多次参加了家庭访问工作,每一次的家庭访问都令我记忆犹新和感动,我见证了家庭访问和送教上门工作的重要性,对残疾儿童及他们的家庭积极帮助和支持。

5 年的时间里,累计完成了 300 多个家庭的访问,这 300 多个家庭分布在我省从晋西北到晋东南,从太行山到吕梁山深处的一个个偏远山村;每次家庭活动,美国帕金斯盲校专家不远万里来到中国,亲自指导、示范,培训指导当地特殊教育教师和眼科医生,通过家访指导和康复,我们可喜地看到,有些孩子迈进学校的大门,有些孩子学会了走路;家长学会了与孩子的沟通和康复训练方法,转变了对孩子残疾的态度;特殊教育教师转变了对特教工作的认识,学习掌握开展送教上门的技能。

Cheer 项目培养了一批特殊教育教师骨干,建立医教结合、可持续开展送教上门机制。这些特殊的孩子生命如此脆弱,希望在这些孩子的生命时光里,作为社会一员,每一位老师、每一位医生都能尽我们所能,给予他们帮助,让他们一样享受生命的美好,感受阳光的温暖!

曾建林

Translated version:

As a "Seeing is Believing" Shanxi Cheer Project Coordinator, I am deeply honored in the past. For 5 years, this project has encouraged and inspired me, (thanks to the support of Standard Chartered Bank and International Perkins School for the Blind, preventable blindness agencies for children's eye care in Shanxi and the efforts of the Health, Education and Federation of the disabled to facilitate the success of this project). After 5 years of grandiose projects, I am hopeful to us see what "Seeing is Believing" has done for our children, especially in the field of education and rehabilitation for visually handicapped children. The Cheer project has pushed Shanxi province to do home visits and provide family support work for children with disabilities. I have participated in the family visit work many times. Every time I join a in a home visit, I am so moved. I have witnessed the importance of family visits, door-to-door work, active help and support for children with disabilities and their families.
We have seen families all over the Shanxi province from the northwest to Jindongnan and from Taihang Mountain to Lvliang Mountain deep in a remote mountain village. Every family activity, an expert from Perkins School for the Blind from the United States traveled to China, and provided hands-on guidance, demonstrations, training and guidance to local special education teachers and ophthalmologists. Through home visits guidance and rehabilitation, we are pleased to see some children into the school gate. Through the years, some children learned to walk, parents learned to communicate with their children, parents learned to apply rehabilitation training methods at home. We saw a deep change in attitude towards their child’s disability. Our special education teachers want to improve their work in special education, and to learn to master the skills to teach.

The CHEER project has trained a number of teachers of special education, set up a combination of medical education, sustainable teaching and door-to-door mechanism. Because these special children’s lives are so fragile, I hope that in the lives of these children, as a member of society, every teacher, every doctor can do what we can, give them help, let them enjoy the beauty of life, and feel the warmth of the sun!

Zeng Jianlin
Introduction

This manual was written for teachers of Shanxi Province special schools to use as a common resource when visiting children with multiple disabilities and visual impairment in their homes. The Seeing is Believing (SIB) project is funded through a Standard Chartered Bank initiative that has brought many partners together to identify children with vision loss and train teachers to be able to educate the children identified with a vision loss. Perkins International was responsible for the training of teachers, and through this opportunity, produced this manual for teachers.

The aim of this manual is to present easy-to-use techniques that will enable home visiting teachers to become successful in their work, and provide the most effective service for families of children with multiple disabilities.

While this manual is geared towards home visiting, yet the ideas and strategies presented in this manual can also be generalized beyond the home and schools and teaching in the community.

As a home visitor, we know that it is important to understand that every child and every family that you work with is unique. Each of them have different skill levels, likes and dislikes, family routines, beliefs, economic status, challenges, cultures and dreams for their child with disability.

Your skills in noticing these differences, through careful observation and listening, are very important in building trust with the families, communicating goals and strategies with them, and encouraging their child to learn through participating in everyday family activities in the home environment.

Ultimately, you must work towards preparing most children for school by making them develop the skills and confidence to leave their home and to learn in school like any of other child. Your strong skills as a teacher should lead you to finding out the strengths of every child and their family, and ways to use these strengths to help the child reach their fullest potential.

It is most important to help families dream of the possibilities for their child, and give them the necessary tools and a strong confidence to know they can get closer to their dreams.
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Chapter 1

Home Visiting Teachers

The most important role of a home visiting teacher is to promote a family’s confidence and competence in interacting with their child with disability and to encourage families to move forward in making the best decisions for their child’s future. A significant focus of home visits should be to encourage communication and to promote the child’s involvement within the family activities and routines.

Below are a few guidelines to help home visiting teachers be successful:

1. Take time to build a relationship and trust with the family. Interact with the family on a personal level but also in a professional manner. Listen to the family with no judgement.

2. Work with the student in the presence of the family. Touch, play and talk to the student calmly when appropriate.

3. Focus on what is good. Always find nice things about the family, student, and family practices. Give compliments.

4. Always use simple language when talking to the family. Explain your thoughts clearly. If family members can read or see photos, bring printed materials that they can learn from. Adjust the reading material to make it easier for the family to follow and understand.

5. Encourage families to think of the ideas and strategies themselves, or to ask questions. Their participation in making decisions is important.

6. Home visiting teachers and services can change and end at some time. Help families build independence and strength in doing what is best for their child.

7. Be flexible and respectful. You must be able to adapt our planned activities based on the situation of the family when you are doing a home visit. You must be able to work in different environments, home management styles and economic status.
Roles and Responsibilities of the Home Visiting Teacher

1. To support the building of a parent-child relationship.
2. To listen to parental concerns.
3. To support parents in their roles as advocates for their child.
4. To serve as an advocate for the child and family.
5. To observe the child in his natural setting.
6. To offer specific suggestions and activities for promoting the child’s development and well-being.
7. To strengthen the family’s capacity to provide their child with everyday natural learning opportunities.
8. To provide information about community resources and to make the connections and referrals to proper people and programs (i.e., referrals to vision specialists, attendance to parent seminars, referral to a school, etc.).

Be a good listener. The first step in building an open and healthy relationship with families is to allow the families to talk about their child. Encourage the family to share their hopes and dreams they have for their child.
This boy is named Zhu. He is 14 years old and has no language and does not go to school. The teacher asked the parents what their child likes to do. His family said that Zhu could not use his hands and did not have hand strength. The teacher and parents thought of things that Zhu can do using his hands productively. They created a work space using a chair and wooden board. The wooden board gave his elbows support. By giving him support to his hands and encouragement from the teacher, he could pluck the corn off the cob. His Mother cried, seeing him doing this work alone and now he can help his mother prepare meals, which contributes to his family life.
This child is 6 years old. He has no language, and is visually impaired. In this photo, the teacher is showing the parent how she is introducing herself to the child and letting him slowly get to know her at his own pace. She tells the parent about what a good conversation can look like with a child with disabilities. The first thing that needs to be established is a trusting relationship, and that can start with gentle offer of hands for exploration instead of grabbing his hand to shake or feel her.

The home visiting teacher should create ways to engage everyone who is involved in the child’s care and learning (many times, grandparents are most involved in the life and caregiving of the child). If appropriate, siblings should participate in the visit and be invited to share their points-of-view about the child’s likes, dislikes, and strengths.
A typical home visit may include:

1. Greet family members and spend time listening to what they want to say. Ask them questions about how they have been doing. Ask the family about concerns, questions and expectations they may have. Listen and offer emotional support.

2. Observe what the child does naturally in the home environment. Talk or play with the child with disabilities and the siblings. Play with the child and note his or her reaction to you. Do a simple assessment of the child.

The child with the eye patch is the child with disability. He is a very shy boy. The teacher involves his big sister in a game. The child with disability starts to be curious and the teacher was able to involve both children in the game and observe his interest and skills.
3. Share developmental information and review developmental changes

4. Discuss activities, get feedback from previous ones, and brainstorm next steps. Solve any issue together with the family.

5. Model activities. Let the family try doing the activity themselves and/or with the child while you provide guidance.

The caregivers are the ones who will be able to practice the skills with the child regularly until they are able to generalize it to other situations. It is best to model the activity with them, and immediately practice teaching it with you or with the child.

In this photo, the mother is practicing strategies on how to walk with her child safely when they are not inside the house.
6. Give family clear and simple printed instruction to help them follow, organize and understand.

