

Guiding a Visually Impaired Child



GUIDING A VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILD

When acting as a sighted guide for a visually impaired child:

- Always ask the visually impaired child, how they would prefer you to guide them, holding your elbow, you walking slightly in front, or standing to their side.
- Treat the visually impaired child as an individual in their own right, always ask what the child requires of you and avoid speaking in the 'third person' .
- Never push or pull the visually impaired child, they should be in control.
- Describe the environment – it is often helpful to provide simple information with regard to obstacles to be faced, for example, 'we are approaching three steps'.
- If you need to leave a visually impaired child alone, always inform the individual of this, they may not be aware you have gone if you do not inform them.
- Try to take into account the physical build of the child you are guiding, doorway widths, vary and may cause nasty knocks.
- When you leave a visually impaired child in a room alone, always guide to a chair or a solid object, perhaps briefly describing the room, in order to provide points of reference.
- Allow time – activities may take a little longer for a blind or partially sighted child – work at the individual's pace.

Disclaimer: Information sheets have been produced to provide information and advice for the parents of visually impaired children. Changes may occur in theories and legislation, however, the information sheets have been written in good faith, as a general guidance tool. If you have any questions with regard to issues raised by the information sheet, please contact the National Blind Children's Society, National Family Support and Information Manager.

