

# **Parenthood with Vision Loss**

**How strategies and Assistive Technology can assist**

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## **VisAbility**

# Who are we?

- VIP's – Vision Impaired Parents
- This is our story and experiences, what has worked for us may not work for others
- We are good friends and long standing colleagues, who like to have a laugh... especially when things go wrong!
- We hope something we cover may resonate with you



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# Full disclosure

- We are specialists in our line of work
- We are NOT experts in parenting
- We are learning along the way
- Parenthood is a unique journey. We all choose to do it differently
- Please reach out if you have any further ideas or strategies that have worked for you that you would like to share

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# Who is this for?

- People who are vision impaired or blind
- Parents
- Mums and dads with vision loss
- Grandparents with vision loss
- Professionals working within disability services

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# How did we get here?

- Did you always know you would be a parent?
- How has your vision changed along this journey?

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# Your home



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# Lighting

- Consider general room lighting
  - Change light bulbs to be brighter
  - Installed multiple downlights with dimmer switch in bedrooms
- Consider task lighting
  - On kitchen bench for meal prep or medication management
  - Next to bed for story time
  - At change table
  - Near play mat or dining table



# Organise

- Customise once baby arrives
- Ensure everything has its place
- Be consistent – put things back in their place
- Labels help family members or your children put things back in the same place





# Declutter

- Declutter and simplify
- Part with items that don't serve you
- Difficult to find items when there are too many to sort through
- Declutter as your children grow eg. toys, clothes, bedding
- Decluttering home services can assist (eg. Art of Decluttering)

# Labels

Helps you and family members put items back in same place:

- Braille labels
- QR code labels
- Large laminated bold print labels
- Pen Friend voice recording stickers
- Soft Velcro placed on back of label and hard Velcro on cupboards (can move labels around as needed)



# PENfriend device

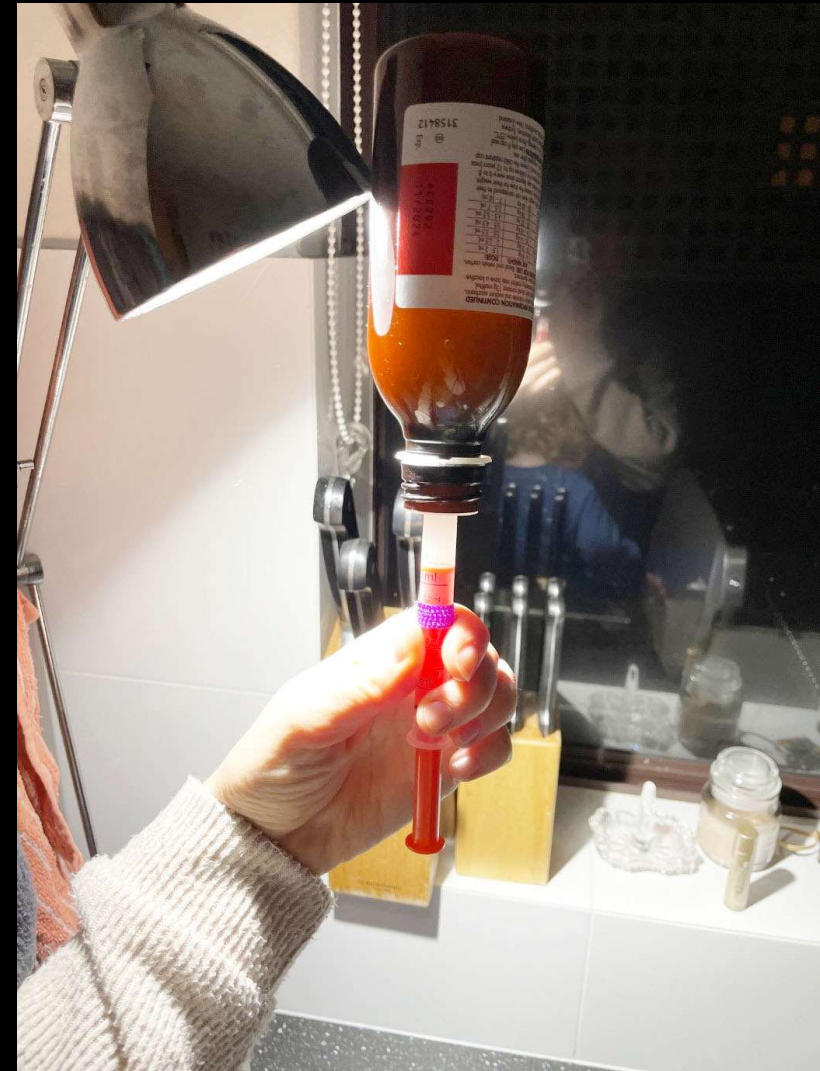
- Cupboards / drawers
- Filing system
- Medication measures (gm/ml)
- Make-up products
- Spices in kitchen pantry
- Freezer labels for breast milk expiry dates
- Essential oils for defuser
- Photo albums



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# Medication

- Talking thermometer
- Tactile marking on syringe (Velcro)
- Task lighting to see measure
- Voice record measurement required for dose (kg/ml)
- Organise layout of first aid kit



# Toys / games

- **BUMP! Crunch! Trip over.. Trod on...**
- Only leave out a few selected toys at a time in play area
- Organise cupboards with labeled containers:
  - Kids can pick from cupboard at activity time
- Build habits around packing away toys during day
- Allows you to keep some control and find things!
- Braille Uno and playing cards



