

# VI TIMES

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MN Regions 5 & 7 Vision – O&M Staff

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## Contents of This Newsletter

Vision-O&M Staff of Regions 5 & 7 .....	1
Contents of This Newsletter .....	1
Games & Activities .....	2
Card and Board Games .....	2
Family Activities .....	3
Video Games .....	3
Past Newsletter Topics .....	3

# Games & Activities

The American Foundation for the Blind suggests setting up the playing area for success with low vision:

- “Cover the playing area with a dark cloth. Black, dark blue, or green felt is good. Felt does not cause glare and it keeps the board from sliding around if you accidentally bump it. The dark color creates a contrast between the background and the edges of the board.”
- Task lighting can help direct the light on the game pieces.
- Braille and tactual markings make games accessible for individuals with any vision impairment.

A question frequently asked by parents and general educators is: What games and activities can the child who has a vision impairment do? Well, the answer is: Be creative, but there are many games and activities that are appropriate. It may take imagination and some adapting, but usually there is a way to do it. Here are some basic ideas.

## Card and Board Games

Some card and board games are commercially available in large print and/or braille—including braille dice. Making adaptations is usually quite simple and doesn't cost a lot of money. If you have the card or board game, adding labels in braille or large print or using tactile materials to indicate paths for markers to follow requires glue, sticky-back label materials, and imagination. For example, UNO is adapted as follows: braille 7g means green-7 card.

The games, *Connect Four* and *Four in a Row*, can be adapted using different shape-punches used in scrapbooking and tactile paper. Each texture and/or shape represents a color. Glue the shapes on each of the circles by color. Be certain the texture is not sticking out (you want it to slip through the game frame). Another option where it doesn't matter if the texture is thicker is to use the same ideas on *Connect 4 Twist & Turn*.



*Chutes & Ladders* can be adapted using string glued to make the path for markers (Velcro on each space allows markers to stay in place), toy ladders glued to the board, and chutes made from crafter's foam. Distinctive tactile markers (craft arrows) can be attached to the board along with a definitive symbol for the finish.

*Sorry* is adapted with Velcro pieces on the side squares all around the board with tactile crafter's foam and Velcro on the colorful corner bases. Buttons with Velcro are used for markers and cards are labeled with clear self-adhesive brailled stickers.

Mazes are simple! Use a Lego board and Lego strips with a marble to make quick and easily changeable mazes.

## **Family Activities**

The old TV show *Minute to Win It* or the more recent *Hollywood Game Night* offer entertainment and many activities that are great for having fun as well as learning about one's body space and movement. Here are a few fun family games for you to try at almost any age!

*Pass the Parcel* is a game played sitting around a table. A candy bar or other "prize" is wrapped in multiple layers of paper or plastic wrap. The parcel is passed from person to person while music is played and when the music stops the person holding the package unwraps one layer. When the music stops and the person unwraps the last layer, they win! Source: Robbin's Blog

*Bowl on Your Head* is a game that teaches body awareness—to all of us! Hold a plastic bowl on your head with one hand while using tongs to pick up marshmallows from the table and place them in the bowl on your head. Family members can be blindfolded to even the playing field. Whoever gets all the marshmallows in the bowl in the fastest time wins.

*Sticky Tic Tac Toe* is made with a piece of black felt attached to a poster board and hung on the wall. A Tic Tac Toe board is made with pieces of yellow fabric glued in a large grid on the board. Wrap Velcro around ping pong or practice golf balls. Take turns throwing the balls at the tic tac toe board. Cues of up, left, down, right, etc. can be used to direct throw.

*Cookie Face* is a challenge for everyone. Each person places a cookie on their forehead. The goal of the game is to get the cookie to your mouth without using your hands, only your facial muscles, in under a minute.

*Junk in the Trunk* involves an empty tissue box with a ribbon running through two slits in the sides and around each player's waist. Each player has 6-8 ping pong balls placed in the box (positioned on their back). The object is to move the body by jumping, hopping, twisting, to get the ping pong balls out of the box in under a minute.

## **Video Games**

Most of the developers of video games do not think about accessibility by individuals who are visually impaired when they create their games. There is a community of developers who are focused on making audio-based and text-based games for individuals with visual impairments. The websites are all focused on the games and their developers, so parents should screen any games and website activities. The games may not be appropriate for young children.

The information changes quickly, so do a search for "video games accessible for visually impaired" for a current listing and scrutinize the information carefully.

## **Past Newsletter Topics**

Contact your Teacher for the Blind / Visually Impaired or Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist if you have further questions on the newsletter topic.