

Monocular Vision

What is monocular vision?

Children with monocular vision have sight in one eye only.

Children normally learn to cope very well with sight in one eye only and, in general, the earlier the individual loses their eye (or sight), the less likely they are to experience the difficulties outlined below.

If a child loses vision in one eye suddenly due to an accident they may take time to adjust to the change in their vision and to the psychological impact.

A student with monocular vision should be able to take part fully in the mainstream curriculum providing there is awareness by all concerned.

The student with monocular vision (no vision in one eye and normal vision in the other) should be able to read regular size print and to access visual information in the classroom as efficiently as children with normal binocular vision (vision using both eyes).

They should not have difficulty with reading from the board, seeing a TV a whiteboard, or discriminating objects in the distance.

Babies and small children may need to be encouraged to explore beyond their visual field e.g. placing toys just outside their visual field - will help them develop skills they will need in later life.

Having sight in one eye only does not mean that the pupil has “half vision. It means that there is a reduction in the peripheral vision on the affected side.

With monocular vision, there is a reduction in the field of vision by approximately 15 – 20 degrees. However, the sighted eye can see surprisingly far into the other half of the visual field. Children will usually adapt by turning their head and body slightly more, so they can see things in the periphery of their vision.

Understandably, children (and parents) with one blind eye sometimes express concern about loss of vision in the good eye. In the vast majority of cases, there is no more likelihood of visual loss than in a normally sighted child. Follow sensible health and safety precautions to avoid damage to the remaining good eye.

What are the effects of monocular vision?

A student with monocular vision may have difficulties with activities, which involve judging distance, depth and speed. PE, games or playground activities may be more difficult because of fast moving groups of children or objects.

A reduced field of vision on one side may cause accidental contact with people or objects on the affected side. This may cause of social interaction issues with other children and unease in crowded areas.

A student with monocular vision may be unaware of people and objects on their affected side, especially in an unfamiliar, busy or cluttered environment. It may cause them to have accidental contact with people or objects on the affected side. Which in turn may trigger social interaction issues with other children and unease in crowded areas.

There may be some difficulties with eye-hand coordination. Difficult activities can include pouring liquids, threading, cutting out and tying shoelaces. It may take them a little longer to master certain tasks because of this.

Road safety must be emphasised, as they may be less aware of traffic approaching on their affected side and of the speed of the oncoming vehicles.

What can help?

- Ensure that they sit with the majority of the room on their 'good' side and that resources are either in front of them or to the 'good' side.
- Check that they are in the best position during demonstrations, assembly, story time, etc.
- Sit on the student's 'good' side when working with them. If walking with them keep to their 'good' side. Try to approach them from the side with best vision.
- Do not expect a student with monocular vision should to share a worksheet or textbook.
- Be aware that as they are relying on visual information from one eye only will need to move their heads more to find out what is going on around them and to keep safe. N.B. this can be tiring.
- Children with monocular vision may be reluctant to join in some activities and may need some encouragement e.g. ball games may be more difficult for them.
- The child may need to be encouraged to turn (e.g. in a sporting activity) in order to increase their awareness of what is happening.
- Try to keep walkways free of obstacles and be aware of half-opened windows and doors. They may have difficulty judging the depth of stairs and kerbs.
- Road safety issues should be emphasised, as they may be less aware of traffic approaching on their affected side.