

Sightless Children Club

Developing Concepts with Your Blind Child



There is an old familiar story that sheds light on the challenging of helping a blind child develop meaningful concepts. The story goes like this: Four blind men touch an elephant. The one who touches the trunk says, "An elephant is like a thick wiggling vine." The one who touches an ear says, "No an elephant is like a big leather fan." The one who touches the body says, "No, An elephant is like a brick wall." And the one who touches the tail says, "How could you all be so wrong? An elephant is like a hanging, swaying rope.

This story teaches us that concepts are related to individual experiences. Concepts are ideas that give us meaning to our world. We develop concepts based upon particular experiences of the elephant and therefore, each had an entirely different experience of the elephant. None of the concepts were wrong if we understand them as the products of individual experiences. Each idea of the "elephant" makes sense from the perspective of the man who touched a different part of the elephant.

Like the blind men in the story, each blind child develop their own unique concept based on their personal experiences. Here are some ideas that make sense from the perspective of blind children who have had them, but might seem odd to someone with sight.

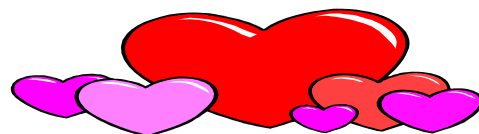
- a boy thought "going home" meant the feel of a bumpy road and a series of turns in the car.
- A girl experiencing snow for the first time thought it was ice cream and asked for chocolate.
- A girl touched a wet leaf and said, "it felt like tears."

- A boy thought food came from a mysterious place up high because it was always set down on the table from above.
- A young girl didn't know that her family's pet ate because she never seen it or touched it as it ate, and no one

had ever told her.

What each of these examples teaches us is how important it is to always be sensitive to and curious about a child's perception of the world. We need to continually ask, "What idea might she/he have or be developing about this experience, object, person, or place?" If we want to help a child develop meaningful concepts, we must be willing to enter into a relationship and seek to understand the child's concepts. Most importantly, we must take the responsibility of providing experiences that will maximize the child's opportunities to develop useful and meaningful concepts of the world.

If we think for a moment about the elephant story, for example, we see that we can help a child develop a well-rounded concept of "elephant" if we show as many parts of the elephant as possible. Children who lack sight need to be consciously given continual access to society and the world around them.



“When we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another.” —Helen Keller

“Your success and happiness lies in you . Resolve to keep happy , and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.” -Helen Keller



Our Mission

The purpose of the SCC is to help blind or visually impaired people achieve self-confidence, social independence, self-sufficiency and self-respect by providing them with aids, adaptive equipment and technology needed to function on the same level as their sighted peers.

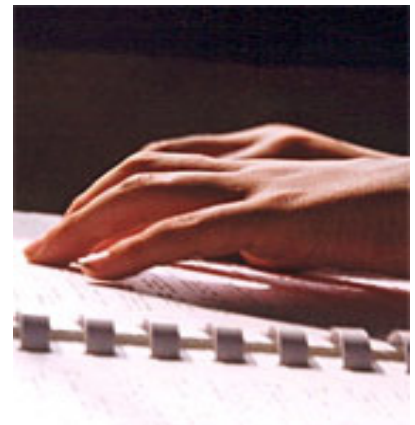
Request granted for the month of January went to:

Kyle Conley

Cassandra Proud

Tambie Trask

Rhea Collett



President's Corner

Lisa Buckingham (937)671-9171

Still needing recipes for the SCC Cookbook. Please bring them to the next meeting.

Please when making a request for your child's equipment, don't forget that it has to be submitted to Lisa Buckingham 2 weeks prior to the SCC meeting. If you need assessment forms for your request, they can be

downloaded from the Website

Also SCC meets every 3rd Monday of the month except for June, July, August, and December. The meetings will always be at 10 Wilmington Place. If there is a change you will be either emailed or you can check the bog section on the SCC Website.

**Next Meeting:
Monday February 18th
10 Wilmington Place
Dayton, Ohio 45420**