

Starting Point

A guide for parents and carers
whose child has a vision impairment

**“We wanted a map of the next few years.
We really wanted to know what do we do
next.”**



Introduction

This leaflet has been written by a collaboration of organisations who support children and families. It will introduce you to the help and support you may want as the parents and carers of a child with a vision impairment.

Your child's diagnosis

You may be asking yourself what happens next and what the future holds for your child.

One of the most useful actions you can take is to get in touch with your local vision impairment education service. This is sometimes called the Sensory Service.

They will have qualified staff who will work with you and your child to support their play, development and learning.

The eye clinic should refer you to this service but if you haven't heard from them then get in touch with us and we will find the service details for you.



“We can help you understand your child's eye condition”



How we can help

You probably have a million different questions. You may want to know which organisations can help you, what resources are available or simply want to know “what do I do next?”. You may also want to meet other parents and carers who have been through a similar experience.

The Sight Advice FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) website draws from the expertise of vision impairment charities and eye health professionals and ensures you can access trusted information.

We can:

- explain your child’s sight condition and possible treatment
- help you understand what your child can see
- provide access to training and advice on your child’s early development and play
- put you in touch with other parents and carers
- connect you to national and local support organisations including local authority vision impairment services
- explain medical terms and the role of health and social care professionals who can support you

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- provide emotional and practical support for the whole family
 - offer information and advice on what benefits and grants you may be entitled to and how to apply

Looking ahead

There’s no right or wrong time to look ahead. Some parents and carers look to the future straight away, whilst others prefer to take it one day at a time. The important thing to remember is that, whenever you are ready, we can help you enjoy the countless special moments and milestones of being a parent or carer. From advice about your child starting nursery or school, through to enjoying hobbies and even going to work.



Our advice areas include:

- early years - how to help your child find out about the world
- education - starting school, university and beyond, and the role of specialist teachers
- leisure activities - making sure your child gets the most out of their hobbies and friendships, plus family weekends, events and regional activities
- supporting independence (mobility and living skills)
- health issues - information on eye conditions and therapies and the professionals you may meet

If you need to talk to someone, you can contact us through our helplines:

Guide Dogs

Guide Line: 0800 781 1444

www.guidedogs.org.uk/familysupport

RSBC (Royal Society for Blind Children)

020 3198 0225

www.rsbc.org.uk

RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People)

0303 123 9999

www.rnib.org.uk

Sight Advice FAQ

www.sightadvicefaq.org.uk



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