

# Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)

A guide for parents and carers



Developed with

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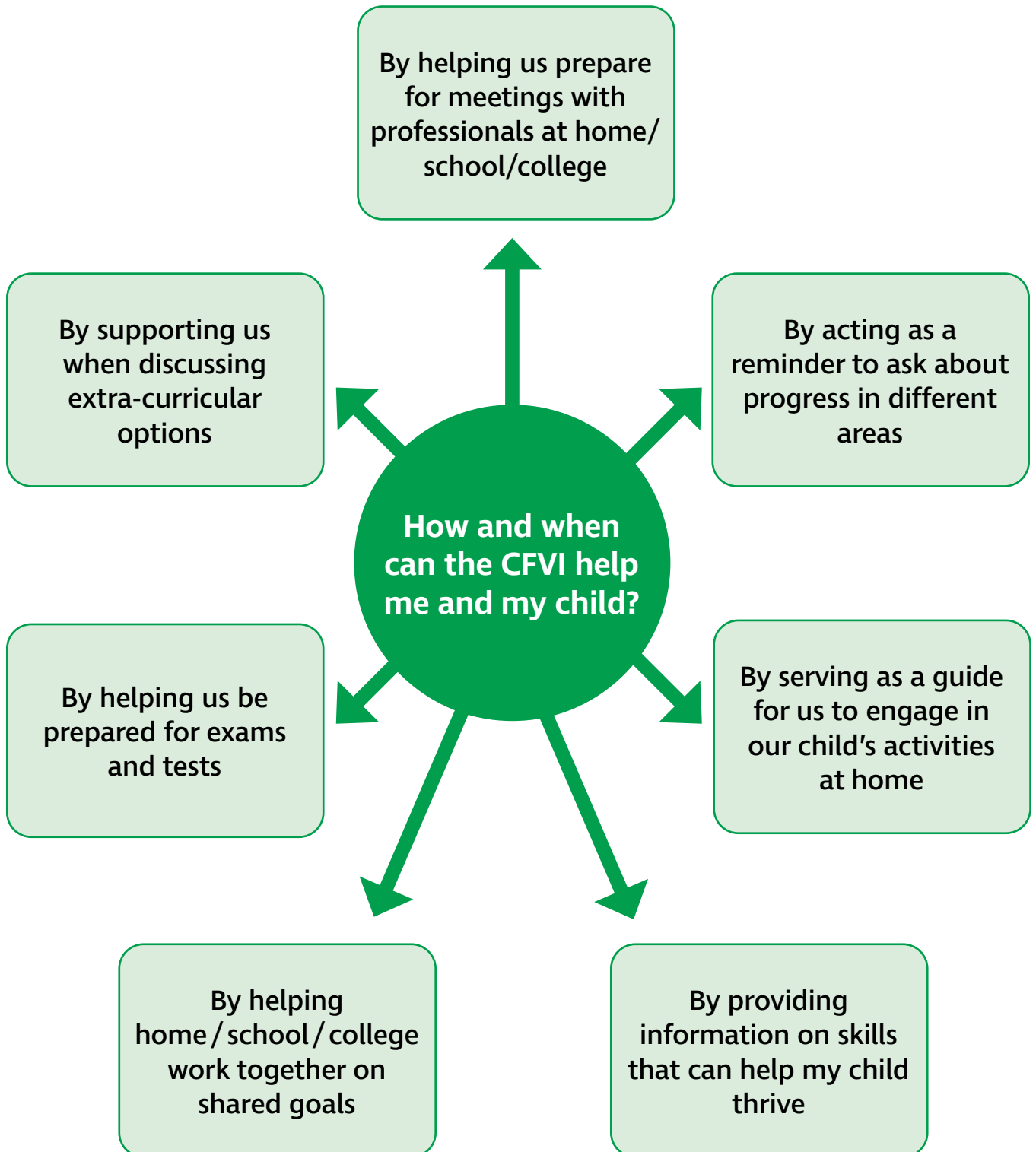
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# Introduction

The Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI) can help you understand and talk about your child's needs and support them on their journey throughout education and into early adulthood.

**Figure 1:** How and when the CFVI can help: some starting points for parents/carers



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# About this guide

We've written this guide with the help of a group of parents to explain the content and purpose of the CFVI. We want parents and carers to understand the additional support that exists for their child and give them the confidence and language to be able to discuss their child's education with teachers and other professionals.

