BELS
Barnet Education & Learning Service

Specialist Teaching Team, Vision

Top tips – Creating an accessible home environment for students with a vision impairment

Colour and Contrast

- Surfaces should be painted in a matt finish to avoid glare.
- Floors should be plain and have a non-glare surface. These include items such as playmats.
- Walls should be painted to contrast with the floor and door frames should be highlighted in a contrasting colour to the walls.
- Door handles should be in a contrasting colour to the door.

Lighting

Lighting should be:

- Even throughout all areas.
- Good quality and without glare.
- Use blinds or curtains to cut out bright natural light that causes glare.
- Accessible light switches which are of a contrasting colour to the background.
- Lights should be kept on at all times when needed.

Steps, Stairs and Changes in Levels

- Handrails should be fitted on all sets of steps or stairs.
- Edges of outside steps should to be highlighted for contrast.
- Ramps should be clearly marked at the top and bottom.
- Surfaces should be kept as even as possible.
- Steps and stairs need to be well lit with even lighting.

Fixtures and Fittings

- Try to ensure furniture is in a colour that contrasts with the surroundings.
- Furniture with different textures will help to differentiate where they are in the home.
- Mats and rugs should be of a contrasting colour and non-slip. They also need regular checks to ensure the edges are not curling up and causing a tripping hazard.
- Avoid clutter in hallways and objects on the floor in rooms that could cause a trip hazard.
- Avoid having any head height obstacles (ie furniture that is mounted half-way up the wall.

General

- Keep objects in the same place consistently so that they are easy to find.
- Push chairs back under tables when you have finished with them to avoid trip hazards.