

Children with vision loss: What can they see?



Vision Australia

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.

Aston and family,
Vision Australia clients



Supporting children with vision loss

Every child is unique and they interact and learn in their own wonderful way. Much of what we learn in life is through watching, so children with vision loss gather information about their world in different ways.

The images in this book will help you understand what a child with low vision can see. It's important to remember that low vision is individual to each child and to each eye condition.

What is visual acuity?

Visual acuity is the ability to see detail. Children are considered to be legally blind when they are unable to see at 6 metres a letter or symbol designed to be seen at 60 metres. In Australia it is expressed as a fraction between 6/6 and 6/60 or less for either near or distance vision.

The photographs in this booklet have been simulated to represent normal vision (6/6), moderate low vision (6/24), legal blindness (vision less than 6/60) and profound vision loss.

An eye specialist assesses visual acuity through a number of tests that may differ depending on the age of the child.

Cayden,
Vision Australia client



How can I help?

Low vision has a significant impact on the amount and quality of information that a child receives. Consequently a child's development, education and ability to socialise with others may be impacted.

The following strategies can be used in your home and school environment:

- Provide maximum contrast between objects and backgrounds using bright plain colours.
- Reduce glare with curtains and blinds and ensure that the child's back is to the window.
- Reduce clutter and pattern. It may be difficult to locate people and objects if the background is busy.
- Greet a child by name and say your name. Remember to bring your face close to their level to make identification easier.
- Provide time for children to look closely at objects and people, and to touch and explore so that they can add to their visual knowledge.

Faces

Poor contrast reduces the effective use of low vision and can make it more difficult to identify individuals.



Normal vision



Moderate low vision



Legal blindness



Profound vision loss

Good contrast ensures the best use of vision. It enhances the child's opportunities for communication and interaction.



Normal vision



Moderate low vision



Legal blindness



Profound vision loss

Table settings

Poor contrast reduces visual information and may make it more difficult for a child to locate food, cutlery and plates.



Normal vision



Moderate low vision



Legal blindness

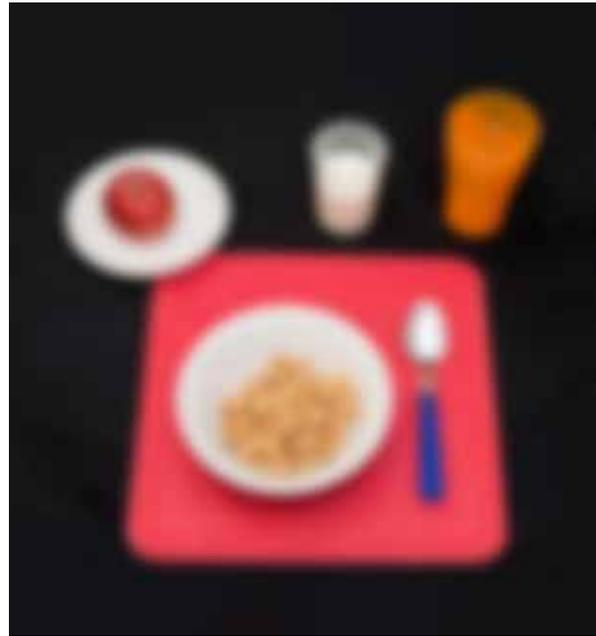


Profound vision loss

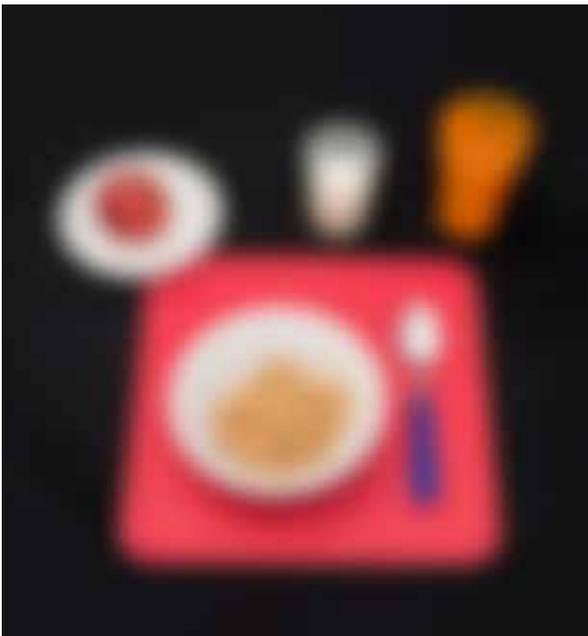
Good contrast will encourage independence skills because of easier visual location.