Home visiting teachers can create short and simple handouts or find creative ways that can help parents remember things more easily, follow simple steps and transfer information to other people within the family with clarity. Teachers should give the right amount of materials presented in the clearest and easiest way to understand and use. You should choose what is best for the family to receive information.

7. Locate community resources. Share information about recent or upcoming medical or other appointments.

8. Schedule the next home visit.
Mei is a 6 year old girl who is blind with delays in her development. When her parents found out that their baby was blind, Mei’s mom wondered “What is my daughter’s life going to be like? Will she be able to do anything? Will she have friends? Will she be able to go to school and find work? How do I care for this child?” Mei’s mom was filled with worries.

A home visiting teacher came to Mei’s house and talked to her parents. The home visiting teacher said, “Mei is a beautiful little girl. I love her smile. She seems to be curious and friendly. She reached out to touch my face when I came over to say hello.” These words made Mei’s parents feel comfortable with the home visiting teacher. The teacher told Mei’s parents that blind babies can learn. She said “We must help her to learn. We can begin by letting her explore using her hearing, touch and smell. We should talk to her a lot. We can do exercises with her, so that she can develop her muscles and be strong. I know she can learn.”

Mei’s parents started to play home created games with Mei. Mei’s favorite game was “Stop and Go” where her father would rock her in a blanket and immediately stop. It made Mei giggle loudly. Mei’s parents sang and clapped with her. When she started walking, they taught her to walk around the house by feeling the walls, and soon she was able to walk to the toilet on her own.

Mei’s parents work in the market. They started to bring Mei to the market with them, and let her explore different fruits. They taught her to count the fruits and put them in baskets. They also let Mei greet the customers that come to their fruit stall. The market people became familiar with seeing Mei. They will greet her and bring her nice things to eat.

When it was time for Mei to go to school, she was used to traveling with her mobility cane. She was familiar to the sounds of a busy place. She was confident about greeting other people. When the children at school saw her coming in, some of them recognized her from the market. Every morning, when they see Mei come to school, they will come to her and greet her.

“We must help her to learn. We can begin by letting her explore using her hearing, touch and smell. We should talk to her a lot. We can do exercises with her, so that he can develop her muscles and be strong. I know he can learn.”

- HomeVisiting Teacher
Senses: Vision, auditory, tactile, vestibular, awareness of body and coordination, smell and taste

Mental: i.e. Thinking, wondering, problem solving, remembering, cause and effect

Social: i.e. Talking, listening, building relationship, seeking

Oral Motor: i.e. Sucking, chewing, swallowing

Gross Motor: i.e. Hold head up, walking, running, jumping

Communication: i.e. Responding to name and following directions and letting someone know what you want and need

Fine Motor: i.e. Grasping objects, using fingers, writing

Self-help: Dressing, toileting, feeding self, washing self

Organization: i.e. Work and study skills, staying on task, waiting for a turn

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How to Support A Child’s Development:

1. When a child sees an object or a person he likes, he reaches for it or them. This helps his arms and legs grow strong. We must make a child attend to objects or people’s voices to encourage them to move their bodies. Clapping and singing, or using toys that light up or make noises are ways to encourage children to reach and move towards the sound or object.

2. When a child plays with an object, he uses his thinking skills, like problem solving. Engage children in simple play that motivates them to use their memory, to recognize situations, to learn new experiences and concepts, to apply skills to new situations, and to problem solve. Play helps cognitive development. Find out what the child likes to do. If a child likes rocking, rock along with him and slowly build in other types of play from there such as stop and go or holding hands while rocking.

3. When a child sees the person talking to him, he will respond to the sound and imitate others. Children need many ways to understand what is going on around them. Use gestures, facial expressions, sounds, visual objects or photos to interact with the child. Find ways to communicate with them in ways they can understand and respond. When they try to communicate with you, respond to them quickly. Find as many opportunities for children to interact with other people in the family or outside of the family like playing with neighbors or helping neighbors.
4. When a child is allowed to do things for themselves, they become more independent. Children naturally want to imitate what others are doing. Children with disabilities do not always imitate. We need to directly teach them specific skills. Teach children to do simple tasks for themselves one step at a time. For example, when putting a jacket on, the mother can help do all the parts of putting the coat on the child, but the child can pull up her own zipper. The mother praises him for dressing. Next time, the mother can let the child help by letting him put his arms through the sleeves and pulling up the zipper, and slowly build the independence of the child. Practice often and be encouraging.

5. Expose children to objects, photos and print materials that they can understand and find interesting. Include reading, writing, or drawing in your daily activities like creating a grocery list, or drawing what Mommy will wear today, or talk about the fruit that you bought at the market while touching them and exploring them.
Development Chart:

A Developmental chart is intended to be used by a home visiting teacher as their professional reference to find out how a child is developing.

The teacher should be respectful of not using this chart to cause frustration for parents. Telling a parent that their child who is 10 years old functions at a 2 year old level is not helpful for parents or the child.

Children with multiple disabilities tend to achieve skills in their own rate, and do not often follow the typical milestones of children without disabilities.

It is not necessary for children to develop every skill in a developmental chart in sequence. Instead, it is more important to focus on what the child can, needs and wants to learn next and continue to encourage improvement.
Chapter 3: Assessment of a Child with Multiple Disabilities

Parents and caregivers are the people who know their child the best. They may not be able to give you a diagnosis of their child’s disability, or tell you the grade level of where their child is functioning, but they spend the most amount of time with their child in different situations and different environments. Your job as a home visiting teacher is to gather as much information from the parents as possible and help the parents find out:

- what skills the child already has and can be built upon,
- what the child likes and does not like, what can he tolerate and what he can’t tolerate,
- what skills and knowledge caregivers should develop in order to support the child
- how the child can learn most effectively
- how to create activities in their family routine for learning so the child participates more in daily activities and family life.

You will understand the child better by:

- assessing the skills and interests of the child,
- assessing the skills and interests of the family,
- assessing the child’s sensory functioning,
- interviewing the family and caregivers,
- observing the child,
- doing activities with the child,
- presenting different materials, activities and situations for the child to explore

As a teacher, you must remember:

- assessment is an ongoing process.
- information you gather from the assessment is what guides you and the parents to make decisions regarding the child.
- you may not have the answer to everything about the child, but through your assessment, you will understand the child better and be able to expand their opportunities to learn.
- to focus on building the skills and interests of the child, rather than the limitations and problems.
- your goal is to make the child reach their highest potential.

These next two chapters on assessment should be used by you as the teacher, as a guide in getting to know the family and child that you are working with. It is a good way to record a
baseline of the child’s abilities and skills and the parent’s views. It will also help you find out which areas need most attention. Keep a journal with you to record your responses.
Script to tell parents during interviews: I would like to talk to you more about (child’s name) health condition. This will not take too long, and all the information you give to me will be strictly confidential and your answers will not be used by anyone outside of the educational team.

MAY I START NOW?

- Yes, permission is given. Start the interview.
- No, permission is not given. Document this and discuss this with your supervisor for support. Initially, speak with the family and ask why? Should the interview be done:
  - At different time?
  - In a different place
  - With different people involved
  - Refused
  - Incapacitated
  - Others ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of child: ________________________________</th>
<th>Comment/ explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age: ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Information: ________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How is (child’s name) learning to SIT, STAND, or WALK? Does the child use a walker? wheelchair? Carried around?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) have difficulty seeing, either in the day time or at night? Tell me more about how he uses his/her eyes.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) appear to have any difficulty hearing (using hearing aids, hard of hearing or deaf)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you tell (child’s name) to do something, does she or he seem to understand what you are saying? Please explain. How? If not, why do you think he does not understand?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) have difficulty using or moving his/her arms or hands? Does the child have weakness in his arms or hands? Does the child hands’ move freely or are they stiff or inflexible?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) have seizures, become rigid or loses consciousness? What do you do when this happens? Was the child diagnosed by a doctor? Is the child on medication for this medical problem?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can (child’s name) do things like children his/her same age? What are the difficulties? Tell me what you observed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can (child’s name) take care of himself? Dressing, eating, toileting and/or washing his body?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) speak? If not, how does he communicate with you? How do you know when he is hungry?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do people outside your home understand his/her speech?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When given a toy, animal, cup or spoon, what mode of communication (words, sign language, gestures) does your child use to tell you what it is?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compared to other children his same age, does (child’s name) appear to be on age level or slow in learning? Please share an example of how you know this.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) eat and drink well? List some of his favorite foods and least favorite foods.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) enjoy playing with other children or adults? What is his best friend’s name?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) play with objects? What are his favorite objects? What kind of toys? How does he play with them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does (child’s name) frequently have tantrum? How often? What are they like? What do you do when this happens?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can (child’s name) pay attention to things he is doing? Can he wait his turn, allowing others to play?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is (child’s name) independent and safe when traveling around the house?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How about in the neighborhood?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does he use any assistive device to help him?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyeglasses? White Cane? Wheelchair? Bell? Computer? What are they used for?</td>
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**Hopes and wishes for the future of their Child:**

This conversation should be done in an open and accepting way allowing the family to share their thoughts. It does not need to be completed in the first visit but the questions can be answered through many home visits.