This guide should be used alongside the CFVI and other supporting resources, which can be downloaded from:

[rnib.org.uk/cfvi](http://rnib.org.uk/cfvi)



# Explaining the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)

Launched in March 2022, the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment sets out and explains the support that children and young people with vision impairment aged 0 – 25 need so that they get fair and equal access to education. We produced it, with a range of partners, after rigorous consultation with specialist professionals, young people and parents/carers.

Throughout this guide, we will refer to the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment as CFVI or the Framework.

## The Framework has three key aims:

1. To set out the key skills that children and young people with vision impairment need.
2. To let all families and professionals know that children and young people with vision impairment need to be taught special skills so they can access education and become as independent as possible.
3. To make it easier for everyone to plan together how and when these skills should be taught and who should teach them.

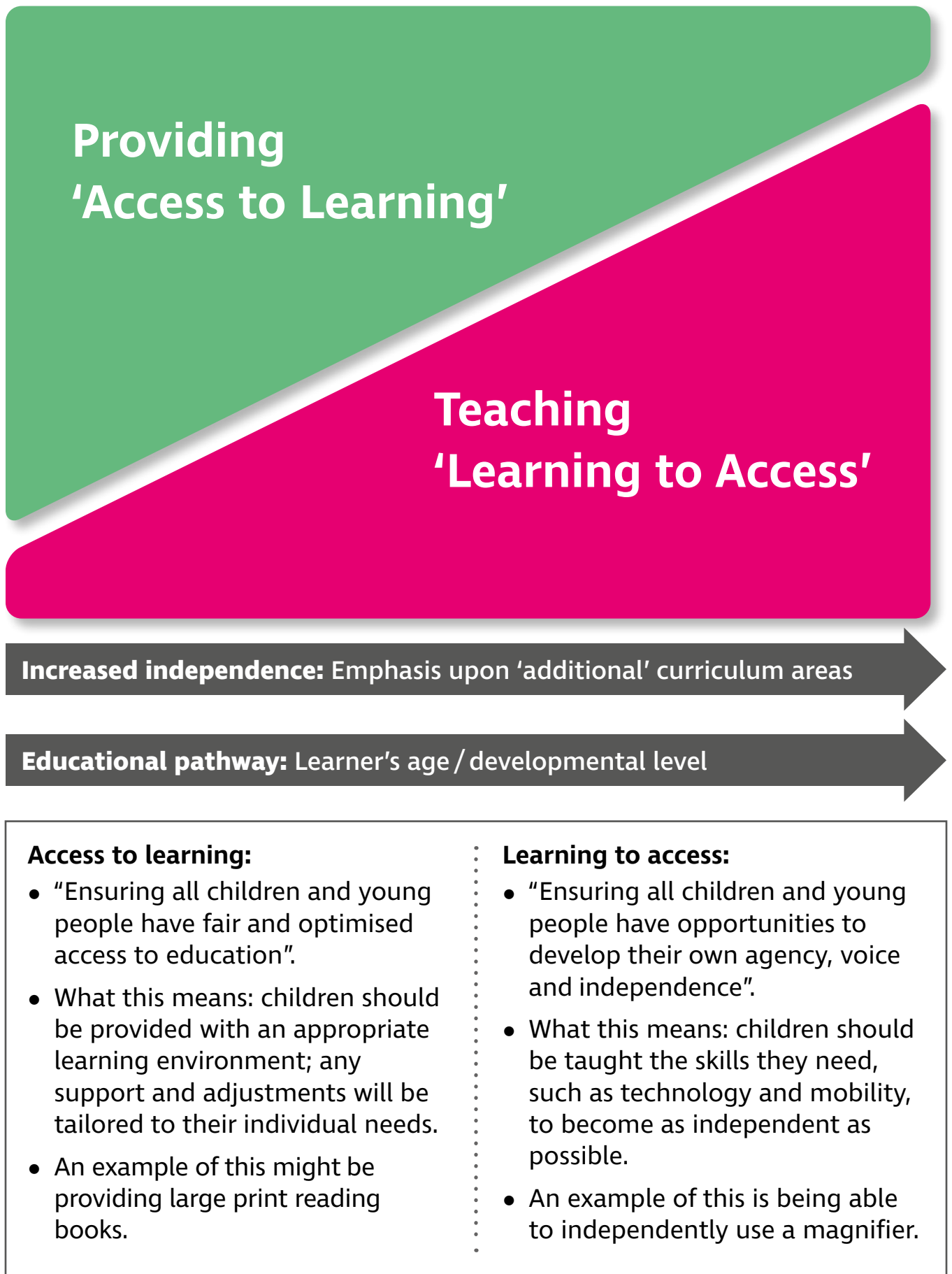
The CFVI consists of 11 areas which have been identified to form the basis of this Framework and seek to capture an important part of the educational experience and outcomes of children and young people with vision impairment. Area 1 focuses on what can be done to make the environment, resources and learning activities accessible for the child/young person, while areas 2 – 11 are based on specialist skills that the child/young person can be taught. By understanding the different areas of learning and looking at the CFVI together with teachers, we hope that parents and carers will feel more confident talking about how they would like their child to be included in education and the wider world.