# Reading books

- Audio books (YouTube on iPhone)
- Braille display connected to iPhone to read in braille
- QR code audiobooks (Nosy Crow stories aloud paperback books)
- OrCam My Eye (on glasses)
- OrCam Read Smart (in headband)



# Story time

- OrCam Read Smart positioned in headband to make it “hands-free” and connected to bone conduction headphones
- Demonstration of reading:
  - “When I am Feeling Nervous”
  - “When I am Feeling Happy “ books



# Handwriting

- Enjoying arts and crafts: drawing, cutting and colouring
- Homework: learning to write, spell and read
- Parent completing application forms for childcare, school etc



# Reveal 16i

- Can complete children's application forms or sign permission slips
- Can use for arts and craft; cutting, gluing, drawing
- Monitor lifts up, and tray pulls out



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# Ruby 10 with speech

- Portable options to use around home or at school
- Extendable camera arm allows for independent drawing or completion of homework by child



# Smart TV

- Voice guidance enabled on Samsung smart TV so you can independently navigate programs
- Audio description enabled in Netflix so you can watch shows with your child

# Leaving your home



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# Routine

- Morning and bedtime routine cards.
  - Large print, Pen Friend labels with Velcro
  - Child removes card once task completed
- Electronic shared calendars eg. Family Wall app
  - Family can all see the same calendar events
  - Shared shopping list
  - Shared To Do list



# Home Pod

- What's the weather today? Help with dressing
- What's the time? Keeping on track
- Set timer for 10 minutes – preparing children for transitions
- Set reminder for the never ending To Do List
- Play music for dance time
- Find my iPhone or Apple Air Tags



# Make-up

To cover the tired eyes!?!...

- Decluttering/organisation to simplify products
- Pen Friend Voice labels:
  - Differentiate lipstick colours
  - Describe eye shadow colours
  - Identify product brands to reorder favourites



# Prams

- VIP badge attached to hood
- Wheels – able to navigate differing terrains, kerbs, ramps and pathways
- Storage - shopping or kids backpacks
- Steering – responsive one-handed steering is helpful
- Colour – lighter colour, better contrast
- Dual seat capacity for two children



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# Keeping track

- Leash on backpack
- Wear child in harness
- High-vis vests or fun capes
- Tiles/Air Tags connected to phone
- Bright hats, clothes, bathers, rashies
- Name labels on waterbottles or bags
- Bells attached to clothes or shoes
- Safety precautions – accessible phone numbers



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# Tiles and Air Tags

Attach Tile or Tag to the following to help you find as it can transmit a noise if lost:

- Water bottles
- Hats
- High-vis vests
- Favourite toy
- Hair brush
- Parents track: keys, wallet or mobile



# Taxis

- Track your taxi – Can see how many minutes away
- Taxi and rideshare services
- WA Government laws:
  - Child 1-7 year sit in seat with seatbelt fastened
  - Infant under one year sits on parents lap but infant not strapped into seatbelt
- You can request car seats in taxi
  - Requested a few times with no success



# Public transport

- NexThere app
- Moovit app
- Perth Transit app
- Scan QR codes on bus stop - to access that specific bus stop timetable
- Bone conduction headphones to hear app information and surroundings whilst navigating



# Shopping

- OrCam Read Smart
- Online shopping
- Seeing AI app on iPhone:
  - Product channel (scan barcode)
  - Short text channel (reads print instantly)
  - Document channel (picture of print)
- Family Wall app – shared electronic shopping list



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# Childcare

- Log children in / out on iPad:
  - Requested iPad to be set up with accessibility shortcut “Voiceover” feature
  - Can triple press home / power button to enable Voiceover
  - Can now independently sign children in / out



# Teenagers

- Social media platforms:
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - TikTok
  - YouTube
- How accessible for parents with vision loss to access?

# Other senses

Hearing:

- Listen for breathing when sleeping
- Verbal check ins “Are you ok?”....“yes”

Touch:

- Feel for temperature
- “Count my fingers”
- Body scan when breast or bottle feeding



# Self care

- If you are OK, then parenting is OK
- Regular daily check ins to see how full your cup is
- How do I feel? What do I need?
- Food? Water? Sleep? Silence? Movement?
- Fresh air? A chat? A cry? A vent? 5 minutes to myself?



# Self compassion

- Parenting is a challenge
- Vision loss is a challenge
- Be kind to yourself
- Take time for yourself
- Communicate your needs
- Don't burn out
- Remember your not alone



# Stay connected

- Technology keeps us connected:
  - Phone calls with family
  - Podcasts for entertainment and education
  - WhatsApp voice messages with friends
- Connecting whilst hearing surroundings:
  - Bone conduction headphones with microphone
  - Air Pods Pro: transparency mode to hear surrounds
- Mothers group and playgroups
- Facebook groups (Blind Parents Connect, Parents who are Blind and Vision Impaired support group, Blind Mums Connect UK)



# Services to help

- Services that can assist:
  - Occupational therapy
  - Assistive Technology
  - Orientation and Mobility
  - Parenting with Vision Impairment Program being developed at VisAbility
  - Psychology (Raffaella)
  - Exercise facilities with a crèche
  - Support workers
  - Home service: cleaning / gardening

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# Thank you

- We truly appreciate your time
- Thank you for listening to our story
- If you would like to get in touch with us directly to share any feedback or further ideas:

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# Any questions?

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