

Polishing the crystal ball...



Preparing Children and Youth with Vision Impairments for Life beyond the Classroom

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What do we really want?

- To see youngsters satisfied with their lives...
 - Happy with relationships (family and friends)
 - Working to their potential in paid or unpaid employment
 - As self-directed as possible (doing what they *want* to do)
 - Comfortable with self and others...

How to make it happen...

- Career education and self-determination
 - Convey high expectations
 - Encourage socialization
 - Develop alternative or compensatory skills
 - Provide realistic feedback
 - Promote opportunities to work

Convey high expectations

- In word and action, we must let children with vision impairment know that we believe they can do for themselves and do as well as children with full sight.
- Ask often, “What will you be when you grow up?”
- Expect typical behaviour – good and bad, full participation, and positive results (verbalize your expectations).

Encourage socialization

- Model and insist upon the use of social amenities.
- Encourage children to engage with others through play.
- Pre-teach games and activities to support engagement.
- Set up opportunities for reciprocity (sharing toys...).
- Ask children about others: their names, details about their lives, and how they might be feeling (“How does she sound?”).

Develop alternative/compensatory skills

- Teach and expect the use of braille or low vision devices for reading, use of a long cane for mobility, use of nonvisual techniques for home and personal management, and so forth.
- Demonstrate and use assistive technology/adapted devices.
- Show and explain systems for organising materials and tools.
- Help with alternatives to driving: use public transportation...

Provide realistic feedback

- Share information about what you see of other children's work and behaviours.
- Help set up systems for self-evaluation and improvement over time (charts, graphs, etc.)
- Remind children that ultimately their efforts will be compared to their fully sighted peers' efforts.

Promote opportunities to work

- Give children chores at home and in school.
- Ask children to volunteer their time to help others.
- Encourage children to read about the careers of people with vision impairment.
- Support youngsters to work for pay: at home, in their neighbourhoods and communities.

Resources...

- WBU's Project Aspiro: www.projectaspiro.com
- AFB's CareerConnect: www.afb.org/careerconnect
- AFB & NAPVI's site for parents: www.familyconnect.org
- TSBVI's resource matrix: www.tsbvi.edu/recc
- Perkins parent resource site: www.wonderbaby.org/
- Hadley School for the Blind: www.Hadley.edu



Phil
Union Awareness Trainer
Oshawa, ON, Canada

Phil talks about how perseverance and learning new skills enabled him to re-enter the workforce after losing his vision.

[Phil's story](#)



Chris
Entrepreneur
Toronto, ON, Canada

Chris launched his company 26 years ago and has never looked back. Find out the keys to Chris's success as a business owner.

[Chris' story](#)



Conner
High school student
Brantford, ON, Canada

Co-op student and future chef extraordinaire, Conner, talks about her passion for cooking and her dreams of becoming a professional chef.

[Conner's story](#)

International Success Stories



Jamey Cook
Spanish Interpreter
Carrboro, NC, USA

Jamey is self-employed as a freelance interpreter of Spanish, helping others with everything from medical appointments to travel planning.

[Jamey's story](#)



Alex Kolberg
Apprentice Chef
Adelaide, SA, Australia

Alex and his employer, Kristian, discuss Alex's work as an apprentice chef at The Taxpayer – a restaurant in Adelaide, Australia.

[Alex's story](#)



Title: *Cooking without Looking*—A short series about a live cooking show and its blind and visually impaired hosts and chef. A lot of fun and scrumptious learning lie ahead. Let's get started! We know you're going to enjoy this interesting team of culinary experts.

Intro: Dear Readers, We have had an exceptionally great year of Our Stories, stories about successful people who are blind or visually impaired doing the jobs and other things they love. This time we are veering off our normal path just a little to present you with a short series about some very interesting folks in Florida who do a live TV show called "Cooking without Looking". The series will introduce you to Renee Rentmeester, the founder, creator and producer of the program, as well as Allen Preston and Annette Watkins, the amiable hosts of the show. We will also introduce you to Don White, the chef of the program. You will learn many fun and interesting things from this team and even get a few holiday tips and recipes along with links to videos of the show.