## Why the specialist approach helps children gain the skills and independence they need

The CFVI follows the 'access to learning – learning to access' model, McLinden, M., Douglas, G., Hewett, R., Cobb, R., Keil, S., Lynch, P., Roe, J., Stewart Thistlethwaite, J. (2022), which is based on the idea that, over time, the focus will shift from support being provided directly to the child/young person ('access to learning') to the child or young person developing the particular skills themselves. Support will then be indirect, so the young person can act and learn more independently ('learning to access').



**Figure 2:** The Access to Learning/Learning to Access model





# The 11 areas of the CFVI

The Framework covers 11 areas, setting out a range of skills that are important for the development of children and young people with vision impairment. Of course, with the exception of Area 1, not everything listed is relevant to every child or young person at any given time.

## **Area 1: Facilitating an Inclusive World**

Area 1 is distinct from the other areas as it focuses on what needs to be in place to ensure there are no barriers to learning or participation for children and young people with vision impairment.

## **Area 2: Sensory Development**

Helping children and young people use and develop their senses.

## **Area 3: Communication**

Helping children and young people develop their skills to communicate, play and work with others.

## **Area 4: Literacy**

Supporting children and young people to develop effective communication skills through listening, speaking, reading and writing.

## **Area 5: Habilitation: Orientation and Mobility**

Supporting children and young people to be able to move safely through their world as independently as possible.

## **Area 6: Habilitation: Independent Living Skills**

Supporting children and young people to develop the day-to-day skills they need to live as independent a life as possible.

## **Area 7: Accessing Information**

Teaching children and young people to access, produce and manage information independently.

## **Area 8: Technology**

Helping children and young people use technology independently.

## **Area 9: Health: Social, Emotional, Mental and Physical Wellbeing**

Helping children and young people stay well and healthy.

## **Area 10: Social, Sports and Leisure**

Making sure children and young people can join in with social, sports and leisure activities.

