

## ***'Make a Change'*: An Intervention Program for Elementary School Children with Visual Impairments**

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### **Abstract**

The spectrum of visual impairment is broad, ranging from low vision that may require glasses to total blindness. The present intervention (*'Make a Change'*) is a unique synthesis of existing activities and adaptations designed to help children with visual impairments (VI) in their learning experience in mainstream schools. The program's aim is to address and serve a diverse range of VI students' motor, cognitive, and psychosocial needs and capacities, ranging from environmental adaptiveness, to conceptual comprehension, and peer collaboration. Activities targeted to enhance environmental adaptiveness focus on strengthening VI children's orientation and mobility, including their ability to navigate safely through the school environment as well as to respond to emergency procedure practices successfully. Spatial awareness expands through the heightening of the other senses and via blindfold activities including auditory stimuli. Sports activities also aid VI children's motor skills, reflexes, and confidence with health-related fitness. Conceptual understanding of quantity, quality, and physics is enriched by 3-D interventions using basic perceptual skills such as touching, tracking, and discriminating between symbols. Lastly, collaborative learning with the use of computer technology increases coordination as well as communication among students. Activities like treasure hunt and interacting with an audio-based computer program help VI children practice their collaborative problem-solving abilities, computational thinking skills, and basic programming abilities; positive outcomes include improved academic achievement and productivity, as well as social related enhancements, such as supportive and committed relationships, social competence, and the development of a sense of caring. Recommendations for teachers follow the strengths of the intervention.

**Keywords:** visual disabilities, mainstream schools, orientation, computational skills, collaborative learning