

Module: **Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility**

Session 1: Foundations of Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility

Study Questions and Answers for Recommended Reading C: Hill, Rosen, Correa, & Langley

Hill, E.W., Rosen, S., Correa, V.I., & Langley, M.B. (1984). Preschool O&M: An expanded definition. *Education of the Visually Handicapped*, 16(2), 58-71.

1. Identify challenges in motor development for children with visual impairments.
Children with visual impairments tend to progress more slowly, require explicit modeling, move more slowly during actual movement, and require large amounts of practice to achieve skills.
2. How does cognitive development relate to environmental and community awareness?
Children develop cognitive abilities through experiences and interactions with their environments. Interactions in the environment provide concrete meanings for abstract concepts. Facilitating cognitive development through O&M activities also promotes environmental and community awareness. Examples include taking children out to a supermarket or a farm or for a walk around the neighborhood, and describing simply and concisely everything they experience through their available senses. These experiences give meaning to words and help children understand the environment, which in turn facilitates the development of concepts, incidental learning, and a more complete understanding of how the world works.
3. How are temporal and spatial relationships different for children with visual impairments?
It is easier for children who are blind to form temporal relationships because they can focus and understand what is happening to them at the time in relation to their senses and the way they feel. Spatial relationships are much more difficult because they cannot see them, and the other senses do not provide as complete and accurate a picture.

4. How do fear and anxiety contribute to developmental lags or abnormal development in children with visual impairments? How does this relate to personality development?
- **Children with visual impairments may be reluctant to move about in the world, especially in unfamiliar settings, for fear of injury. This fear may be greater if the parents are also fearful and anxious about the child being injured and are therefore overly protective. As a result, children’s motor skills and posture will not develop as normally as those of children who move regularly. When children with visual impairments feel safe and comfortable in their environments, they are more active and will develop better motor skills.**
 - **A feeling of security enhances self-esteem and self-confidence. It also facilitates independence, freeing the child from having to rely on others.**
5. Why do many children with congenital blindness have delays in language development?
- Many children with blindness do not have the experiences to give concrete meaning to words, particularly spatial terms. They cannot see distances and positions, and they experience them differently than do sighted individuals. Because children with blindness live in a sighted world, they must learn to use terms that they do not fully understand or that they experience differently. Additionally, it takes longer for them to fully understand the meaning of some words because their experience is fragmented and based primarily on the senses of sound and touch; they learn by moving from the part to the whole. Sighted children, by contrast, can learn through holistic visual experiences.**
6. What should orientation and mobility specialists (OMSs) emphasize to parents of children with visual impairments?
- OMSs need to emphasize the importance of parents’ playing an active role in therapy. Parents need a clear understanding of what the OMS does and why, so that they can apply the concepts at home and fit them into daily routines. OMSs can also help parents understand child development and behavior in order to appreciate their child as an individual with unique needs. OMSs also need to help parents recognize they are part of the team, working together to form interventions that will work for the individual child in the context of their environment and the needs of their family.**