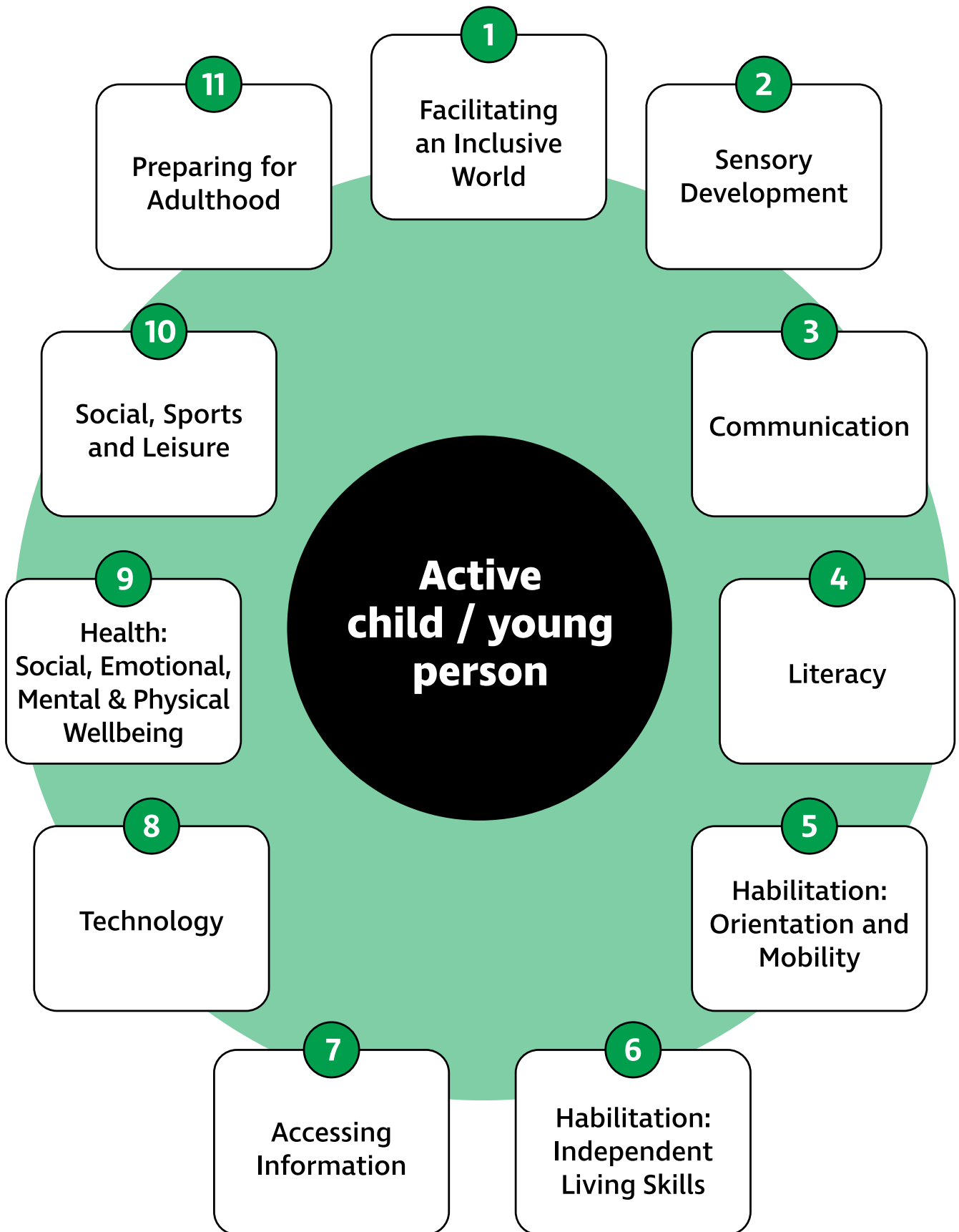
## **Area 11: Preparing for Adulthood**

Supporting children and young people to prepare for their lives after compulsory education and make decisions for their future.

The areas of learning are explained in more detail in the CFVI, which can be downloaded from:

[rnib.org.uk/cfvi](http://rnib.org.uk/cfvi)

# Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment



**Figure 3:** Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)



# How parents and carers can use the CFVI

Navigating the UK education system isn't easy. There's a lot of information to take in – different types of assessment, exams, curriculum, options and more – and, just as you're getting used to the terminology and routines, a change of school or even year group can bring a whole new set of challenges.

When you have a child with a disability, this system, which can start from birth and continue into adulthood, becomes even more complex. Keeping up with the ongoing cycle of assessments, planning and meetings is something that parents and carers of children with vision impairment often tell us can be difficult.

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**"I know how complex the education support system is and how much potential there is for things to be missed and for my son to fall behind. I feel that the CFVI highlights the importance of early intervention and, had this been in place for my son, would have helped him to get the right support earlier."**

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The CFVI can help parents and carers understand the pathways of support for their child or young person and the services that may be involved in providing that support.

You can find out more about support for children with vision impairment, including the roles and responsibilities of different professionals, at:

**[rnib.in/SEN\\_Inclusion](https://rnib.in/SEN_Inclusion)**



## Getting the basics right

Area 1 of the CFVI – ‘Facilitating an Inclusive World’ – sets out the overarching principles upon which the CFVI is based. At the heart of this area is a focus on ensuring physical and social environments are accessible and inclusive for children and young people with vision impairment.