CareerConnect: Renee, thank you for talking with us about this wonderful program. Our first question for you is where did you come up with the idea of doing a program like this?

Renee: I came up with the idea for "Cooking without Looking" on January 5, 2001 in Miami. I had worked in TV since I was 17 years old, and over the years had sat on many boards; at one point, six at one time!

I wanted to create a personal way of giving back. I wanted it to be something that helped everyone, no matter what religion, race, age, economic status, etc. After much research I found that blindness was my cause. TV was the tool which I chose because it was what I know best, and it creates large scale change and promotes understanding of a group of people which, many don't really know a lot about.

Since I was not blind and no one in my family or friend circles where blind, I had more research to do so I turned to blind listservs online which were primarily made up of blind people. I discovered what many of the issues were by reading their comments. I also found that the cooking listservs for the blind were the most popular. At that point, I found blind chef(s) in the area, a PBS station to air the piece and, the rest is history.



CareerConnect: Where did you find your talented staff?

Each one is a special story.

I met Allen Preston, one of our two hosts, at a Braille Club meeting in West Palm Beach, where he was president of the club at the time.

Annette Watkins was a pharmaceutical sales executive when we met. Her friend Celia Chacon, a blind caterer (who passed away last year), told me about her, and we put her

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[Cooking without Looking—Part 2: with Co-Host, Allen Preston](#)

[Cooking Without Looking—Part 3: with Co-Host Annette Watkins](#)

Featured Book



[Physical Education and Sports for People with Visual Impairments and Deafblindness: Foundations of Instruction](#)

FamilyConnect

For parents of children with visual impairments

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The 9 Days of Holiday with the Expanded Core Curriculum: Career Education



By [Emily Coleman](#)

(Editorial Note: The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is specific to children with visual impairments. In honor of the holiday season, we're bringing you [9 articles on ways to incorporate ECC skills into daily life.](#))

On the 6th Day of Holiday, the Expanded Core gave to me... Career Education, [Recreation and Leisure Skills](#), [Independent Living Skills](#), [Compensatory or Functional Academic Skills](#), [Social Interaction Skills](#), and [Orientation and Mobility](#).

You might think, "Where does career education fit into the holidays?" In some ways, every skill taught towards independence is a type of career education. At least, it is readying your child for employment. However, many kids have limited exposure to actual jobs in the world, and may base their future plans on the few careers they come into contact with regularly. This includes grocery store clerks, teachers, nurses, whatever their parents do, etc. These are all great jobs, but there are many more choices in the world. Here are some ways to expose your child to other career opportunities:

- If they have time off from school, and you have to work, let them join you on the job for a day or part of a day.
- If out for a holiday dinner, talk about all the employees that work in a restaurant. There is the manager, dishwasher, server, hostess, chef, food preppers, etc. Your child may think your server does it all because that's the only person they see or hear.
- When out shopping, talk about the employees in the store. If you get a chance, have your child ask somebody about their job. What are they responsible for at work?
- Give a book for Christmas that describes a career, or many careers. Even toddler books can be found that are based around employment.
- If your child receives gifts with a favorite character in a book or movie, talk about their job if it's possible. For example, if it's "Bob the Builder", explain that he's in construction, and give your child a chance to meet a construction worker in your town.
- Volunteer anywhere your child can gain "on-the-job" experience. One example is sorting or gathering toys for a charity toy-drive.
- When with extended family, encourage your child to find out what everybody does to make a living. The more careers they learn about the better!

Career education is means teaching your child what is possible for them. If they never know that somebody called a "chef" does the cooking in a restaurant, they'll never aspire to be one. Talking about employment can be a part of everyday education, but it can also be easily fit into holiday time as well. What career have you taught your child about lately?

Announcements

[Win a Free Copy of AFB's New Expanded Core Curriculum book, *ECC Essentials*](#)

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The 9 Days of Holiday with the Expanded Core Curriculum: Career Education

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Featured Book



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[ECC Essentials: Teaching the Expanded Core Curriculum to Students with Visual Impairments](#)

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
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Description: This website has been developed to help high school students with disabilities learn about the process of applying to college and attending college. It includes resources on learning about your own strengths and goals, campus life, and how to prepare.

