Club Handout Template 1

My name is …………………………………………………….

I have a visual impairment, my sight condition is ………………………….…………… if you would like to find out a bit more about it.

I love playing/doing (whatever the club is)…………………………………………. I just need a little extra support to help me join in like everyone else.

The best way to support me is: (for example)

1. Introduce yourself by name when you talk to me

This helps me know who is talking to me, so I can focus on what you’re saying, not on trying to figure out who is saying it.

2. Use my name when giving instructions

I can’t see body language, movements or eye contact, so I won’t know that you’re talking to me, unless you use my name first.

3. Introduce me to the other children

I like to know who is around me so I know who to talk to. It also helps me to identify where my friends are if the room is busy.

4. Be specific with directions/instructions

Please describe in detail what you need me to do. For example, instead of pointing or saying ‘over there’ say, ‘at the back of the room between the door and the table’

5. Provide a visual commentary

I like to know what is going on, I can feel left out of the group if people are laughing or talking about something that I can’t see. Please describe as much as possible what is happening so I can feel included in the activity.

6. Try not to move things too much.

I am very good at learning where things are quickly. To make that easy for me, please try to keep things in the same place for each session. This means I will need less assistance and ask less questions.

Please keep this sheet available for anyone who may be involved in teaching this session.

Club Handout Template 2

Hi there

I am the parent of …………………………………………………, he/she has a (severe) visual impairment and his/her condition is called ……………………………………………………, if you wish to find out more about it. Thank you for including him/her in your group.

I am giving you this information about my child and his/her disability, with the view to helping him/her transition into your club/class/organisation as smoothly as possible. As a parent it took me a long time to work out the best ways to do things so I could be as aware as possible of how his/her needs differ with having a sight impairment. Generally, things can be very easily adapted so that they are accessible.

Here is a list of things to think about when working with ………………………………………………………….

1. Don’t treat him/her differently

Whilst it can be easy for parents of blind children to wrap them in cotton wool, that doesn’t help them. They won’t learn to explore, to try things and it will limit their independence as they grow older. Treat (child’s name) like any other child, you still need to make sure he/she is safe, but if he/she falls over it’s not the end of the world.

Likewise, we can’t all be “inspirational” and being told that you are several times a week is quite draining. There are inspirational disabled people, those who take part in the Paralympics for example, but being told you are inspirational because you get out of bed every day or because you are dressed nicely is both demeaning and frustrating.

2. Don’t panic about what not to say

Whilst there are some terms which are offensive, don’t overthink things too much. It’s a normal part of speech to say, ‘I watched something on TV’, ‘I saw something in the news’, ‘I looked at something twice’ and so on. So don’t be afraid to use it.

3. Try not to move things too much

Where possible try to keep things in the same place for each session my child is with you. This will make things so much easier for him/her in terms of navigation and it will be beneficial to you as a teacher as he/she will need less assistance and ask less questions as a result. I understand that this isn’t always possible, but informing him/her of a change of location of a certain item early on will give him/her the best possible start.

4. Give help when asked

There are some things which take longer when you can’t see what you’re doing and some which are much more difficult. Although it is good to promote a ‘just get on with it’ attitude, sometimes being (child’s name)’s eyes can be a massive help. If you don’t have time to help at that exact moment, just say so, but if you can help it would be really appreciated.

5. The visual commentary

It can be really frustrating to (child’s name) when everyone else is laughing or commenting on something he/she can’t see. If possible try to explain what you can see. That way the environment becomes inclusive for him/her and he/she fully participates. Visual commentaries are a great way of keeping (child’s name) in the loop with his/her surroundings.

6. Use (child’s name) name when giving an instruction.

As (child’s name) may not be able to see that he/she is being looked at, observe body movements or know he/she is being spoken to directly, always use his/her name first, that way he/she will know that whatever you have said applies to him/her.

Yes, some things may take my child a little longer to do; yes, he/she may sometimes ask for help! But he/she can do pretty much everything that any other child can do as long as he/she is shown how or if things can be made accessible for him/her so that he/she can do it independently. Please never be worried about coming and talking to me about the best ways to approach certain situations, I am here to help!

Many thanks!