1. What hopes and dreams do you have for your child? For your family this year? In the next 5 years? In the future?

2. What activities would you want (name) to participate in at home or in the community?

3. What do you want your child to learn? What does your child want to learn or do?

4. What are the priority skills for your child to learn this year? What’s next?

5. What kind of support does your child need to be successful in school?
Chapter 4: Assessment of the Use of Senses

In this chapter, you will be exposed to a list of guiding questions to help you in your observations and interview as you begin to understand how the child you are visiting is using their senses. It is important to be mindful of many factors that affect how a child uses their senses and how they all interact with one another. Should you have questions, be sure to collaborate with other professionals in your school or county such as the teachers working with children who are blind or visually impaired or disabled people’s federation workers or local doctors.

ASSESSMENT OF VISION

Some children have difficulty seeing things, but are not totally blind. They can tell light from dark (i.e. they can tell when the door or windows are open from the light that is coming through). Other children can see objects depending on their color or size. Some children can read letters depending on how near the print is to their eyes.

Below are some guiding questions that will help you to determine how children use their vision when they don’t have formal language or does not use their voice.

If the child I am working with is visually attentive:
1. Does he/she attend to lights?
2. Does he/she attend to shiny/ reflective objects?
3. Does he/she attend to faces/people?
4. Does he/she attend to high contrast materials?
5. Does he/she attend to brightly colored materials?
6. Does he/she attend to objects?
7. Does he/she attend to pictures?
8. At what distance does he/she look?
9. How long can the child look before getting tired?
10. Are the objects familiar or unfamiliar?
11. Is the response better when it is quiet?
12. Are responses more consistent when the materials are moving or standing still?

**If the child wears glasses:**
1. When does he wear glasses? (only at home, school, near, distance)
2. How long will the child tolerate the glasses? glasses are on or off?

**LIGHTING**
If lighting affects the child’s vision:
1. What lighting conditions affect the vision?
2. Does the child seem sensitive to bright light?
3. Under what lighting does the child function best?

**If the child exhibits self-stimulatory behaviors:**
1. What do the behaviors look like (light gazing, eye poking, finger flicking)?
2. When do the behaviors usually occur?
3. How are they effectively re-directed?

**CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSE/ DELAYED VISUAL RESPONSE**
If the child has visual responses:
1. How consistent are the child’s visual responses?
2. Does the child’s functional use of vision appear to fluctuate?
3. Is there an immediate or a delayed visual response?

**VISUAL FIELD**
Describe the child’s visual responses in different visual fields, including central (when are focusing straight ahead) and peripheral vision (vision on the side gaze).

**CONTRAST**
Describe the child’s visual responses to varying levels of contrast (for example, the child accurately visually locates beige colored cereal in a contrasting red dish, but is unable to visually locate the cereal on a similar colored beige table surface)

**FIGURE GROUND**
Describe how the child responds to a visually “busy” background (for example, the child is able to visually locate a favorite toy on a solid-colored rug, but not on a multi-colored rug with a pattern; the child is able to visually shift gaze between two toys, but is unable to visually scan a whole shelf of toys or a toy box full of toys, to locate a favorite toy)
ACUITY
If the child is able to visually recognize items at different distances:
1. Objects (at what distance/size of object)
2. Pictures (at what distance/size of picture)
3. Gestures (at what distance/arm movement, hand/finger movement)
4. Facial expressions (at what distance?)

Suggestions to Enhance the Use of Vision:

- Ensure proper lighting, but reduce glare.

- Reduce visual clutter. Use plain background.

- Use high contrast, highlight on things you want the child to see clearly.
- Enlarge material to the size that the child can read

- Allow the child to bring things close to his eyes or to go closer to objects to see.

- Give the child time to process and understand what they are seeing
- Organize the space of the child

ASSESSMENT OF HEARING
It is difficult to determine the hearing abilities of children with additional disabilities like visual impairment. Formal auditory testing may not be available. There are many things to consider when working with children with multiple disabilities such as their irregular visual behavior, body movement, fatigue level, behaviors, motivation level, and subtle cues, which may easily be missed, that show response to an auditory cue. However, given that their other senses are compromised, it is important that they are maximizing the use of their remaining hearing abilities.

If the child wears hearing aids:
1. When does the child wear them?
2. For how long does the child wear them?
3. Do you notice a different in the child when he is wearing them?
4. How long has the child had hearing aids?

If the child has frequent ear infections:
1. Do they generally occur at a certain time of the year? Or a certain season?
2. How do they know when it hurts the child?

If the child responds to sounds:
1. How does the child respond to voice? Who’s voice?
2. How does the child respond to environmental sounds? Which sounds?
3. How does the child respond to music?
4. How does the child respond to toys? Which toys?
5. Is the response immediate or delayed?
6. Describe the child’s response to familiar sounds:
7. When you name objects, can he find it?
8. Describe the child’s response to unfamiliar sounds:
9. Does the child turn his/her head towards the sound?
10. Does the child respond when his/her name is called? (9 months up)

If the child is responsive to sounds in the environment:
1. What kind of responses does your child do to react to things in his environment?
2. What type of responses does he make to sounds?
3. What type of sounds does the child respond to?
4. Do you think there is a difference to his response to loud or soft sounds?
5. Is there more response to sound if it is quiet?
6. Does this change if the background is noisy?
7. Is there more response if the sound is made at a certain distance?
8. Is there difference in response if the sound is high pitch or low pitch?
9. Does your child seem to respond differently if he is tired? Or hungry? Or sick?
10. When he is upset, does your voice (caregiver) soothe him?

If the child expresses sounds:
1. Does he have different cries to express his need?
2. What kind of vocalizations does he make?
3. Does he seem to enjoy playing with the sounds he makes?
4. Does he engage in taking turns in making sounds?
5. Can he say any words? What words?

Suggestions to Enhance Hearing:

- Use simple words. Speak clearly.
- Face the child when speaking with them so they can see your face and lips.
- Reduce background noise so that they can focus on what you want them to hear.
- Bring their attention to what you want them to hear.
- Play turn taking with vocalizations. Encourage the use of listening carefully.
- Combine different modes of communication such as sign, touch, print, with speech to enhance the child’s understanding.
TACTUAL FUNCTIONING

If the child responds to touch:
1. How does the child respond to firm touch?
2. How does the child respond to light touch?

If the child responds to touching various objects/ textures/ people:
1. What behaviors tell you it is pleasurable?
2. What behaviors tell you the child dislikes it?
3. Which textures are preferred? (soft, hard, crunchy, predictable, etc.)
4. Is the child comfortable being touched on only certain parts of his body?
5. How does the child respond to unfamiliar or unusual textures?
6. How does the child respond to vibration?
7. Can the child recognize objects by touch?
8. Does the child like to be wrapped tightly in a blanket or like having a heavy blanket put on top of him?

MOVEMENT

If the child responds to movement activities:
1. How does the child respond to movement he/she initiates?
2. What is the response when someone else move him/her?
3. Is there a preference for certain movement (for example, slow rhythmic, predictable, etc.)?
4. Are there any movements the child dislikes or avoids?
5. What are positions the child likes?
6. What position does the child not like?
7. In what position is the child most alert and attentive?

OLFACTORY/TASTE

Describe the child’s responses to smell and tastes:
OVERALL SENSORY FUNCTIONING

SEARCH
1. Does the child search for lost or dropped items?
2. Is the search primarily visual, tactual or auditory? Describe.
3. At what distance does the child search?
4. How sustained is the search?

APPROACH FOR FINE MOTOR:
1. Are fine motor activities approached primarily visually or tactually?
2. Is the child’s reach visually directed?