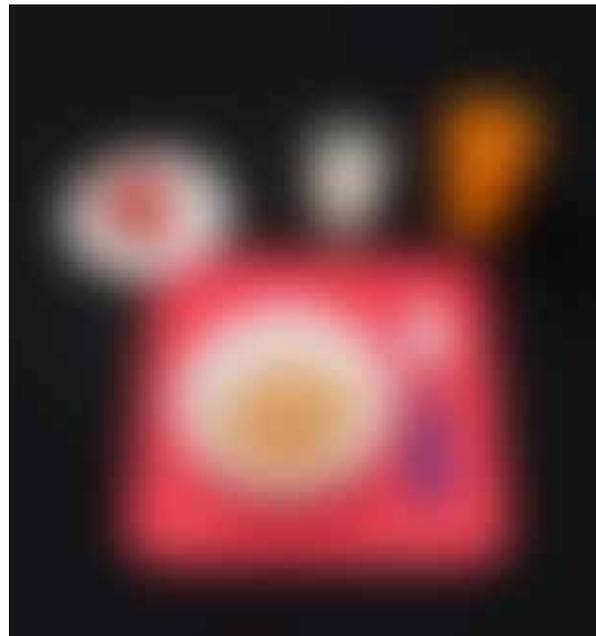
Normal vision



Moderate low vision



Legal blindness



Profound vision loss

Books and story time

Poor positioning and glare from windows reduces visual input for all children.



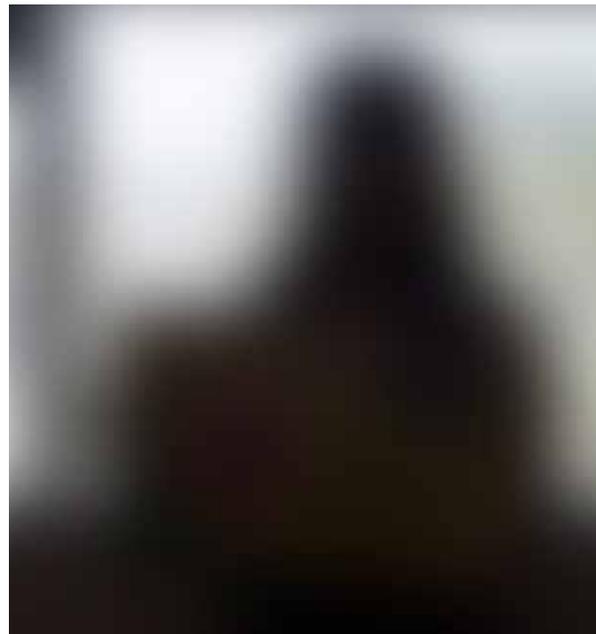
Normal vision



Moderate low vision



Legal blindness



Profound vision loss

Good positioning ensures that the background is not distracting and a diffuse light highlights the book and face of the adult.



Normal vision



Moderate low vision



Legal blindness



Profound vision loss

Outdoors

Glare and contrast are particularly important to consider outdoors. Even cloudy days can be glary and reduce the efficient, confident mobility of children with low vision.



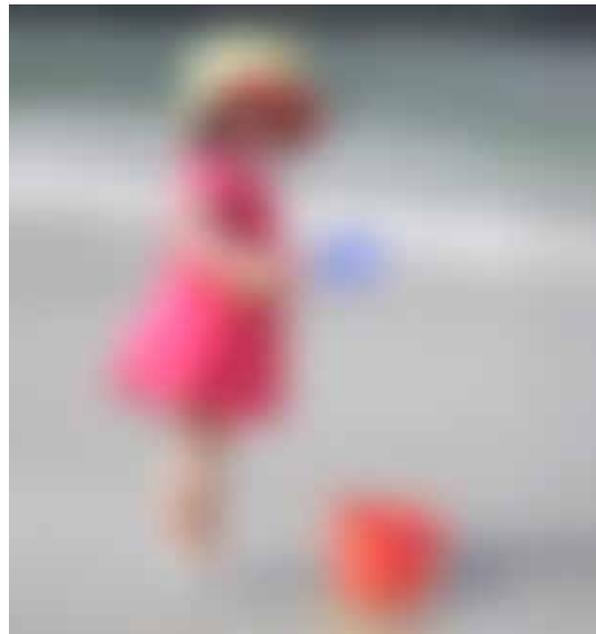
Normal vision – low contrast



Normal vision – high contrast



Profound vision loss –
low contrast



Profound vision loss –
high contrast

Background clutter can be visually distracting and it is important to view the environment from the children's level to be aware of their perspective.

Good contrast is needed to encourage independent play and mobility.



Normal vision – low contrast



Normal vision – high contrast



Profound vision loss – low contrast



Profound vision loss – high contrast

How can Vision Australia help?

Vision Australia provides support and services to people of all ages and stages of life who are blind or have low vision.

We work with children, their families and support networks to help each child reach their full potential.

We can help with learning and development during a child's early years so they reach their developmental milestones and are school-ready. Our support continues throughout their primary and secondary school years so they can make a successful transition into adulthood.

With the support of our allied health team, professionals and specialist staff, we can develop strategies unique to every child, to help them grow into confident, healthy, independent adults and live the life they choose.

Maxwell,
Vision Australia client



Vision Australia is the leading national provider of vision loss support

Phone 1300 84 74 66

Vision Australia has 28 metro and regional centres around Australia. Call us or visit our website to find the one closest to you.

Find out more about eye conditions and our specialised vision loss support

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 VisionAustralia
 @visionaustralia

Vision Australia acknowledges the support of state and commonwealth governments. For full acknowledgments see www.visionaustralia.org/gvtfunding

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