Education settings are required to be fully inclusive for all children and young people; a good starting point for this is ensuring that all staff have had visual awareness training. Not all will require a detailed understanding of a child’s support needs but it is perfectly reasonable to expect that anyone who meets your child during their day has, at least, a basic awareness of the impact of vision impairment.

As well as working with you and your child, the VI specialists are there to support education settings and can arrange for staff training to be carried out, so it’s ok to have this conversation with your child’s Qualified Teacher of children and young people with Vision Impairment (QTVI) or Registered Qualified Habilitation Specialist (RQHS).

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**“It’s important because, if the teachers don’t get this, then we are always playing catch up with people who are not even on the same page.”**

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## Meeting professionals

Meeting professionals to discuss your child’s needs and progress can be overwhelming. Parents and carers tell us this can sometimes be a difficult process, involving lots of complicated terminology. Some say they become tongue-tied, and that feeling like they are constantly having to advocate for their child can cause emotional strain.

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**“You think to yourself, here we go again. As your child moves on, the harder these meetings can become. With this guidance, you know what to say and how to put things. It gives you confidence.”**

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Having the CFVI to hand, and preparing key questions to ask in advance, might help you feel more comfortable and confident when approaching these meetings. On the following page we provide some examples of questions you might ask when you meet with education professionals. This list is not exhaustive but is designed to help you to consider the types of questions you could ask, and how you can use the CFVI to help you with this.

## Common areas

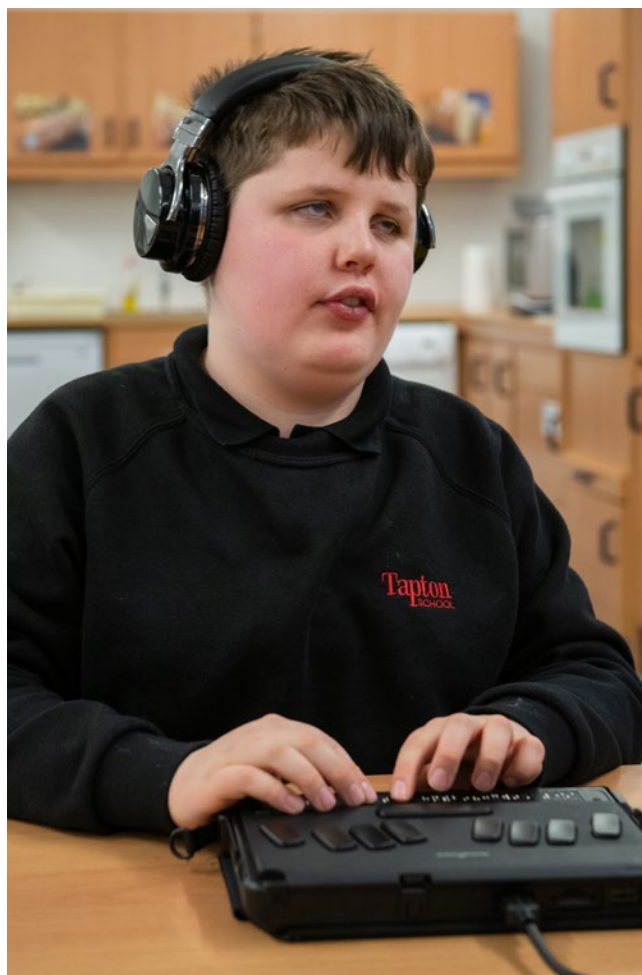
Some key questions that apply across different areas include:

- How have you made the classroom/school/social times accessible?
- What training have staff had?
- What system is in place to provide accessible resources?
- Does my child have all the technology they need to use in lessons?

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**"Education is where our children spend the best part of their week. If the hours they spend at school are not going well this can have a detrimental effect on all areas of their lives."**

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## The 11 areas of the framework

Depending upon the age of your child or their educational stage, you might want to tailor your questions to the specific areas of learning. You could ask:

- What progress has been made in this area this year?
- What support is planned to ensure progress is made in this area next year?
- Who will be delivering the support and how frequently?
- As a parent / carer, how can I support my child?

Focusing on 'now' and 'next' will give you a clear idea of the progress your child is making in each area. Understanding the support they are receiving, and how this might change and adapt, should help everyone play their part in ensuring your child is working towards their own, individual goals.

