

Monocular Vision

What does this mean?

Monocular vision means 'sight in one eye only'. Many children with monocular vision experience few or no problems at all in their daily life especially when they have had the condition from birth. Children who have recently lost vision in one eye often adapt very quickly to their change in sight.

The effects of monocular vision are:

- The field of vision is reduced on the affected side
- Perception of three dimensions is diminished.

Implications for learning

Field of Vision

- The field of vision is reduced by approximately 20%. However, the good eye can see surprisingly far into the other half of the visual field.
- A child may be unaware of people and objects on their blind side. This can be especially hazardous in an unfamiliar, busy or cluttered environment.

Depth of vision

- A child with sight in one eye may have difficulty judging distances and depth.
- A child with sight in one eye lacks three-dimensional stereoscopic vision and they may sometimes not recognise steps or kerbs unless clearly marked.

Hand-eye coordination:

- Difficult activities can include pouring liquid, threading, cutting out and tying shoelaces.

Judgment of speed and distance:

- Games or playground activities may be frightening because of fast moving groups of children or objects. Speed and distance may be harder to judge. Children may get 'spooked' or jumpy when someone approaches quickly on their blind side.

Ways to help

- Make sure everything of importance is either in front of the child or to the good side.
- Check that the child is in the best position in the classroom.
- The teacher or work partner should generally sit on the child's good side when working with them. Occasionally a partner can be on the child's blind side to remind them to scan and look in this direction.
- 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 textbook. When using text, the text should be placed on their seeing side.
- The reduced visual field is likely to slow the child down when scanning or searching for his/her place on the whiteboard, book or shelf.
- Avoid unnecessary hazards, e.g. obstacles on the floor, half open doors/windows. Children with monocular vision may be reluctant to join in some activities, particularly racquet games. Ball games may be more difficult for a child with monocular vision
- 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. Protective goggles are strongly recommended by medical professionals when taking part in sporting activities.
- Road safety issues must be emphasised as the child may be less aware of traffic approaching on their blind side.

Other resources:

W: berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk/

<https://chect.org.uk/protective-eyewear-for-children-with-monocular-vision>

Acknowledgements to childhood eye cancer trust – information re monocular vision