If the child recognizes people/ objects:
1. What behavior tells you she recognizes
   a. Objects
   b. People
   c. Places
   d. Activities
2. What cues does the child use to recognize objects/ people/ places/ activities:
   a. Auditory cues?
   b. Tactual cues?
   c. Visual cues?
   d. Multi-sensory cues?
   e. Contextual/ environmental cues?

If the child takes time to respond:
1. How many seconds?
2. Does the time seem overly long?
3. Is the time needed to respond unpredictable?

If the child becomes sensory overloaded:
1. How does the child show signs of sensory overload?
   a. Does the child become quiet? Loud?
   b. Does the child become agitated or irritable?
   c. Does the child move away?
   d. Does the child show disinterest (describe)
   e. Does the child avoid tasks/ materials?
   f. Does the child close his/her eyes/ fall asleep?
2. How quickly can you tell that the child is overloaded?
**Sensory Responsiveness:**
1. What calms the child?
2. What alerts the child?
3. What stresses the child?
4. What overloads the child?
5. What motivates the child to move?
6. What are the sensory characteristics of the child's favorite toys?

**Suggestions to improve overall use of senses to increase focus and alertness:**

- **Exploration:** Bring the child outside the home to explore simple objects found in the environment. Talk to the child about the object or the environment while he slowly explores the object.
- **Movement:** Encourage a lot of movement through play. Dancing, clapping and singing are ways to motivate a child to move.
- **Balance:** Offer support for stability. Some children need you to hold them by the hips to stand, some need a hand to help them walk, while others can benefit from holding on to a cart or chair to maintain balance so their energy can be placed on other things like brushing their teeth.
- **To focus and attention:** Break tasks to small steps and take breaks to accomplish certain tasks. Find a way to make the breaks clear to the student like using a timer.
- **To calm:** Massaging the hands, feet and body at appropriate times during the day is a great way to create a calming feeling.
- **To use multi-sensory approach:** Allow the child to learn one concept using their different senses. For example, to learn about plants, reading stories about it, touching it, smelling it will be a much better way for the student to fully understand the plant than just by seeing a picture of it. This is true for learning many other skills and concepts.
- Tolerance for touch and texture: Put your hands under the child’s hand as you explore objects. Do not force the child’s hand to touch an object he is not ready for.
Over twenty five years of training teachers internationally has taught us to focus on the most important ideas that teachers can incorporate into their teaching practice. Sharing these ideas with families will bring many opportunities for learning that will lead to change for children with visual impairment and additional disabilities. We have chosen the five big ideas that we believe are the most important and shared them with the teachers included in the Seeing Is Believing Project in Taiyuan, China (2017). It is helpful for you, as home visiting teachers to share these ideas and the principles with the families you work with. Teachers can use the 5 Big Ideas to guide their planning for a learning program created for children. The "5 BIG ideas" are based on two main principles which are foundational to the education of children with multiple disabilities with or without visual impairment.

*We believe ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN*

*We believe ALL CHILDREN COMMUNICATE*

With a positive mindset that all children can learn and all children communicate, these "5 BIG ideas" will have more meaning and strength. If you use these ideas, you will create a profound impact in your teaching and the relationships you help build for the children and their families.
BIG idea #1: Use real objects and meaningful activities.

- Simple daily routines can be designed to allow many opportunities for teaching and building skills such as tooth brushing; the following are a few of the things a child can learn and develop when learning to brush his/her teeth:
  - How to make choices by picking which toothbrush or toothpaste to buy
  - Hand strength in grasping the toothbrush for prolonged period
  - Build fine motor in opening the package of a toothbrush or toothpaste
  - Develop hand and body coordination
  - Develop oral motor skills
  - Learn concepts like top or bottom row of teeth, front and back of teeth and parts of the mouth, like gums, tongue, incisors, canines, molars, etc.
  - Develop mobility skills while walking to the store to buy toothbrush or toothpaste or walking to the bathroom to brush their teeth
  - Learn simple math like counting teeth, or more complex like money skills when buying
  - Practice communicating skills with the seller to purchase the items
- Find activities in the home environment where the child can learn (i.e. bedtime routines, mealtime, or play time).
- Find materials in the home that can be used as teaching objects (i.e. apples, chopsticks, towels).
- Encourage exploration to broaden experiences and understandings of the world around them.
- Find activities that are meaningful for the child and family to motivate the child and family to learn and grow together.

(These photos show a young girl helping water the plants in her home garden. She is blind with cognitive problems.)
Encouraging a child with disabilities to be independent is a process that takes time. Teachers, parents and caregivers should be invested to constantly allow the child to develop confidence in their skills and to gain motivation in performing daily life activities. This often involves preparing the activity so the child can be successful, making it fun, and teaching a small step at a time, then pausing and WAITING to give the child time to perform a step of the activity or to complete the activity.

- Let the child participate actively in doing things completely on their own, or in some parts of a task.
- Give the child extra time to do a task on their own. Be patient.
- Let the child learn how to solve problems. Problem solving is important to prepare the child for school and for adult life. Remember that children learn from making mistakes.
- Break a task into small steps for the child to do. Take yourself through the whole task and write every step you do step by step. Allow the child to accomplish certain steps of a task until they can do the whole task on their own.
- Have high but realistic expectations for the child to learn.
BIG idea #3: Consistency with people, activities and environment.

- Students with disabilities learn best through repetition. They need repetition to help them build their skills.
- Give many opportunities for the child to practice building skills throughout their day.
- When teaching a skill:
  - Follow the same steps in completing a task.
  - Use the same caregivers and home visiting teachers who know the child and understand how they learn.
  - Use the same words and language each time you teach the same skill. For example, when one person teaches a child “Hold the spoon on your right hand and hold the plate with your left,” and another says “Grab the spoon and plate together,” this may be confusing for the child.
- Children learn best when they feel safe in the situation and person they are doing certain activities with. A predictable daily schedule at home helps children feel safe, so they are ready to learn and participate in activities.
BIG idea #4: Create learning activities using the child’s strengths and interests.

- Children learn best through guided learning, not forced learning. As a teacher, we must facilitate the child’s learning through following and building on the child’s interest and skills while considering the interest, skills and needs of the family.
- Choice making is a strategy that can make a child motivated to learn. For example, during meal time, the child can be asked which color of cup he/she would like to use, red or green.
- When you focus on the strengths and interests of children, you will be able to improve their skills and keep them motivated to on the tasks. If you try to impose your desires and expectations on a child, they will lose interest and fail to become an active learner.
- Focusing on the strengths of a child will give him/her the opportunity to keep improving and building skills. Focusing on the problems and limitations of the child may bring you down a path of frustration and hopelessness.
- Always consider the strengths and interests of the family. Utilize this to help connect with their child more effectively.
- Celebrate small and big successes. Stay positive and be encouraging to the family and to the child.
- Make learning fun.

In this photo, the mother takes the girl on a wheelchair to their home garden. They have put some pots high enough for the girl to reach. The girl helps pull out the vegetables for her mom and they sell the plants to their neighbors. This activity is something the mother and child looks forward to everyday. This is their work and their livelihood.
This child is has a hearing impairment, low vision and intellectual disability. She loves animals and animals love her. She does not like to do many things at home, and does not do well in studying in school. The family gave her more skills on how to properly take care of animals. Now, she works in the Veterinarian’s clinic cleaning the animals and feeding them. She is an excellent caregiver for animals.
One of the desired outcomes for 6 year old boy named Yu is for him to walk independently. The home visiting teacher asks Yu’s mother to describe times when Yu seems motivated to walk. The mother tells her that Yu loves to eat and will often move toward the dining table. Yu is blind and weak in both his legs and torso. Yu also shows learning delays.

Together, the mother and the teacher develop a routine for mealtimes to reach the goal for Yu to walk 3 feet to the chair by the dining table. They think that Yu can achieve this goal after 6 months.

They place a dark, high-contrast mat under his high chair to help him see the chair better. When it is time to eat, the mother gives Yu a spoon to touch to tell Yu that it is time to each and it is time for him to find the chair.

They started by expecting Yu to walk 3 steps to his chair. Once he gets to his chair, his mother would tap him on the shoulder and say “Up on the chair”. And lift him up. Slowly, the mother gradually increased the distance of where Yu is expected to take independent steps to the chair.

