

LIGHT

- Does your child stare at overhead lights?
- Is your child more attracted to objects that are illuminated (e.g. toys, mobile devices, windows)?
- If it is too bright, does your child close or rub their eyes?

Light is necessary for people to see. Think about lights that attract our attention: traffic lights, fire truck lights, the kitchen stove indicator when the stove is warm, stars in the night sky... As it turns out, light is used to give us clues about our environment because it captivates our attention. When children have CVI, lights can be used to help develop visual skills because it is easy to see light. Sometimes too much light can pose a problem due to the reflection of light creating glare. Think about restaurant menus that are made more durable with plastic sheet covers: when overhead lighting is directly above the menu, the light-producing glare makes it difficult to read the menu. It is always important to consider the surrounding environment to help facilitate a child's learning when they have CVI.

*Lola is an 18-month-old girl with a CVI diagnosis and a CVI range score in Phase I. Her mother, Elaine, reports that Lola always likes to look at lights when they are at home. At the grocery store, Lola enjoys looking at ceiling lights. Elaine says it is difficult to get Lola to look at toys or books because she prefers to stare through the windows in the house. After gathering information about their home and daily routines, the early intervention teacher of the visually impaired and Elaine identify ideas which will help Lola look at objects. Together they agree that light is too distracting for Lola. Elaine will start using dim floor lamps in the corner of the living room, making sure Lola is facing away from the lamp and windows, and having the window curtains pulled closed. Since light is so motivating for Lola to look at, Elaine and the teacher discuss the need to **shine light on objects** they want her to look at by using Elaine's phone **flashlight from behind** Lola's head. They also discuss **shining a light on Lola's high chair tray** before the start of each meal time. Elaine is hoping to help direct Lola's visual attention to objects she uses and sees each day.*

These materials are often already found in the family home, and can be used to **direct light, easily reflect light or control light sources**. If these items are silent, it will help the child to rely on visual attention, not the sounds.

Gooseneck or Reading Lamp	Cell phone flashlight	Nursery light projector	Aquarium
Mylar paper	Mylar balloon	Mylar pompon	Mirror
Lightbox or tablet	Flashing holiday lights*	Glow in the dark clothing	Glow in the dark objects
Large cardboard box for child to sit in	Dark sheet/blanket	Indoor tent	

***flashing lights should not be used with children who are at risk of seizures (photogenic epilepsy)**

IDEA FOR ROUTINES:

*Remember: Children who are tired, stressed, ill, or overstimulated may stare at lights

Play/Floor Time

- ___ Turn off overhead lights
- ___ Cover windows with shades, curtains, or blinds
- ___ Utilize a lamp in the room away from where child is working
- ___ Position child so they are not on their backs directly under bright ceiling lights
- ___ Create a tent-like structure to block out light and visual clutter (*drape a dark sheet, build a fort with a blanket, or save big boxes*)
- ___ Use hand-held flashlight (*flashlight or cellphone*) to illuminate another object
- ___ Use handheld flashlight behind child to shine on visual target
- ___ Utilize objects that reflect light (*mylar materials*)

Dressing/Diapering

- ___ Turn off overhead lights
- ___ Turn on lamp that is near the diapering station (*soft lamp*)
- ___ Use table lamp with flexible neck to turn the light toward caregiver's face
- ___ Caregiver wears glow in the dark scarf, shirt, or apron
- ___ Have the child choose from glow in the dark clothes

Meal Time

- ___ Position child so they are facing away from windows and/or lamps
- ___ Utilize a floor lamp that is positioned behind child's eating space, spotlighting tray
- ___ Present materials on backlit surfaces (*tablet or lightbox*)
- ___ Use flashlight to look at bottle, cup, or g-tube pouch
- ___ Use glow in the dark cups, bowls or utensils
- ___ Illuminate McDonald's McFlurry spoon with penlight in the end
- ___ Finger lights taped to spoon

Lap Time

- ___ Use hand-held flashlight (*flashlight on cellphone*) to illuminate another object
- ___ Utilize objects that reflect light (*mylar materials*)
- ___ Illuminate caregiver's face so child can easily focus on it
- ___ Tape object to a slanted board to reduce overhead glare (*cookbook stand or clipboard*)
- ___ Glove lights

Time Outdoors

- ___ Encourage child to wear wide-brimmed hats to reduce glare from overhead lights
- ___ Encourage child to wear glasses with tinted lenses
- ___ Position child so they are not on their backs directly under bright sunlight
- ___ Visit outdoor light displays (*e.g. zoo lights, fireworks, holiday displays*)
- ___ Supervise play with glow sticks

Bed Time

- ___ Use lava lamp in child's room
- ___ Use lights above or on the wall next to child's bed
- ___ Use glow in the dark wall stickers
- ___ Nursery light projectors
- ___ Aquarium