

**Working collaboratively to ensure the  
VI child with complex needs can best  
meet their educational outcomes within  
the mainstream EYFS environment**

**Michelle Jones Head of Sensory Support,  
External Services, Seashell**

**Seashell**

# Population and statistics

The population of children and young adults (0-25) with vision impairment is thought to account for around 2% of the total school/college population (DFE, 2021)

Around 50% of those VI children and young adults are thought to have additional or complex needs.

[Key issues for VI education in England - VIEW](#)

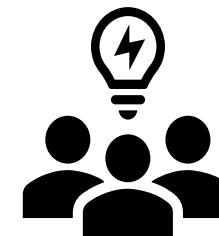


When additional or complex needs are combined with vision impairment the young person will experience a unique range of challenges which require a highly specialised and collaborative approach

[Key issues for VI education in England - VIEW](#)



# Co-production



**Co-production** is one of the core principles underpinning all legislation and guidance related to SEND

When this is applied effectively it can enable the child or young person, their parents/carers and multiple professionals to work together as equal partners to achieve shared outcomes.



# Collaboration



Dictionary definition

the situation of two or more people working together to create or achieve the same thing ...

**Seashell**



# EYFS Overarching Principle

Children benefit from a strong partnership  
between  
practitioners and parents and carers



# Case Study: Max

- Looked after child with foster carers from the age of 2
- FASD (Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder)
- Vision impairment: CVI, nystagmus, myopic (glasses)
- Hearing: clinical assessment within 'normal' range possible processing difficulties
- Mobility: could shuffle and commando crawl
- Tactile sensitive
- Developmental delay
- Sensory Processing challenges

**Seashell**

# Multi-disciplinary team (MDT)

## Education

### Local sensory team

QTVI

Habilitation Specialist

QTMSI,

Early years support worker

Portage



## Social care

Disabled Children's

Team Social Worker,

OT

IRO

## Health

Ophthalmologists

Orthoptists

Physiotherapists

Occupational Therapists

Speech and Language Therapists

Child Development Play Therapists

Health visitor

Audiologists



# Before Max could start nursery ...

- Holistic functional sensory assessment with recommendations (observation)
- SaLT assessment – identification of communication needs – inclusive communication approach
- OT assessment – sensory processing needs and postural support / equipment needs
- Physio – postural support, programme identified
- Habilitation: environmental audit ...



## Before Max could start nursery ...

- Identification of staff training needs (VI, FASD) and initial awareness raising session
- Settling sessions for Max (familiarisation with environment, spending time with new people ..)
- Identification of Max's strengths and needs – target setting, activity planning, curriculum (MDT)



# Targeted support: building relationships

- Modelling simple action rhymes with Max ie peekaboo, round and round the garden. Enjoyed the repetition and this was a good ‘way in’ for nursery staff.
- Modelling how you copy Max’s sounds, body movements and gestures (intensive interaction) supporting staff to understand that it is ok to pause and wait for a response – take his lead (expressive communication)

*Early Years Foundation Stage: Personal social emotional, communication and interaction*

*Developmental Journal Multiple Needs: Communication, PSE*



# Targeted support: early communication (strategies developed jointly with SaLT)

- Creating concrete routines for Max so he could be supported to anticipate what was going to happen next and begin to make choices
- Providing simple scripts (step by step) within those routines for activities and encouraging staff to scaffold his learning

*EYFS: Communication and Language*  
*DJMN: Communication, Thinking*



# Targeted support: early communication

- Identification of simple object cues for motivating, functional activities within his familiar routines (receptive communication)
- Introducing now/next and finished baskets to support his understanding of the routines using concrete objects
- Continuing to use the ‘on body’ signs introduced at home to support an inclusive communication approach (receptive communication)



# Targeted support: reactive environment

- Resonance board - modelled how to engage Max using it as his active learning space and to promote early mobility skills
- Dark den for vision work and because he liked it to hide in sometimes when experiencing sensory overload
- Responsive communication partner

*EYFS: physical development, communication and language*

*DJMN: physical, thinking, communication*

# Targeted support: reactive environment



[Resonance Board - Active Learning Space](#)

[Sensory dark den cube tent](#)



**Seashell**



# Targeted support: sensory play working jointly with EY support worker

- Tactile exploration – used the Messy Play Hierarchy to introduce him firstly to dry easy textures using a hand ‘under’ hand
- Sensory story and massage sessions modelled to staff enabling Max to develop skills of anticipation, interaction, joint attention, body awareness