This is an example of how a goal can be integrated into a daily routine, with many opportunities for Yu to practice, while using Yu’s interest and strengths as starting point to motivate him to reach a goal that is valuable to his development.
**BIG idea #5: Partnership with Family.**

The family is the most important people in the child's life. As a home visiting teacher, you should understand the important role of parents, grandparents, siblings and caregivers is in the education of their child.

- Involve the family in creating and planning for activities for their child.
- The family should take lead in carrying out the activities with their child regularly.
- Every family has their own individual characteristics, dreams, hopes, strengths and challenges. However, a family with a child with disabilities goes through more challenges in life that affect their entire family.
- Families are likely to experience a range of emotions associated with the birth or diagnosis of an infant with a disability. Feelings like shock, anger, and sadness are all part of the process of coping with having a child with a disability.
- Home visiting teachers should be sensitive and good listeners.
- A healthy professional relationship between the family of the child and the home visiting teacher is one of the most important indicators of a successful home consultation.
When I watch the mother with the child during mealtime, I always see her feed the child. The child does not eat by himself because he cannot hold the spoon properly. I asked the mother if she has something to make the spoon handle thicker so that the child can have a good grip on the spoon. The mother has a wonderful idea. She took a small piece of towel and wrapped it around the spoon with 2 rubber bands from the rolled up newspaper next to her. She took the child’s hand, put it on the spoon and they put the food in the child’s mouth together.

After a few weeks like this, the child was able to put the food in his mouth by himself. The mother was crying with a happy smile on her face when she told me about this. I was so happy for them, it made me cry too.

- Home Visiting Teacher
Chapter 6: Communication Modes for Children who are Non-Speaking

For all children, communication is the key to their learning. The ability to take in information from others, understand the world around them, develop relationships with others, and express their feelings and needs is important. All children have the right to express what they want and how they feel, but this is not always easy to do. Some children may not express themselves appropriately or clearly enough for everyone to understand them and can get very frustrated. Some children have difficulty understanding what other people are telling them and can feel very isolated. As a home visiting teacher, you find ways to help the child learn to communicate in ways that will prepare the child for school or adult life.

Below is a list of communication modes and examples of how they are used. Some children can learn to communicate using one (1) communication mode (i.e. sign language), while others can use two (2) or more (i.e. making the sound close to the word, and pointing to a picture). The process of picking the proper communication mode to use with a child is individualized for each child. Sometimes, teaching the child to learn at least two (2) modes of communication will help others communicate with the child more clearly and allow others to communicate with the child in a natural way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Modes:</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking or Sounds</td>
<td>Saying “Y” for Wo Yao to express that he wants something. And saying “B” to express Bu Yao, which means, he doesn’t want something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Objects</td>
<td>The mom brings her son to the market to pick the fruit he wants. While touching the same fruit, they are having a conversation about it. Given two choices of fruits, the son picks up one fruit showing his Mom what he wants- he makes a choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestures</td>
<td>Pointing to tell their mother what they wants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial Expression</td>
<td>Pouting to show dislike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign Language</td>
<td>Doing the proper sign to the word, or close to it. This child is asking for “more” (i.e. food) during mealttime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs and Drawings</td>
<td>Children can point to the picture of an orange to say what fruit they want to eat. These pictures can also give them ideas on what food they can choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print or Braille</td>
<td>Communicating using Braille or print words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Using an tablet (i.e. Ipad) or a talker with pictures or small symbols.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Initial Strategies to Encourage Communication:

1. In the beginning, gather a list of words of things, person or activity that the child really likes and will need help from you to obtain.

2. Once you select the word, for example: “ball,” decide what the child can easily do that can get a clear response from his communication partner.

3. Teach him he can ask for the ball. For example, joining fingers of both hands.

   ![Image of two individuals signing "ball" in American Sign Language]

   You may begin by doing this action together with the child. For example, one clap together, then give the ball. Next, you may ask the child to clap on his own, and give him the ball. In time, you can ask the child what he wants, and he can clap once on his own to indicate ball.

4. Make sure the child gets the ball whenever he does the sign for it. This will help establish to the child that the caregiver is listening to him and that he is a true communication partner.
5. Make sure that the thing the child is working to communicate for (i.e. ball) is not available to the child all the time. The child may be able to see it, but he should not be able to get it on his own until he communicates ball by signing for it.

6. Provide only a small amount of time with the desired item. For example: one minute with the ball. Then take the ball from the child, and tell him to ask again. For example: Say, in an excited voice, “what do you want?” and as soon as the child indicates ball, return the ball.

7. Ensure that there are multiple opportunities for the child to practice asking for the object appropriately.

8. Provide choices whenever possible. Choice making is a useful strategy to involve children to learn about the power of communicating.

9. Be consistent in your teaching, and the child will soon learn that his signs and gestures have meaning.

10. Build on the child’s vocabulary to add other words or increase his words by saying things in a phrase or sentence.

For example, instead of requiring the child to just saying “Ball” to express what he wants, the next step may be to teach him to say “I want---- ball” using signs, voice, or photos, etc.
11. Talk to the child regularly and find ways on how they can understand. For example, use photos, objects, written, and descriptions and do fun activities using the object.

![Image of handwashing signs]

These picture symbols can help in letting the child understand what he needs to do when washing his hands. It can encourage some children to talk through the different steps in handwashing or point to the photos to communicate what they are doing during this process. Exciting conversations can happen about hand washing.

12. Always consider the 5 Big Ideas to think about how to expand a child’s understanding of the things around him. Positive emotional experiences will help the child remember what he/she learns more effectively. Have fun!
Chapter 7: Independent Living Skill

Developing independent living skills such as eating, dressing, toileting, washing or traveling independently are very important things that children can learn. When children can do valuable skills, they will develop a natural sense of accomplishment. When children become independent in many of these skills, there will be greater opportunities for them, such as going to school and finding employment as they reach adulthood.

Below are suggestions for home visiting teachers to share with families about how they can increase the independent living skills of their child with disabilities.

Suggestions to Teach Independent Living Skills:

1. Find natural routines and environments and use real objects to practice skills as regularly as possible.
2. Break down steps to simple tasks. Use simple language and clear instructions.
   - To break down the steps, do the task by yourself or with the caregiver
   - Have someone write down every step of the task.
   - The teacher and caregiver should practice the steps together before teaching the child.
   - Encourage the caregiver to practice with the child regularly.
3. When teaching the child, model doing the steps to the task or do it together by touch and by using proper communication strategies.
5. Consistency is a key to learning successfully. Be consistent with the words, teaching technique and order of teaching the steps to the child.
6. Create an easy to follow plan on paper with photos and clear instructions for the child and family.
7. Encourage and praise the accomplishment of small steps and big steps.
8. Encourage independence by slowly reducing the help you give the child.
9. Focus on the strengths, skills, and interest of the child and family.
10. Have high but also realistic expectations. Slowly increase your expectations for the child.
Skill # 1: Mealtime Skills

Materials Needed:

- Plate and/or bowl
- Cup
- Spoon, fork, chopsticks (for some children)
- Place mat or tray
- Table napkin
- Bib (for some children)
- Sticky place mat to hold the plate
- Wash cloth

General Tips for Teaching Mealtime Skills:

- Make meal time enjoyable!
  - Meal time is more enjoyable for children who are blind if they can easily find the food on their plate.
  - It is also more enjoyable for them if they help prepare the food (shopping, chopping, washing, cooking, setting the table, etc.).
  - It is also more enjoyable for some if meal time happens with people they enjoy.
  - Eat at regular times, not when the child is overly hungry.
  - Talk to the child and tell the child what they are eating.
  - Allow the child to explore the utensils and food.
  - It will be less stressful if you have a wash cloth and basin next to you during all meal times so that you are ready to wipe any spills when it happens.

- Use the proper equipment.
  - Use a plate or bowl that has raised edges to stop food from spilling.
  - Some children need to have the utensils adapted to allow them to be independent.
- Use a sticky place mat or tray to help the student define his space and find things easily and avoid the plate and cup from moving around.

- Ensure proper seating position. Never laying down even if the family sits on the floor to eat. Use adaptations as needed.
- Choose a chair with arms, if this will make the child feel safe and comfortable.
  - Make sure the child’s seat is not too high or too low from the eating table.
  - Make sure the child is sitting close to the table and facing his food.
- In the beginning, use a glass or mug with a wider opening. Slowly change it to different sizes once drinking becomes easier.
Steps in Mealtime:

Eating with hands

- When the child begins to pick up food with his hands, let him feel and smell the food.
- In the beginning, help him get the food with his hands until he can do this on his own.

