

## All about Guide Dogs for Early Years

Thank you for inviting us into your setting - we hope you have a fun learning experience with us! Please take the time to read this through before we visit alongside our risk assessment guidance. If you have any questions, please get in touch with the volunteer who is delivering your experience or email [learning@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:learning@guidedogs.org.uk).

### Overview of the experience

This 1-hour experience will sensitively introduce the idea of sight loss, inclusion, and charity workers to children in the Early Years. We'll show positive images of people with disability and explore the idea of similarities and differences in everyone. We'll explain how Guide Dogs helps.

- Introduction with video (10 mins).
- Our volunteer to run a focused activity for small groups (4 groups, 10 mins each), with the remainder of the class accessing our three other activities in free flow, with these supported by any available setting staff. These activities are exploring a tactile book, colouring with sensory crayons, making textured pictures, and accessing a dark den with sensory toys.
- Close of session with song (10 mins).

### Resources and set-up

We will provide all resources for this experience other than those everyday items requested below. The Wikki Stix we use for tactile picture-making have undergone testing in the UK and conform to BS5665/EN71. Resources are non-toxic and contain no latex/gluten/nut. The LED in the sensory toys cannot be removed.

Please can we ask for:

- Children to be sat as a whole group for the start of the experience with the four activities set up around the classroom to be accessed after our introduction - an area for doing our sensory colouring, an area for making our tactile pictures, a dark den, and an area to explore the tactile book.
- A screen and internet access to show the video.
- The colouring in sheet to be photocopied for the group.
- Work surface/laminate sheet to create the tactile pictures on (no glue required).
- A dark blanket available to create a dark den. Other sensory toys for this area you may have would add to the ones we bring.
- Optional: if you would like to purchase sensory crayons or Wikki Stix so you have them for use after our demonstration, please talk to us about this beforehand.





- Optional: if you have any other tactile books available, such as from the 'That's not my...' series.

In advance of the experience, alongside this document and risk assessment guidance, we will have sent through to you access to the video link, and the photocopyable colouring sheet and optional parent information letter.

## A few points to help things run smoothly...

- Please ensure there is shared understanding with yourself and our volunteer of the arrival procedure, timings, room set-up required, plus resources you can provide.
- Our volunteers will lead the content of the experience but will not be responsible for class management or organisation and should not be left in charge of any group or class. We politely request for children to show age-appropriate sensible behaviour throughout the experience.
- Please share any accessibility requirements or behavioural issues of pupils you feel the volunteer needs to know to lead the experience effectively.
- Some of our volunteers are guide dog owners and/or have sight loss. They will discuss with you any specific requirements before their visit but please ensure that routes to the site are accessible and that you take the lead in Q&A sessions as our volunteer may not see hands raised. Please use your own actions to demonstrate to students how to best support a person with sight loss - not distracting a guide dog, how to start a conversation to ask if they need assistance...if you're not sure, feel free to ask us!
- We won't be using our own mobile phones in your classroom, but we encourage all schools to take photos using their own systems and share on social media, tagging @GuideDogs in so we can share further and let everyone know what a wonderful group you are!

## Risk assessment

Please now read through our accompanying risk assessment guidance: this may help if you wish to fill out your own organisation's risk assessment. As the organiser of an activity, you're responsible for keeping everyone who's involved as safe as possible. We encourage you to discuss your risk assessment when in conversation with our volunteer prior to the experience. We also expect as a condition of booking that you have public liability insurance in place and may ask to see evidence of this.

Thank you for letting us share our learning experience with you!

End of document.

