TRANSCRIPT – STATE SCHOOLS – DISABILITY AND INCLUSION

Reading with children with low vision

Reading is an important life skill. Reading with your child who is blind or who has low vision provides many learning opportunities and helps your child to develop a love of reading as well as spending some special time together.

For children with low vision it is good to encourage healthy posture allowing your child to bring the book to a comfortable viewing distance. Sitting on the couch or sitting on the bed with their back against a wall or lying on their tummy on their forearms on the bed are all good positions. Remember to reduce distractions by turning the TV or radio off.

Think about the lighting that helps your child to see at their best.

Encourage your child to wear their glasses and to have their magnifier close by if these are in their low vision kit of helpful items. Cleaning glasses before reading a story together is a great routine to establish.

Get ready to have fun and don’t forget your interesting voices, facial expressions and body gestures. You can make your voice like a giant or floaty like a feather or short and sharp like a buzzy bee. Pause during reading so your child can look at the expressions on your face that represent the character expressions in the story. Describe what your face and body are doing. Your child can make the faces too and make their bodies like the characters in the book.

Allow time for your child to explore the cover of the book and each page as it’s turned. You may like to draw their attention to important information in the pictures that may help them understand and enjoy the story. Sometimes the pictures show funny details that aren’t in the words of the story.

Ask questions like, “I wonder if you can find the bow on the page ?” and use your finger to gradually help your child to scan from left to right and top to bottom to find what they are looking for. Another strategy is to comment on what you can see, for example “I’m going to count the jewels.” Your child is sure to want to do that too.

To help your child understand the story and to have even more fun, you might like to gather some items from the story and do some of the things that the characters do.

Most of all remember to have fun and enjoy bringing the world to your child through books!