

**Module: Assessment of Infants and Toddlers With
Visual Impairments**

**Session 1: Legal Basis and Overview of
Recommended Practices**

**Handout A: Assessment of Infants and Toddlers With Visual
Impairments Vignettes, Session 1**

EIVI Training Center. (2006). *Assessment of infants and toddlers with visual impairments vignettes, Session 1*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers With Visual Impairments.

Casper

Casper, an 18-month-old who is blind due to retinoblastoma, and his mother, Julia, are playing on the kitchen floor. Casper's TVI, Tamara, has arranged for a transdisciplinary play-based assessment to monitor his developmental progress. As Casper and Julia play, Tamara and Casper's orientation and mobility specialist observe. Casper crawls toward one of the kitchen cabinets and attempts to open the door by pulling at the corner of the cabinet door. When Casper is unsuccessful in opening the door, Julia verbally prompts him to find the doorknob. Casper searches for the knob without locating it. Tamara suggests that Julia try tapping next to the knob to provide Casper with an auditory cue. When Julia does this, Casper immediately locates the knob and pulls the cabinet open.

Casper is delighted with the "treasures" he finds in the cabinet. He pulls out different containers and pots. Julia gets a few more kitchen items and places them in the cabinet. Casper soon attempts to crawl inside the cabinet. At first he is not able to turn around in the cabinet, but he soon maneuvers himself around and sits down. Casper suddenly freezes as he hears a sound from the garage. "Dada," he verbalizes. Julia confirms and expands: "Is Daddy home? I think you might be right. Let's go meet him by the door."

Before Tamara and the orientation and mobility specialist end their visit, they share their observations with Casper's parents. Casper's parents eagerly describe their observations of Casper during daily routines and play.

Humar

Hannah and her son, Humar, a two-year-old with ocular albinism, are eating dinner together. Hannah praises Humar for tasting her new chicken dish. Humar smiles

proudly as he picks up another piece of chicken. Although she is glad that her young son will try new foods, Hannah would like for him to become more competent with a spoon and fork.

When Brandon, Humar's teacher of children with visual impairments (TVI), arrives for his weekly home visit with the family, Hannah tells him that she would like Humar to start using utensils instead of his fingers, at least for some foods. Brandon suggests that they schedule a session during mealtime so that he can observe Humar while he eats. Hannah is excited about learning how to help her son eat with a spoon and fork so that he can become more independent. She tells Brandon how much she appreciates his sensitivity to her values, observations, and suggestions for Humar's intervention goals.

Aaron

Aaron is a friendly 30-month-old with cortical visual impairment, global developmental delays, and physical disabilities, including high muscle tone. Eileen, Aaron's TVI, provided an in-service training session on cortical visual impairment for Aaron's early intervention program and childcare staff. Monica, his occupational therapist (OT), joined Aaron and Eileen at Aaron's childcare center to identify how Aaron's combined visual and physical disabilities were affecting his ability to interact with people and objects in his childcare setting.

As Eileen positioned Aaron on his back on a semicircular "boppy" pillow, she noticed that as Aaron turned his head to the right, his right arm and leg extended and his left arm and leg flexed. Monica explained to Eileen that Aaron's asymmetrical tonic neck reflex (ATNR) is not integrated, and that, in this position, he would not be able to effectively turn to look at or reach for objects presented by Eileen.

To reduce the ATNR, Monica provided support for Aaron's head in midline. With his head in midline, Aaron was able to coordinate hands and eyes to locate and reach for a red Mylar balloon presented to his left and right. Eileen realized that, without Monica's explanations, she might have incorrectly concluded that Aaron could not see the red balloon. Monica left their collaborative session with an understanding that she should use red objects without noise, that she should stop unrelated "chatter" while interacting with Aaron, and that she should allow more time for Aaron to react.

Monica and Eileen's subsequent joint assessments gave Aaron the chance to really show his abilities. Given enough time to process visual information and respond to it, Aaron was able to shift his gaze between two familiar toys and then indicate his choice by maintaining his gaze on the toy he preferred. Monica and Eileen shared their observations with Aaron's parents by writing in the notebook that accompanied Aaron as he traveled from his childcare center and home each day.

Olivia

Olivia, a two-year-old with aniridia, glaucoma, and visual field loss, is being observed by her intervention team in her home as she plays with her favorite baby doll. Olivia's mother participates in the assessment by playing with Olivia. Olivia holds the baby in her arms as she feeds her a bottle. Because Olivia is photophobic, the TVI has dimmed the lighting and pulled the shades so that Olivia's vision will be less affected by the lighting conditions and glare. Olivia's mother carefully considers the presentation of objects to Olivia during their play.