- Help your child learn to bite off pieces of food in the front teeth and chew with the back teeth.
  - Show him by putting his hand on your jaw as you chew.
  - Put your hand by her jaw to gently move her jaw up and down to show her chewing.

Learn to Find Food on the Plate

- Always tell the child how his plate is organized. Put the same type of food in the same section of the plate for each meal. For example: the top left is always vegetables, the left lower side is always rice, and the right lower side is always the meat or protein.

- In the beginning of the meal, allow little children to quickly see the food on their plate by slightly touching them. Tell them what they are touching. You may guide the hand to search the plate in a clockwise direction.
Using a spoon:

- Let the child explore the spoon. Talk to the child about the front part of the spoon where the food goes, and the handle.
- To teach the child how to hold the spoon in the proper position, place your fingers over the child’s fingers grasping the spoon handle. Together, scoop the food with the spoon and bring it to his mouth.
- Use the words that describe the steps to eating such as:
  - Get the spoon
  - Scoop the food
  - Open your mouth
  - Chew and swallow
  - Put the spoon down into the bowl (or beside the bowl, so that the child can find it again)
- Practice with the child the motion of grasping the spoon, scooping and putting the spoon in the mouth.
- Sit behind the child. Make sure your hand guidance moves the child’s arm and hands to make the correct curve to bring food into the mouth.
- As the child’s grip on the spoon gets better, they will switch the way they hold the spoon to a more mature grasp so they can eat more easily.
• Always put the spoon on the child’s dominant (strong) hand.

• Let the child put one hand on the edge of the plate or bowl, while the other hand scoops to avoid spilling. The hand on the plate also keeps the plate stable.

• Be patient. Meal time may be messy, but it will be enjoyable. Let the child use a big table napkin to cover the clothes in case of spills.
• While the child is learning to use a spoon. Pick food that stays on the spoon easily, like a mashed potato.
• Work towards letting the child eat by themselves, give less hand and verbal support by slowly moving your hand away from the child’s hand to their wrist then arms.
Pouring a drink:

- When the child can hold a jug or pitcher, help him learn to pour his own water.
- Use a smaller or lighter container for pouring liquid into a small cup. Big containers can be too heavy for the child to pour.
- Let the child keep a finger inside the top of the cup so he/she can feel when the cup is full.
- Make sure the spout of the pitcher is touching the glass before pouring.
- Tell the child. “When the cup is full, stop pouring.” Explain what you mean by full.

Other Steps to Consider for Mealtime:

Mealtime can be broken down to different steps while allowing the student to be successful in doing some parts of the task and not the others, until they are able to perform most parts of the task independently.

Break down each of these steps to smaller steps to allow the student to perform a small step independently.

1. Drinking from a cup, glass and straw and different drink containers.
2. Eating soup and different textures of food.
3. Wiping mouth with a napkin, eating without mess.
4. Food safety. Knowing when food is bad or dirty.
5. Unwrapping packaged food.
6. Using a spoon, fork or chopsticks to eat.
7. Peeling a fruit by hand.
8. Using a knife to spread on a slide of bread.
9. Transferring food to own plate.
10. Use kitchen appliances like a knife, ladle, peeler.
11. Eating from different dishes and using different utensils.
12. Preparing simple meals and boiling water.
13. Using household electric appliances: kettle, rice cooker, water dispenser, microwave.
14. Preparing different types of food: grains, meat, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, etc.
15. Storing and organizing food: cabinet, refrigerator, table top.
16. Orientation of the kitchen.
17. Washing dishes and putting them away.
18. Cleaning the dining area.

**Skill #2: Dressing Skills**

**Materials Needed:**

- All clothing used for going outside (clothes related to the weather)
- All clothing used for indoors (depending on the activity or time of the day such as pajamas or clothes for playing).
- Organizational system for clothing (shelves, boxes as cabinets, hooks that are easy and safe for the child to use).
- Task board or communication chart to remind families on how to work with the child, or to help with the child’s independence in dressing.
- List of key words and key phrases that will be used for teaching dressing.
- A list of every step for teaching dressing
- Adaptation of materials to make it easier for the child to learn the skill.
General Tips for Teaching Dressing

- Talk to children about clothes they wear and what their functions are (i.e. “Let’s put on your hat to keep your head warm. It is cold outside.”)
- Tell the family to dress the child in the same location every day. Use the same language and same steps when teaching dressing.
- Teach dressing during the time that the child needs naturally needs to change their clothes, like teach taking clothes off for bath, and putting clothes on before going outside. This makes the child understand why he is doing what he is doing.
- Work with the family to give ideas on how to organize the child’s clothing so they can find their clothes more independently.
- Slowly back away and give the child the chance to do each step of the skill on their own, giving support as needed, and praise/encouragement for accomplishing tasks in dressing.
- Allow the child to problem solve. Give the child extra time to perform the task.
  - Allocate extra time for the child to participate in dressing for the event. For example, if bedtime is at 8pm. Begin dressing routine 1 hour before bedtime, instead of rushing the bedtime process.

Steps in Dressing:

Removing and Putting on Clothing

- Let the child touch what he is going to put on. Let him feel the clothing and how it is shaped before putting it on.
- Work on removing the clothing first, before putting on clothing.

Velcro can be used to help some students who cannot sit or stand well to put their shirt on easily.
• Communicate the steps with the child. For example: Yun, first, tuck your thumb fingers into your pants. Then push your pants down. Then, sit down and pull your pants off.
• Model the steps of dressing by holding the child’s hands and doing it together. Do not force the child’s hand into doing anything, if they are not ready.

• Communicate with the child. Describe the clothing to the child, including the parts, color, what it has (i.e. zippers, buttons) and what it’s for.

These are books that can be created by the family and the teacher to talk more about clothing with the child. The concepts in these books support the different things that are often talked about during dressing with a particular child who loves to talk about clothes. The book is about the pattern of clothing, or the different shapes and sizes of buttons.
• Mark the back of the child’s clothing (i.e. a small safety pin, or a small piece of cloth) so the child can tell the front from the back of the clothing. For example: Find the small tag, the tag always goes to your back. Do the same for shoes; put a marker on the shoe to identify the left side from the right side.

  o Let the child find the marker of the clothing first, then find the proper position before putting it on.
  o Provide the physical support as needed. Prepare or help hold the shirt in a position that allows the child to get their head through the hole.

• As you put the clothes on, tell the child the name of the clothing and the part of their body that it goes to. For example: Let’s put your shirt over your head.
• Putting on pants: make sure the child has the pants in proper position. Then, give the child time to put the pants on independently.

• For children who cannot do the task independently tell them to help you as you put the clothing on or off. Let the children know that they have to participate in dressing. For example: Yun, stretch your right arm and put it in the hole of the sleeve of your shirt. Good work. Now let’s do the left arm.
Buttoning

- Children who can hold things between their fingers and thumb may be ready to learn to button their clothing.
- It is easier to be behind the child when teaching them to button a shirt.
- For practice, you may use clothing with large buttons first.
- Teach unbuttoning first before buttoning.
- Communicate clear instruction while doing hand over hand modeling. For example: Yun, hold the button with your right hand, find the hole in the other side with your left hand, slip the button through the hole.
- Practice multiple times, and be patient.

Zipping

- Let the child explore the different parts of the zipper.
- Find words for each part that the child can understand and use the same words when talking to the child.
- Make sure the child learns the basic steps of finding the pull-tag, pulling it to zip up and down, and unfastening the bottom parts of the zipper.
- Sit behind the child to match the height of the child. Model the task of zipping by holding the child’s hand and doing it together.
- Provide support as needed. Slowly move away from helping the child as the child learns the skill.
- Talk the child through the steps of zipping and use the same sequence or order of zipping
  - Find the pull-tag
  - Pull the pull tag up and down
  - Undo the bottom of the zipper.
Fastening the bottom of the zipper

- Guide the child to locate both bottom ends of the zip.
- Make sure the pull tag is sitting next to the bottom of one end. Hold them together with the left hand.
- Slip the other bottom (tail) into the pull-tag and all the way to the base of the zipper
- Hold the base of the zipper down with one hand, while putting the pull-tag up to zip.

- Zippers can sometimes get stuck. Teach the child how to problem solve, or start from a step that makes sense, usually, by unzipping everything and start again.

