

## Teaching strategies

If a child is deafblind, it makes it much harder for a child to learn. Curriculum activities must be presented in the best possible way for each individual child and the [learning environment](#) needs to be optimised, and the [key approaches](#) of building trust, being consistent, helping understanding, taking time, following the child and being supportive should be used.

Many children who are multi-sensory-impaired need to work one-to-one with an adult for many activities. Staff need to know the child and have knowledge and expertise regarding deafblindness. Qualified teachers of children who are multi-sensory-impaired and trained intervenors need to have specialist training in multi-sensory impairment.

## Providing information

Deafblind children cannot pick up information incidentally. This means that every aspect of every activity may need to be deliberately presented to a child, in a way that they can access:

- Children need to know about an activity before it begins - what will happen, where and with whom
- They may also need to explore objects and places before using them in an activity
- Activities may need to be demonstrated hand-over-hand (adult's hands holding child's hands). This approach needs sensitivity to the child's responses - forcing the child will not help him or her to learn
- Many deafblind children cannot see or hear the results of their own or others' actions - for example, what happens to a ball when you throw it. They need specific feedback about activities and particularly about their successes.

## Learning in context

New skills or concepts to be learned need to be broken down into their components. This helps to avoid assuming that children already know about aspects of an activity (for example, that clothes get wet in the rain). It also helps in teaching, when very small steps may need to be taught one at a time.

It is important to teach these in the context of the whole activity, not in isolation. Deafblind children have particular problems linking one activity to another. They may not realise that separately-taught skills are supposed to fit together.

Nearly every activity will provide opportunities to practise communication and mobility, and to see how existing skills in these areas can be used in new contexts.

For physical skills such as dressing, forward or backward chaining are often useful. In forward chaining, the child learns the first small step, then the first and second and so on through the activity. Backward chaining, where the child learns the last step first, is often better because the child immediately gets the satisfaction of completing the activity.

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