



**NCCA**

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta  
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment



# Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment

Written submission template for organisations, groups and individuals  
responding to the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*

## *Individual submission details*

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Yes

yes

No

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).

## **Feach.**

**Why the need for Féach?** Féach was set up as a support group for parents of blind and visually impaired children, however as a result of shortcomings in the services available to children with low vision, it

became apparent that parents, teachers, health care workers and wider society needed more **practical information**, based on **lived experience** in order to create better outcomes for children with a visual impairment

**Our Solution** : We produce **Guides** for every stage in a visually impaired child's life. We hold **Webinars** for parents, teachers, SNA's, and young people on various important stages in education, on technology and on trouble shooting. We create safe spaces for parents to meet and talk through our **Peer-to-Peer Support** group, our Family Information Day and our Private Facebook Page. We advocate for improved services for blind/visually impaired students in education and health care

## Expanded Core or Additional Curriculum

The expanded core or additional curriculum is of itself not a new concept as the development of skills listed below are essential in ensuring all children can participate and reach their potential in all aspects of life.

### So why is there a need for extra consideration of these skills and specialised instruction for children who are blind or vision impaired?

Information gained automatically and effortlessly through incidental learning lays the foundation for **concept development** for most children. Children with low vision often receive incomplete visual information while children who are blind typically receive no useable visual information about objects and routines in the world. The following table offers an explanation of these skills and why special consideration and instruction is needed.

ECC/Additional Curriculum Area	Description
<p><b>Compensatory Access Skills</b></p> <p><i>Having access to enable learning to take place about the world, how to communicate and develop literacy skills</i></p>	<p>Having little or no vision means that basic concepts can be misunderstood e.g.</p> <p><b>characteristics</b> of animals ie. Distinguishing a dog from a fox or <b>function</b> ie. How a school building operates differently to a bank.</p>
<p><b>Sensory Efficiency</b></p> <p><i>The ability to use all senses to efficiently receive, give and interpret information</i></p>	<p>The use of hearing and touch is needed to locate, for example a dropped toy. Listening to the noise it made when it fell, helps to <b>localise</b> the object i.e. estimate its whereabouts, while the hands are used to <b>search</b> using techniques that help to make contact.</p>

<p><b>Access Technology</b></p> <p><i>Technology that supports access to all aspects of daily living in play, education, rest or work</i></p>	<p>This critical to accessing and producing printed information and communicating with others. It has moved beyond <b>access</b> to specialist devices and now includes mainstream equipment. <b>Learning how to access</b> is crucial and an ongoing process as children grow and demands are increased.</p>
<p><b>Orientation and Mobility</b></p> <p><i>The concepts and skills required to get from one place to another safely and efficiently</i></p>	<p>Early mobility involves the development of gross &amp; fine motor skills. Without vision, early movement such as the <b>motivation</b> to swipe at a toy on a play-gym or crawl to get a dropped toy is not always present.</p> <p>Familiarisation of new environments such as a school building or local playground supports the development of <b>independent movement</b> skills.</p>
<p><b>Independent Living</b></p> <p><i>Skills required to take care of one's self, family, home and to be able to live as independently as possible</i></p>	<p>A lack of vision and incidental learning opportunities can impact on a child's ability to understand and learn the skills and <b>strategies</b> necessary to independently care for oneself. Many tasks such as dressing, cooking, eating, cleaning, managing money etc. are learned by imitation but with lack of or reduced vision these can be challenging and require <b>supportive instruction</b>.</p>
<p><b>Social and Communication Skills</b></p> <p><i>Knowledge of social rules, developing and maintaining relationships</i></p>	<p>Social interactions involve the observation and interpretation of a range of verbal and <b>nonverbal actions</b> e.g. gestures, facial expressions, empathy, sharing etc. In the early years, <b>imitating</b> play behaviours and expressing needs helps to develop friendships. Later on, social etiquette, conversation skills and <b>self-awareness</b> are critical to maintaining relationships, and interact with different people e.g. family, friends, public.</p>
<p><b>Sports and Physical Activity</b></p> <p><i>The knowledge, behaviours and skills that enable participation in physical activity and enjoy fun and relaxing activities</i></p>	<p>Many children with visual impairment report feeling <b>excluded</b> from sport and physical activities particularly ball sports. It is essential that children have access to and participate in movement activities as early as possible to help develop the <b>prerequisite skills</b> including gross and fine motor skills. In addition, parents, trainers and educators require access to resources, equipment and <b>instructional strategies</b> that promote real inclusion in sports and physical activities.</p>

<p><b>Career Education</b></p> <p><i>The development of knowledge, refinement of talents and promotion of skills needed for success in employment</i></p>	<p>The <b>unemployment rate</b> among people who are vision impaired is extremely high. Opportunities for incidental learning experiences starting in the early years must be facilitated in order to help develop positive work habits. Because vision impairment is a low incidence disability, access to <b>peer role models</b> in the workforce is often lacking. Creating meaningful work experiences and providing realistic feedback is crucial.</p>
<p><b>Self- Determination</b></p> <p>The skills required to be able to advocate successfully for your own needs, goals and rights</p>	<p><b>Over support</b> can often result in young people lacking the skills required to make their own <b>decisions</b> and be in <b>control</b> of their lives. This is particularly important as transitional stages approach and skills including self-advocacy and assertiveness are required. It is important to plan for a decrease in supports in line with growing responsibilities so that <b>problem solving</b> skills and <b>self-regulation</b> behaviours amongst other can develop.</p>

Adapted from: *ECC Essentials Teaching the Expanded Core Curriculum to Students with Visual Impairments*. Allman & Lewis (Ed.) 2014 AFB Press

**Individualised plan:** Following one or more assessments, the development of an individualised intervention plan can be created which addresses the unique needs of your child.

**You should also expect**

- As a child or young person with vision impairment you have a right to have your voice heard in the creation of your individualised plan and in all decisions in matters that affect you
- As a parent you have a right to have your voice heard and be informed of all aspects of your child’s individualised plan
- Have documentary evidence of your or your child’s functional vision assessment and individualised plan
- To understand the type and impact of you or your child’s vision impairment

- Have knowledge of all supports available to you or your child and have contact details
- Have documentary evidence of transitional plans where appropriate
- Know when next review is scheduled