Putting clothes away

- Organize the space for the child’s clothes. Think of how you’d like the child to understand it. Clothes you wear in the house stay in one place while all outside clothes stay together, all underwear, all socks, etc. Make this space permanent.
- Teach the child how the clothes are organized, and teach the child where they can find their clean clothes.
- Create a hanging area for outside clothes. Clear the space around it.
- Teach the child to put their clothes away in the same space each time.
• Teach the child about washing, drying, and folding the clothes and how they go back into their closet. Next time, allow the child to participate in this process.

Other Steps to Consider for Dressing:

Dressing can be broken down into different steps while allowing the child to be successful in doing some parts of the task only, until they are able to perform most parts of the task independently. Break down each of these steps to smaller steps to allow the student to perform a small step independently.

1. Remove shoes
2. Remove socks
3. Remove hat
4. Remove Jacket
5. Remove shirt
6. Remove pants
7. Remove underwear
8. Put dirty clothes away
9. Get clothes for dressing
10. Put on underpants
11. Put on camisole or bra for pre-teen girls
12. Put on shirt
13. Put on pants
14. Put on hat
15. Put on jacket
16. Put on socks
17. Put on shoes
18. Sorting, organizing clothes
19. Folding and hanging clothes
20. Picking proper clothes (i.e. for the activity, or weather)

**Skill # 3: Toileting**

Toilet training means letting your child keep clean and wear dry underwear during day and night. The child will have to only urinate or have a bowel movement in a designated location (toilet).

Having independent toileting skills is a very important ability for a child’s future. Many of their opportunities for entering schools, and finding a job when they reach adulthood may depend on their ability to use the toilet on their own.

**General Tips to Consider when Teaching Toileting:**

- Orient the child to parts of the toilet and how they are used (i.e. the door, lights, toilet bowl, flush, tissue, water, wash basin, sink, soap, towel, extra clean underwear, etc.).
- Being consistent.
  - The time for the child to use the toilet should be consistent all the time (i.e. 30 minutes after each meal).
  - Use the same steps in going to the toilet. Remind the family to use the same language when using the bathroom.
- Collect data for 2 weeks of when the child urinates or has a bowel movement.
  - Use this record to see if there is a pattern of when and how often the child needs to use the toilet.
  - If the child is wet often, take them to the toilet more times.
  - Create a chart for the family to use to keep track of how many times the child was successful.
• Teach the child how to sit or squat on the toilet
  o Girls usually sit or squat to urinate and have a bowel movement.
  o Boys sit or squat to have a bowel movement.
  o Most boys stand when they urinate
    o Let the child stand in the middle of the toilet bowl, knees touching the side of the bowl to locate the middle
    o Teach the child how to adjust so that they always aim low into the toilet bowl.
    o Young children may need a step stool to reach the toilet bowl
• Praise the child every time the child keeps dry and clean underwear.

• Prepare to give an immediate reward (i.e. a big praise, a special toy the child likes, etc.) for successful use of the toilet.
• Depending on the abilities of the child, have the child be involved in setting toileting goals.
  o You may let the child use a chart to record their progress
  o Provide reward when the child reaches their goal
  o Adjust the goal when necessary
• Do not show any frustration, disgust or anger to the child when an accident happens.
• Build a way for the child to be able to tell their caregivers that the child needs to use the bathroom. Remember that every child communicates different (i.e. sign language, sounds, photos, object, etc.).
• Each time the child is dirty or wet, bring him to the toilet to get changed. This will make him the child learn the use of the toilet.
• Allow the child to sit in the toilet for a maximum of 5 minutes each time, even if the child doesn’t go. This is getting the child used to sitting.
  o Use a timer.
    o It starts by letting the child sit only for a short time, building up to 5 minutes.
• Certain adaptations may need to be made or bought to allow a child to use the toilet independently or safely.

A seat may need to be created for children who cannot squat or homes that do not have toilet seats.

• Ensure that the child is properly supported and stable when using the toilet. They need to feel safe, comfortable and relaxed in order to be successful in the toilet.
  o Install heavy duty stability bars in the child’s home. These bars can be bought in the store.
Use a foot stool if necessary. Feet that are flat and stable are a better sitting position for the child.

Steps to Consider for Teaching Toileting Skills:

1. Knowing body parts
2. Indicating when the child needs to use the toilet
3. Knowing the parts and function on the toilet
4. Sitting or squatting over the toilet without resisting
5. Using the toilet for bowel movement
6. Using the toilet to urinate
7. Flushing
8. Using paper towel to wipe
9. Cleaning with water and soap
10. Toileting with no accidents in pants
11. Walking to the bathroom independently
12. Turning the lights or sink on to wash hands
13. For women, dealing with menstrual period
   a. Understanding changes
   b. Anticipating when it will happen each month
   c. Locating and using sanitary supplies
   d. Disposing used sanitary pad
   e. Coping with menstrual discomfort
   f. Washing private parts
14. Discussion about privacy when talking and using the toilet
15. Using public restrooms
Skill #4: Proper Hygiene

It is important for children with multiple disabilities and visual impairment to always smell, feel, and look clean. They need to learn how to participate in washing their hands, taking a bath, brushing their teeth, combing their hair just like any other child. It may take children with multiple disabilities longer to master these skills but it is essential to encourage independence. Adults should avoid the urge to do the task for them and be in a rush.

**General Tips to Consider when Teaching Proper Hygiene:**

- Break down each task into steps. For example, make a list of all the steps for teaching hand washing. Make a list of all the steps to teach teeth brushing.
- Teach these skills in its natural time and location.
- Be consistent with using the same techniques, words, and steps when teaching each task.
- Provide support to the child for each step of the task as needed. Start with full hand support if needed and be sure to remove or decrease your support for each task once the child is showing independence.

- Allow the child to do some steps of each task independently.
  - For example, at the end of hand washing, allow the child to turn the water off independently, and say “Nice work turning the water off”.

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During toileting routines, encourage the student to get their own underwear from the drawer even if the student is not yet toilet trained.

- Ensure safety:
  - Use nonskid rugs on the floor and nonskid mats in the tub, bathroom, etc.
  - Install a grab bar on the edge of the tub or a railing on the wall of the shower if it will help the child be safe.

- Organize hygiene materials for easy access (easy to locate and use):
  - Remove clutter in the bathroom.
  - Use a basket or a specific area of where the materials are, so they are easy to locate.
    - Use towels and washcloths in colors that contrast with the color of the bathroom floor, wall or tub.
    - Label objects in large print, photos or Braille.
- Using different shaped containers can be helpful for different items (i.e. lotion bottle is different from shampoo bottle)
- Use non-breakable containers like plastic rather than glass
- Use rubber bands, tape, or tactual markers to attach to containers to tell them apart.

- Teach communication skills.
  - Don't forget to that hygiene routines are opportunities to teach concepts like (in/out, up/down, wide/narrow, rough/soft, front/back, colors, counting, etc.)
  - Teach children their body parts and what they are for. For example: while brushing teeth, say, “You brush your teeth to keep them healthy so that you can bite and chew your favorite apples.”
• Build other skills like fine motor skills.
  o Have the child use and touch objects like a hair brush and toothbrush and talk about wet and dry items (towels, soap, sponges)
  o Use the lather of soap to promote finger sensitivity. Squeeze toothpaste and wring washcloths to develop hand strength.
  o Pull Kleenex from a tissue box to develop hand strength.
  o Students should learn to identify if their hair is neat, styled and clean by touch and asking other people’s opinion.

**Other Steps to Consider When Teaching Proper Hygiene:**

1. Hand washing
2. Brushing teeth
3. Face washing
4. Cleaning nose
5. Combs hair
6. Washes hair
7. Takes a shower or bath
8. Uses lotion
9. Cleans and cuts fingernails and toenails
10. Uses deodorant
11. For male: shaves
12. For female: shaving armpits

Notice how the caregiver is supporting the child at the elbows instead of the hand. This is a way to slowly remove the support she has been giving the child in turning the faucet off.
Skill #5: Orientation and Mobility

Training children with multiple disabilities and visual impairment to travel independently and safely around their home, in their backyard or out in the community allows children to build self-awareness, awareness of their environment and self-confidence. Orientation and mobility for children with multiple disabilities is very important to help them build awareness and understanding about the world around them.

