

ABOUT CORTICAL/CEREBRAL VISION IMPAIRMENT (CVI)



Cortical/cerebral vision impairment (CVI) is a neurologically based vision impairment, caused by damage to the visual pathways of the brain, resulting in difficulty interpreting or responding to visual input from the environment.

Each learner living with CVI is a unique individual. Educators and leaders who support learners with CVI make sure adjustments to their educational program and learning environment are tailored to their needs. When you understand the impact of CVI you'll be better able to adjust to the learner's needs.

See the online practice guides to find out more:

edi.sa.edu.au/practiceguidance



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for Education

Understanding CVI

CVI is characterised through identified visual behaviours, with each behaviour manifesting differently for each student. Not all visual behaviours will be present in all students. These behaviours include:

- light gazing
- difficulty with visual attention
- colour preference
- reduced attention to visual fields
- difficulties interpreting complex visual patterns, arrays or scenes
- difficulty locating distance targets
- decreased recognition of familiar objects
- impaired or increased attention to movement
- difficulty with visually guided reach.

Impact of CVI on learning

CVI can affect:

- curriculum access
- literacy & numeracy, as letters and numerals are abstract impacting how those with CVI demonstrate their knowledge.
- independent movement
- social development opportunities.

While students may see a target, their ability to interpret and understand an object may be impacted. Seeing may not equal understanding.

Strengths of learners with CVI

The strengths of learners with CVI can be:

- increased compensatory skills, such as auditory discrimination and tactile skills
- increased verbal memory.

Note that these compensatory strategies can mask their vision impairment.

CORTICAL/CEREBRAL VISION IMPAIRMENT (CVI) ADJUSTMENTS

EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS



Environmental

- Reduce clutter and complexity in the learning area to reduce sensory impact.
- Use plain backgrounds for presentations.
- Introduce yourself to the learner when approaching them.



Instructional

- Use light in a functional way (for example, use a torch to direct attention).
- Reduce cumulative complexity (for example, use alternate visual and non-visual tasks and schedule visual breaks to reduce fatigue).
- Using movement may support visual attention for some students.
- Use additional wait time after presenting accessible and appropriate visual material for the learner to respond (if the learner is using their visual system).
- Give specific instruction in relevant areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (see adjustments for learners with vision impairment).
- Schedule break times throughout the day to reduce CVI meltdowns and visual fatigue.
- Use a hand-under-hand approach when working with students with CVI rather than hand-over-hand.
- Explicitly teach and practice social skills.



Curriculum

- Consider form accessibility – some students may not be able to attend to images and may need 3D objects for visual attention.
- Provide individualized instruction based on professional assessment and recommendations (for example specialist advisory teachers trained in CVI).
- The use of backlit tablets or targeted lighting can help focus visual attention.
- Resources may be available for short-term loan through Kilparrin and Statewide Inclusive Education Services (SIES).
- Provide language rich environment when describing activities.