

3. Sensory Considerations for Learners with Visual & Hearing Loss, Multisensory Learning

3B: Unusual Visual Conditions

Glaucoma

What is this?

Glaucoma is a result of increasing pressure from the fluid in the eye on the optic nerve, eventually causing damage. Childhood glaucoma is very rare. It should be picked up in routine tests and it can be managed through medication and surgery.

What causes this?

This is caused by a gradual blockage developing in the drainage channels in the eye.

What does this mean for the learner in my class?

Learners with glaucoma may experience difficulties with:

- bright light and glare inside (from windows or reflective surfaces) and outside (sun glasses/hats will reduce discomfort from sunshine)
- identifying spatial markers - adequate contrast between different surfaces i.e. wall/floor/door/workstations is needed

Albinism

What is this?

Albinism is a congenital disorder characterized by a lack of pigmentation (melanin) in the skin and the iris (coloured part of the eye) and retina.

What causes this?

Reduced pigmentation in the retina reduces clarity of vision, as less light is detected by the retina and sent to the brain via the optic nerve. Learners may also experience the following co-existing visual impairments - short or long sightedness, squint or nystagmus.

What does this mean for the learner in my class?

Learners with albinism may experience difficulties with:

- increased sensitivity to light
- visual acuity
- And may hold his/her head in an unusual position in order to see objects or surroundings as clearly as possible

Retinosa Pegmentosa

What is this?

A rare condition where the cells in the retina begin to break down, causing a loss of peripheral vision.

What causes this?

Retinosa Pigmentosa is an inherited or genetic condition.

What does this mean for the learner in my class?

Learners with retinosa pigmentosa will experience difficulties with:

- a darkened environment
- needing time to adjust to changes in lighting
- discomfort in bright light



Retinopathy of Prematurity

This eye condition is linked with babies born very prematurely and/or with a very low birth weight, who may have had oxygen treatment after birth.

What is this?

A baby born before it's expected delivery date has immature development of the retina at birth. The development of the retina after birth is abnormal.

What causes this?

This is caused by abnormal and fragile blood vessels growing over the retina, which may leak causing scarring to the retina. The retina may be pulled out of position.

What does this mean for the learner in my class?

A learner with retinopathy of prematurity will experience difficulties with:

- shortsightedness
- squint
- damage to the visual pathway in the brain.

Retinoblastoma

What is this?

Retinoblastoma is a very rare childhood cancer and early intervention is successful.

What causes this?

Retinoblastoma develops in the immature cells of the retina and may spread further into the eye. It may affect just one or both eyes.

What does this mean for the learner in my class?

A learner with retinoblastoma may experience difficulties with:

focusing on an object/person
controlling eye movements
reduced vision