

MONOCULAR VISION



Monocular vision means 'sight in one eye only'. This information sheet explains specific challenges some children with monocular vision may face. If your child has impaired vision in both or in their remaining eye contact a CHECT support worker for further information on vision impairment.

Many children learn to cope very well with sight in one eye only and, in general, the earlier the child loses their eye (or sight), the less likely they are to experience the difficulties described below.

PLEASE NOTE:

Every child is different and therefore will adapt differently. The ability to adapt is not related to intelligence - some people will simply struggle with certain tasks in certain settings. Children with special needs may always find some activities challenging.

This information is based on studies into adults with monocular vision, and it is widely assumed that children will be affected in a similar way.

HOW MONOCULAR VISION CAN AFFECT A CHILD

With monocular vision the field of vision is reduced by approximately 15 - 20 degrees.

However, the sighted eye can see surprisingly far into the other half of the visual field. Children will usually adapt by turning their head and body slightly more, so they can see things in the periphery of their vision. They will also try to position themselves, when in a group, so that people are sitting to their good side thus reducing the need to

turn their bodies: this may become a subconscious action.

- Babies and small children may need to be encouraged to explore beyond their visual field e.g. placing toys just outside their visual field - this will help them develop skills they will need in later life.
- A child may be unaware of people and objects on their blind side. This can

be especially hazardous in an unfamiliar, busy cluttered environment.

- Some children may have difficulty judging distances and depth.
- Difficult activities can include pouring liquid, threading, cutting out, and tying shoelaces. It may take a child a little longer to master certain tasks because of this.

Safety

Safety is of prime concern when supporting a child who has monocular vision. When leading a young child by the hand, hold the hand on the blind side to protect the child. Road safety issues must be emphasised as the child may be less aware of traffic approaching on their blind side and of speed. Protective eyewear and sports goggles are recommended during some PE and other activities and extra care should be taken in lessons involving potential hazards, eg science, woodwork and cookery.

In the classroom

- Make sure everything of importance is either in front of the child or to the sighted side.
- Check the child is in the best position during assembly, story time etc and when an overhead projector is used.
- The teacher or work partner should sit on the child's good side when working with them. When approaching the child from behind, try to approach on his/her sighted side.

- Try to maintain eye-to-eye contact with the child's sighted eye.
- A child with monocular vision should never be expected to share a worksheet or a textbook.

Outside the classroom

Some children will struggle with judging speed of moving targets and tasks that rely on good hand-eye coordination such as throwing and catching a ball. During some PE lessons the child may need to be positioned so he/she has a good view of the pitch with their seeing eye.

Games or playground activities may be frightening because of fast-moving groups of children or objects. Children may get startled or jumpy when someone approaches quickly on their blind side.

Driving

Most monocular-sighted people can hold an ordinary licence if they're still able to meet the standards of vision for driving, although they will need to inform the DVLA and their insurance company of their condition.

Be aware that you can be fined up to £1,000 if you don't tell the DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving. You may be prosecuted if you're involved in an accident as a result. Consult your eye specialist if you have any doubt about whether your vision meets the requirements.

If you have a health condition or vision impairment in your sighted eye, please check the rules for that condition with the DVLA.

SUPPORT:

Please get in touch with one of our support workers if you would like to discuss any of the information in this leaflet, or visit our website for information on treatments and stories from other families affected by Rb.

We can connect you with others whose children have monocular vision, or you can also post on our Facebook page asking for someone with experience to message you privately.

www.chect.org.uk

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