

Expanded Core Guide to Cherry Hill

The Expanded Core Curriculum is specifically designed for individuals with vision impairments, and covers nine designated areas that children with vision impairments miss because of their vision loss.

Goal: Empower parents with skills needed to prepare, experience, and reflect on community events you participate in with your blind or visually impaired student.

Please scroll down to your student's skill level.

Foundational Level Skills

Young children and some children with multiple disabilities may still be learning the skills they need to fully interact with the objects in their environment. A child may move around the following stages depending on a variety of factors.

Extended State

The child is fussy, crying, tired, agitated, drowsy or asleep.

Tip: Comfort the child and meet their needs.

Attention Zone

The child has selective attention and concentration on one thing while ignoring others.

Tip: Focus on a single aspect of an object the child is showing attention to: the sound, the touch, the smell.

Exploration Zone

The child exhibits self-initiated movement to engage, with intent, to get information about the sensory attributes of an object.

Tip: Let the child freely explore as long as the child is safe. They may use their feet, hands, arms, legs, face, torso or mouth. Clean the object when the child is finished.

Function Zone

The child can use an object in the way most people use it.

Tip: Model the intended use of the object. Focus on the function of the object. For example: blocks are for stacking and lining up. Books are for reading. Toy cars drive. Etc.

Basic Level Skills

Toddlers and early elementary aged children who have reached the functional level of play are now ready to apply this skill to a variety of situations and environments. They are now ready to apply basic Expanded Core Skills to their play. *This may be the most appropriate level of access for students with complex support needs of any age.*

Access skills - How will I get information from my environment and understand it?

Access skills include the Expanded Core areas of compensatory access, sensory efficiency and use of assistive technology skills.

Considerations for parents:

- Can the environment or objects be too much visually for your child to handle? **Suggestion:** Bring black fabric or a black binder to present objects on. It will help reduce the visual clutter for your child. Your child may be sensitive to the brightness of the sun reflecting on the water. Careful positioning of pool toys can help with this.
- My child uses symbols to communicate and access information. **Action step:** Bring their symbols with them to the Cherry Hill! Your child likely has common vocabulary symbols such as finished/all

done, more or want. You can embed those symbols right in the learning. Create 1-3 symbols that work well for your child in the community such as cards, familiar words, or signs.

- What if they can't use their hands to touch objects? **Suggestion:** It's okay that your child does not use their hands to explore items. Their arms, feet, and head are all awesome options to explore items.

Community Readiness

Community readiness skills include the Expanded Core areas of career education, orientation & mobility and self-determination.

Considerations for parents:

- How do I help transition my child from one place to another? **Suggestion:** Support your child with changing environments by using a simple routine. This can include using a communication symbol, a short chant/song or visual cue. Do this every time you change activities or environments to help them match the transition routine to changing activities/environments.
- How do I think about orientation (knowing where I am/an object is) and mobility (how we move to a destination)? **Suggestion:** O&M extends to understanding positional concepts as well. You can use simple prepositions such as on/off and top/bottom when helping your child interact with activities. For example, "The pool noodle is under your arms."
- How can I support my child to direct their play at Cherry Hill? **Suggestion:** Comment on what you see they like. For example, you notice that your child repeatedly splashes water at you. You can highlight this by commenting. "You like splashing water on (insert name of person being splashed)." You can also present an object and give them a minute to explore it. See what they do with it. Your child may not know how to play/interact with the object so you can use hand-under-hand support to help them interact with it.

Independent Living Skills

Independent living skills includes the Expanded Core areas of independent living skills, social interaction and recreation & leisure.

Considerations for parents:

- How can I support social interaction in the community? **Suggestion:** Follow your child's lead in verbal play. If your child verbalizes, respond by copying the sounds they make. Remember to position your child so they can easily interact with others.
- How can I support their independence in the community? **Suggestion:** Help your child understand the process of an activity by using words like "now" and "finished.". Remember that it is okay that you provide support to your child as they develop independence. Look for small, simple actions that you can empower your child to do such as eye gaze to their communication partner or splashing water.
- How do I introduce recreation and leisure activities at Cherry Hill? **Suggestion:** Consider the qualities of activities that your child might like to participate in as a way to introduce it. For example, If your child like to explore objects, consider giving them pool toys before introducing them to the pool.

Intermediate Level Skills

Children who are approximately 8 years old+ AND have mastered the Basic Level Skills are ready to apply Intermediate level Expanded Core Skills as they explore the finer details of the activity.

Access - *How will I get information from my environment and understand it?*

- Assistive Technology
 - Where can I find information about the location?
 - Will I need a tactile map to help me know where exhibits are?
 - What devices will I need to support me at this event?

Action Step: Assistive technology is on a spectrum. Low tech: cane, symbol card to high tech: AAC device, phone.

- Compensatory - *What skills do I use to compensate for my vision impairment?*
 - How can I interact with activities at this event?
 - Are there braille, large print, or auditory cues?
 - How will I know where I can swim/play?

Action Step: With your child, make a list of items or skills that will help them engage in the event.

- Sensory Efficiency
 - What types of sounds do you think you will hear at the event? If a sound is too loud, what can you do?
 - What colors do I see best?
 - What types of things do I like to touch?

Action Step: With your child, try to identify something from the event that stimulates each of their senses.

Community Readiness

- Career Awareness
 - What time do I need to be at the event?
 - How will I organize the items I am bringing to the event so I can access them and keep track of them?
 - What are the rules at Cherry Hill?

Action Step: With your child, develop an order for participating in the exhibits. Communicate that order with “First/Then” or “First/Next/Then” wording. For example: First we’ll visit the lazy river, then we’ll go to the big pool.

- Self-Determination
 - What types of activities do I like?
 - What are 3 things I want to know about Cherry Hill?
 - What’s my responsibility to enjoy the event?

Action Step: With your child, design a cooperation plan including how to regulate negative and positive emotions while at the event.

- Orientation & Mobility
 - How do I know where I am when I play?
 - Where is the restroom? Is it accessible?
 - How will I navigate through Cherry Hill?

Action Step: Identify a landmark at Cherry Hill and refer to the location of different areas of Cherry Hill in reference to this landmark. For example: The Pirate Ship is located between the big pool and the lazy river.

Independent Living Skills

- Social Interaction Skills
 - How can I keep my personal space while I'm playing/swimming?
 - Am I turning my head/body toward the person that is speaking to me?
 - Do I know how to appropriately ask for support?

Action Step: Model for your child how to ask, "How can I participate in this activity?"

Example: Will I be swimming with others or by myself?

- Recreation & Leisure
 - Do I need a reservation or ticket for this event?
 - What activities or areas do I want to explore?
 - Rate the activities favorite to least favorite? And why?

Action Step: With your child, reflect on the positives of this community event and plan another outing for your family.

- Independent Living Skills
 - What should I wear?
 - What kind of food and activities are available at this event?
 - What do I need so I may eat without getting messy?

Action Step: With your child, help them retrieve items such as their swimsuit, sunscreen, pool toys, and lunch items from the designated area and return them when finished. This helps them know where the objects are.

*All Family Event Activities competencies at USB are based on the ECC High School Readiness Checklist and the [Utah Portrait of a Graduate](#). For more information about this and the Expanded Core Curriculum please visit our [website](#).