Some basic methods of how children with visual impairment travel are by:

1. Walking on their own using their remaining vision and hearing, or by using some O&M techniques.

2. Walking with a companion by holding on to the arm of a sighted individual for guidance.

3. Using a long cane or stick. Using a white cane while applying some O&M techniques.
4. Using electronic travel devices like a phone App that provides directions for traveling.

This lady is standing at the bus stop independently, waiting for a ride. She used her mobile app to find the exact location of the bus stop.

5. For children who have physical disabilities, they may use a walker, wheelchair or be carried by an adult.
General Tips for Teaching Orientation and Mobility to Students:

- Keep the walking path clear from things that the child may trip on like toys on the ground, boxes, etc.
- Avoid moving furniture around.
- Prepare for different weather conditions. Wear proper clothing and gear, like sunglasses for children who are sensitive to glare.
- Do not leave a child in an open area. Lead him to a side of the room with a wall to hold on to, or a chair to sit and wait.
- Explain unusual noises especially when they are near the child, like a dog barking, or construction vehicles moving.
- Do not leave doors half open. Always keep it shut or fully open.
- Make the child always bear towards his right side all the time to avoid getting bumped into.
- Walk with a white cane even if they have low vision. The white cane will let others be aware of their special needs.
- Build sensory skills. Teach students to use their other senses to locate important places, like the ticking of the clock ear his desk, the sound of the fan in the bedroom, or the bumps on the floor to the bathroom.
- Create tactile landmarks to help the child identify different places around the house. For example, a piece of wash towel can be placed by the door to the bathroom, a piece of bedsheets for mom and dad’s bedroom, and a toy car to his own bedroom.
• When selecting routes to practice:
  o Select routes that are purposeful to learn like the bedroom to the bathroom, or
    the bedroom to the kitchen, or the kitchen to the living room.
  o Be clear of which routes to practice first, then gradually increase the routes
  o Practice those routes in the most natural time possible. For example, practice
    walking to the bathroom every morning when the child wakes up instead of
    carrying them there.
• Frequent repetition will help the child learn the routes independently.
• Be consistent in using the same words to identify things around the house or parts of
  the house.
• Use encouragement. Never force the child to walk or travel.
• If the child needs to carry things, have the child use a small bag so their hands are free.
• For children with low vision, you may consider using high contrast markers for floor,
  stairs, and corners on the wall.
• Work on various concepts related to traveling such as:
  o Left and Right
  o Back and front
  o Up and down
  o Bottom and top
  o Over and under
  o Far and near
- Low and high
- Inside and outside
- Beginning and end
- Off and on
- Closed and open
- Forward and backward
- Around
- Center
- Across
- Between
- Middle
- To and from
- Here and there
- Beside
- And other concepts found indoors and outdoors.
  - Wall
  - Window
  - Door
  - Floor
  - Ceiling
  - Light switch
  - Corner
  - Outlet
  - Fan
  - Stairs
  - Mailbox
  - Sidewalk
  - Curb
  - Parking lot
  - Driveway
  - Trash can
  - Lawn
  - Trees
  - Fence
  - Street
  - Corner
  - Stop sign
  - Traffic light
- Cars and other vehicles
- Colors, size, sounds, smell, and texture
- And many more....
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| Skill #3 |            |           |           |           |          |
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Summary Skill #1

Summary Skill #2

Summary Skill #3

Next Steps:
Chapter 6: Preparing a Child for School

As a home visiting teacher, an important part of your job is to help the child and family have the skills to be ready to attend and be successful in school, along with helping the school to be prepared for the child.

Preparing the Child for the Future:

The child you are working with may only be 5 years old, but someday the child will turn into a teenager. Then the child will turn into an adult. You can help the family set high goals for their child. You should encourage children to see themselves as independent adults, capable of doing things and experiencing many things. Help the child see their capabilities, while being realistic about their needs. This will allow the child and the family to look forward to a bright future, and learn how to get the support they need to reach their goals. People with disabilities can learn many skills. They can have friends, a family, a job, and enjoy doing leisure activities just like anyone else.

Tips on how to prepare the child for school:

- Teach the child to play with other groups of children.
  - At school, there are many children to play with. These children are all unique in their own ways. They make different sounds, and movements, and have various characteristics. Parents can help the child by allowing their child to have more experiences being with other children and playing with them.
• Talk about what a school is like.
  o Read stories to the child about children going to school.
  o Talk about siblings or children they know in the neighborhood who goes to school. Think of things they will be learning and playing in school.
  o Ask older children to play pretend school with the child.
  o Listen to the child’s concerns. If they are worried about going to school, simply offer them comfort. Do not criticize them.
• Take the child to visit the school and walk around the school.
  o The child will feel more comfortable if the child has visited the school several times. Let the child explore the classroom and the different parts of the school. Bring them during a quiet time, and when the child is more familiar, take them during busier times. Talking to a few teachers in the school will also help make the child feel more comfortable.
• Continue to strengthen the independent living skills of the child.
  o Being able to do many things for themselves builds confidence in the child to be away from home. If the child cannot do things on their own, they can ask for support from their new classmates or teachers. You can practice how to ask for help by role playing at home.

Preparing Families for the Future:

As a child approaches 5 years old or older, many families have questions and concerns about sending their child to school. Some families are used to keeping their child at home. The transition to send their child to school is going to be an emotional and anxious time for families. Home visiting teachers should assist families to learn about the transition process, the child’s rights to education, how to advocate for their child, and what they can expect when their child goes to school. Teachers should give a realistic and positive image of the possibilities that the child and family will experience once the child attends school.

Tips on How to Prepare Parents to Send Their Child to School:

• Connect parents with other families who have children with disabilities who are in school or going to school.
  o Parents who have children with disability can learn a lot from other families who have children with disabilities. Families can share many experiences with each other and even support each other with many things.
• Help parents get to know the abilities of their child on their own.
  o Teach them how to teach their child so that they can find out what their child can do.
    ▪ Read with their child to find out if their child recognizes some characters or understands some vocabulary.
    ▪ Play games to see if how their child can understand rules of games and follow directions.
    ▪ Learn how their child learns best (for children with low vision, what lighting or pen works best, etc.)
    ▪ Draw and write with their child for fun.

• Connect family with health care and community resources.
  o Some families may have a difficult time setting appointments with doctors and communicating with them. Support the families’ abilities by helping them know what questions to ask doctors and who to call and reach out to.

• Empower parents to talk about their child.
  o Work with parents in building their child’s confidence so they can go to school and talk with teachers and other parents. A healthy relationship between the parents and school is vital to the child’s successful experience in school.
Help parents be able to give information to the teachers about their child (what works for them to learn the most, what their interests are, and what they can do).

Help parents be able to give teachers information about their child’s disabilities and discuss their challenges (unique characteristics, health issues, and safety concerns that the school needs to be aware of).

- Remind parents about their child’s rights to education. Education is a human right, parents should not feel that they are asking the school for a favor to accept and provide proper service for their child.

Preparing the School for Receiving the Child:

Being able to attend school is a wonderful milestone for every child, including those with disabilities. It is the goal of the nation to be able to educate every child in the country and to prepare them to become strong and responsible citizens of China and valuable members of their community.

Having children with multiple disabilities attend school help everyone in school appreciate the differences in each and every child. The presence of children with multiple disabilities will push schools to make their teaching style and environment more accessible for every child. Being in school allows all children, children with and without disabilities to learn and support one another.
General Tips on How to Prepare the School for the Child:

- Discuss with the school any environmental adaptations or accommodations that need to be made.
  - Is the classroom accessible for the student to go to?
  - Does the seating arrangement support the learning of the child?
  - Are there ramps into the buildings?
  - Is there enough lighting in the classroom?
  - Is the classroom space arranged in an open and organized way?
  - Is there availability of special furniture or simple ways to change furniture (i.e. chair with back rest or arm rests.)
- Discuss with the school the learning support that the child needs.
  - Braille or large print
  - Low vision devices
  - Assistive technology
  - Other learning and teaching materials
  - Extra teacher in the classroom
  - Teaching strategies
  - Recommended special instruction or classes
- Share other information about the child:
Respecting Confidentiality

In transferring information about a child to school, it is important for the home visiting teacher to understand the balance of giving information and maintaining respect and confidentiality for the family.

- Mode of communication
- Health issues
- Behavior issues
- Child’s functional use of hearing and vision
- Results of the assessment you have done
- Skills, interest and challenges of the child
- Child’s learning style
- Family’s strengths and challenges and any support you think they may need.