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**"As a result of the conversation here it was agreed to put a hold on mobility which was a positive thing... he has brilliant cane skills, but it was becoming a real fight."**

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## Smooth transitions

If your child or young person is approaching a transition point – for example, a change of school or a new stage of their education – you could ask:

- Will my child need more or different resources or equipment adapting in the new setting/next education stage?
- Who is leading on exam access arrangements?
- Who will organise training for the staff in the new setting?
- Who will make sure the necessary adaptations are made to the new environment?
- Should my child, their staff or I, be learning to use new technology in preparation?

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**"This discussion was useful for reviewing technology options. It gave the team more to think about... not one size fits all."**

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## Learning at home

It's important that you feel confident to support your child's learning at home. You might ask:

- How are you ensuring that homework will be provided in my child's preferred format at the same time as their peers?
- Will our technology at home be compatible with that used at school?
- Is there any training available for me to support my child's learning?
- How can I support my child's independent living skills, mobility and orientation?

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**"At the review meeting, the Framework was really useful in highlighting some things that had got a bit forgotten."**

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## Working together

Education settings, teachers and all the professionals around your child want the best for them and you should all be working towards the same goal, with the needs of the child or young person at the centre of any conversation.

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**"Nobody wants to step on anyone's toes... but things can get lost."**

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The CFVI has been designed to provide a shared vocabulary so that professionals, parents / carers and children / young people themselves can be equally involved in conversations about education.

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**"The Framework pulls everybody together."**

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## If you need more help

We hope that the CFVI – and this guide – gives parents and carers the increased confidence, knowledge and awareness to understand and discuss their child's educational needs, but additional information, advice and guidance is always available.

If you want to talk to someone about your individual circumstances, there are organisations that can help. You can contact the RNIB Helpline on **0303 1239999** or email the Children, Young People, Families and Education team at:

**[cypf@rnib.org.uk](mailto:cypf@rnib.org.uk)**

RNIB's Family Support Officers provide regional specialist information, advice and guidance. We work closely with partners across the sector, so can signpost families to the organisations and services most relevant to their needs.

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**"The CFVI will bring each child or young person with vision impairment and their parent or carer into a common pool of knowledge and support regardless of where they live and what other challenges they face. It will make an invaluable contribution to so many children and young people and help them achieve their potential."**

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## About the authors

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**Laura Hughes** is the parent of a young adult with vision impairment.

“We had the usual battles getting her needs met, particularly at secondary school and eventually moved her to a boarding school/college for VI students where she thrived. She is now a 5th year medical student. I run Moorvision, a support group in Devon and Cornwall helping other families of children with VI.”

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**Joanne** is from North Wales and is mother to a 13-year-old who has a severe vision impairment.

“I also have sight loss. I have had to fight for my child from getting an accurate diagnosis in the early years through to the ongoing work to ensure the right support was in place in school. I gave up work to apply myself full-time to ensuring my child gets what they need at the right time.”

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**Karen Newell** is Co-Founder of ToyLikeMe and mum to Fred (SSI) aged 12 and Eva 14.

“RNIB has always been a positive influence in our life since my son’s diagnosis. I was lucky enough to be asked to rewrite the RNIB’s Toy and Play Guide, a resource that was so important to me as a mum in the early days. It’s a pleasure – now my son is in secondary school and many EHCP meetings later – to have some input into the CFVI. I wish this had been there for us and hope it supports many families navigating the systems that are so essential to enable our children to thrive and succeed.”

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## References

Hewett, R., Douglas, G., McLinden, M., James, L., Brydon, G., Chattaway, T., Cobb, R., Keil, S., Raisanen, S., Sutherland, C., Taylor, J. (2022). Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI): Defining specialist skills development and best practice support to promote equity, inclusion and personal agency. RNIB

Access to learning – Learning to access diagram (Figure 2, p.5) used courtesy of:

McLinden, M., Douglas, G., Hewett, R., Cobb, R., Keil, S., Lynch, P., Roe, J., Stewart Thistlethwaite, J. (2022). Promoting Equitable Access to Education for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment: A route-map for a balanced curriculum. Routledge.



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## Contact details



**cypf@rnib.org.uk**



**[www.rnib.org.uk/cfvi](http://www.rnib.org.uk/cfvi)**