



## Introduction to A Shared Vision's Learning Experiences<sup>®</sup>

In the annual caregiver surveys our families often mentioned that they would like activities they could do with their children at home, in between visits with their teachers and other providers. We listened to you. And the idea of “Learning Experiences” was born.

The Learning Experiences adhere to the principles of early intervention. They are guided activities you can do in your home or via telehealth with your Early Intervention Teacher of the Visually Impaired (EI-TV). The intent is that you can continue the experience on your own because that's when real learning occurs.

The experiences are tied to everyday routines like play time, bathing, and feeding because routines help all children feel assured that the world is an orderly place. Routines are especially important for your child because they probably won't have the benefit of incidental learning, the ability to see what other people are doing around them. Establishing a routine helps them develop a sense of cause and effect and what comes next throughout the course of a day. It also promotes their independence.

The learning experiences can and should be adapted to your child's developmental age and your goals. The experiences don't have to be completed in their entirety either. Most can be broken down into smaller activities based on the needs of your child or your own abilities.

Many of the experiences use materials that are easily found in your home or in your backyard, or your teacher can choose to provide the materials for you. Most importantly, the experiences are meant to be fun!

### **EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM**

When your child transitions to school-based programming, they will study the same basic academic subjects that sighted children do, from how to tell time to how to write a persuasive essay. But to master these subjects (often known as the “core curriculum”) and complete their schoolwork – as well as to eventually live and work independently – your child will learn an additional set of skills known as the “expanded core curriculum.”

The learning experiences address the nine core areas of the ECC, including compensatory skills, independent living, orientation and mobility, recreation and leisure, self-determination, sensory efficiency, social skills, assistive technology, and career education. They show concrete examples of how ECC concepts can be incorporated into everyday routines in a fun, meaningful way right in your own home!

## **ABOUT EACH EXPERIENCE**

Each experience has a brief introduction, an approximate duration of the activity, a list of materials required for the activity, and the activity steps. Many of them also include helpful tips. All of them have a list of “extension activities” – other experiences that might reinforce the learning that occurs during the activity, like reading books, making an experience book, singing songs, or playing a game.

Basic strategies, especially hand-under-hand, verbal descriptions, reading your child’s cues, wait time, and sensory learning, are imbedded into every experience so you can practice these strategies during the activity both with your teacher and on your own. All the experiences give you multiple opportunities for communication and engagement with your child.

## **GET STARTED!**

Discuss your interest in an activity with your teacher first so she can help you choose an experience based on the developmental needs of your child and your family’s interests. Familiarize yourself with the steps in the activity and assemble any materials ahead of time. Make a date to do the experience with your teacher first, either in your home or via telehealth.

As mentioned before, it’s not necessary to complete the whole activity, especially if you or your child lose interest or become tired. The experiences can be easily broken down into a smaller subset of activities. There is no “right way” to complete the activity because every child and every family is different.

The experiences can also be completed with extended family members, like grandparents or older siblings.

Some of the learning experiences can even be used sequentially. You could read “Five Little Pumpkins” and then make pumpkin pie play dough afterwards. The experience about scanning the home for objects complements “How to Travel Without Leaving the Home.”

After completing the experience, try some of the extension activities. We hope the learning experiences will inspire you to come up with your own creative ideas!

If you have any questions or comments about the learning experiences, please contact your EI-TVI. We are always looking for ways we can improve the experiences and welcome your feedback.