Health Care Professionals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired (Jobs That Matter) (Cost)	D. Kendrick	Career Education and Transition	Family Resources, Role Models/Mentors for Students		Report a problem!
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Description: This book provides profiles of 15 different successful health care professionals. A great source book of role models for aspiring students.

How Can I Participate in Transition Planning?	N/A	Career Education and Transition	Choice and Decision Making, Family Resources, Resources, Self-Awareness, Transition/Future Planning		Report a problem!
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Description: This document provides information for students to better help them participate in the transition process.

Jobs to Be Proud of : Profiles of Workers Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired (Cost)	D. Kendrick	Career Education and Transition	Choice and Decision Making, Family Resources, Instructional Strategies, Resources		Report a problem!
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Description: This book focuses on twelve people who are blind or visually impaired and looks at the jobs they do, why they chose the job, how their visual impairment impacts their job, and gives information about pay and benefits.

Preparing for college and beyond: A guide for students with visual impairments (Cost)	J. Dote-Kwan & J. Senge	Career Education and Transition	College		Report a problem!
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Description: This book (available in braille and large print) is a comprehensive handbook for those with visual impairments who are seeking higher education. Topics include assistive technology, textbooks, registration and more.

School to Work: Developing Transition Portfolios for Students with Significant Disabilities (Cost)	W. Bridgeo, C. Gickhorn & M. Zatta	Career Education and Transition, MIVI	Transition/Future Planning		Report a problem!
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Description: School to Work is a manual that provides a framework for developing meaningful vocation activities. It also helps teachers develop transition portfolios for adolescent age students with visual and multiple impairments.

Science is Golden: Interviews with 4 Scientists Who Are Visually Impaired	J. Ingber	Career Education and Transition, Science	Career Education, Job Descriptions, Role Models/Mentors for Students		Report a problem!
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Description: The author interviews 4 scientists who are visually impaired to talk about how advancements in technology allowed them to make a career in the field of their choice.

Skills for Success: A Career Education Handbook for Children and Adolescents With Visual Impairments (Cost)	K. Wolffe (Ed.)	Career Education and Transition, Self Determination	Activities for Elementary and Middle School Students, Activities for High School Students, Choice and Decision Making, Curricula, Instructional Strategies, Resources, Self-Awareness		Report a problem!
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Description: This book provides activities to prepare students for success in the workplace. Suggestions are provided for preschoolers, elementary school students, and middle school students.

Supporting Young Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind in Their Communities: A Transition Planning Guide for Service Providers, Families, and Friends (Cost)	J. M. Everson (Ed.)	Career Education and Transition, Deafblind, Family Resources	Choice and Decision Making, Family Resources, Self-Awareness, Transition/Future Planning		Report a problem!
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Description: The goal of this book is to guide service providers, family members, and friends in providing transition services to young adults who are deaf-blind. As such, it represents an effort to express the unique needs of the deafblind population and to integrate best practices into their transition services.

SWEAT - Summer Work Experience in Austin Texas	N/A	Career Education and Transition, Social Interaction	Activities for High School Students, Parent Resources, Vocational Education Training		Report a problem!
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Description: TSBVI provides job related opportunities for students from 14-21 to take part in during the summer months in Austin, Texas. (Texas students only)



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10 Sensory Christmas Activities for Children who are Blind!

During the holidays we are baking, decorating and spending time with family and friends. Get your kids involved by having them help in the kitchen, create Christmas decorations or make their own gifts to give to their friends!

Sign up for free!

or

Share Resources

Found an online resource you want to share with other parents? Enter the link below!

http://

New Resources! see what other parents are sharing right now.



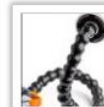
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Q&A

Ask a Question

Or find out what other parents are asking right now...

1 answer
How can I get my 22 yr. old q-daughter who is autistic a free iPad. She had one for years and dearly loved it before she finally

4 Hi, we recently moved from

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Our mission is to promote independent living through lifelong, distance education programs for people who are blind or visually impaired, their families and blindness service providers.



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Announcements

- ▶ [School Closed December 22 to January 2 and Reopens January 5](#)
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Thank you for your interest!

For further information, please
contact me: karenwolffe@gmail.com