# Messy Play Texture Hierarchy

Easy	Challenging		
<p>Dry textures fall away and the child can control contact with the texture.</p>	<p>Dry textures that mostly fall away, some particles or bits may stick to the hand.</p>	<p>Wet textures that stick to the hand but the child can easily break contact with the texture (e.g. by lightly wiping)</p>	<p>Wet textures that stick to the hand and the child has least control when breaking contact with the texture (e.g. by repeatedly wiping).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feathers</li> <li>▪ Shredded paper</li> <li>▪ Dry Pasta / spaghetti</li> <li>▪ Dry Rice</li> <li>▪ Dry porridge oats</li> <li>▪ String</li> <li>▪ Lace</li> <li>▪ Fabric squares</li> <li>▪ Fur fabric</li> <li>▪ Dry sand</li> <li>▪ Beads</li> <li>▪ Plastic items</li> <li>▪ Sea shells</li> <li>▪ Coconut husks</li> <li>▪ Dry lentils / beans</li> <li>▪ Dried flowers</li> <li>▪ Hay / straw</li> <li>▪ Leaves</li> <li>▪ Cotton wool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Damp Sand</li> <li>▪ Glitter</li> <li>▪ Sequins</li> <li>▪ Touching mixture of corn flour mixed with water.</li> <li>▪ Cold wet pasta / spaghetti</li> <li>▪ Wet rice</li> <li>▪ Silly string</li> <li>▪ Chalks</li> <li>▪ Playdough</li> <li>▪ Compost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Foam (e.g. light shaving foam)</li> <li>▪ Water</li> <li>▪ Wet sand</li> <li>▪ Wet noodles</li> <li>▪ Wet lentils</li> <li>▪ Baked beans</li> <li>▪ Jelly</li> <li>▪ Mashed potato</li> <li>▪ Ice cubes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Foam (e.g. heavy shaving foam)</li> <li>▪ Glue</li> <li>▪ Melted chocolate</li> <li>▪ Mashed banana</li> <li>▪ Dripping mixture of corn flour mixed with water on the skin</li> <li>▪ Mud</li> <li>▪ Angel delight</li> <li>▪ Porridge</li> <li>▪ Custard</li> <li>▪ Yoghurt</li> <li>▪ Ice cream</li> <li>▪ Finger Paint / poster paint</li> <li>▪ Tinned Spaghetti</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 20px;">Items may also include additional properties at this end of the scale (e.g. ice cream is wet, sticky and cold)</p>

# Targeted support: sensory play

- Use of feet to explore materials - the foot spa provided fantastic opportunities for communication and the introduction of a simple switch to promote cause and effect
- Toys already in the setting provide opportunities for joint attention – treasure baskets with natural/ real objects, light up toys, cause and effect ...

*EYFS: physical development, communication and language*

*DJMN: physical, thinking, communication*

# Targeted support: sensory play



**Seashell**



# Targeted support: social skills

- Awareness of peers through shared activities (water play, play doh) – common goal
- Building those strong trusting relationships with the adults promoting a sense of self

*EYFS: PSE, communication and language*

*DJMN: thinking, communication*



# Targeted support: independence working jointly with the Habilitation Specialist

‘Do with not for’ using small steps within scripts to support Max to be an active participant in self help activities – putting on his coat

Giving the nursery staff ‘permission’ to stand back and observe whilst being ready to scaffold his learning when required – not an easy thing to do!

*EYFS: PSE, communication and language*  
*DJMN: thinking, physical, PSE, communication*



# Targeted support: movement working jointly with Hab and Physio

Support to use equipment to learn to pull up to standing and over time 'push a long' toys under close supervision of the keyworker to move around with his peers

Support to access the outdoor areas and play alongside peers – routes, landmarks, environmental cues

*EYFS PSE, physical development*  
*DJMN: thinking, physical, PSE*



# Role of the specialist teacher within the MDT

- Specialist curriculum monitoring, assessment and target setting with the MDT
- Regular joint visits to Max with the other professionals
- Attending regular MDT meetings
- Ongoing liaison with family
- Modelling good practice to the nursery staff and training
- Ongoing monitoring of Max's voice – what activities was he enjoying / not enjoying being responsive to his needs



## Documentation

Sensory Profile

Case notes / reports

All about me

Individual Learning and  
Development Plan

Communication Passport

Assess Plan Do Review

One page plan

EHCP submission

**Seashell**



# Curriculum Frameworks / Resources

- [Development Journal for Children with Multiple Needs](#)
- Development Journal for babies and young children with visual impairment (DJVI) [Developmental Journal Babies Visual Impairment \(DJVI\) OFFICIAL available from XIP \(uclb.com\)](#)
- Success from the Start: A developmental resource. - [Success from the start | Documents and resources \(ndcs.org.uk\)](#)
- Engagement Model - [The engagement model - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

# Curriculum Frameworks / Resources

- Oregon Project. - [The Oregon Project for Preschool Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired – Paths to Literacy](#)
- Portage Assessment Checklist. [Portage | The Education People](#)
- [Messy Play Texture Hierarchy](#)
- [Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment](#)

# Curriculum Frameworks / Resources

‘On body’ signing: [Canaan Barrie Signs](#) (one example)

Sensory stories: [The Sensory Projects - Sensory Stories](#)

‘You Tube’ clips from Sense are also really useful:

[Making play inclusive - Hand under hand communication](#)

[Making play inclusive - Resonance boards](#)

Communication Passports: [Personal Communication Passports](#)

Intensive Interaction: [Intensive Interaction - Fundamentals of](#)

[Communication](#)

**Thank you for listening**

[Michelle.Jones@seashelltrust.org.uk](mailto:Michelle.Jones@seashelltrust.org.uk)

**Seashell**

