

## **The Personal Vision Portfolio**

A Personal Vision Portfolio is a collection of educational and medical information, guided activities, resources, and documents, specifically related to the understanding of individual vision needs of a student or client. Developing a Vision Portfolio becomes a learning process that results in a product of working files appropriate for use in independent living. Portfolio entries can be built on activities from kindergarten to adult life.

This booklet is an overview of the portfolio process and not an entire portfolio program.

### **Purpose of a Vision Portfolio:**

- To create, collect, organize, and use information related to a vision condition, vision needs, and vision devices
- To develop and support advocacy skills and strategies
- To organize paper and electronic information related to vision abilities and needs

### **Through this process, portfolio participants:**

- Describe visual abilities and vision needs
- Develop skills for assessing their environment
- Describe techniques and strategies for the best use of vision
- Research and explore appropriate technology
- Research and collect reference information of eye condition, medical needs, and support services
- Develop organization systems for paper and electronic information

## **Responsibilities of the Teacher/Facilitator**

- Outline expectations
- Assist student in selecting appropriate objectives and activities
- Plan and provide for meaningful real-life experiences
- Embed academic and social expectations in activities
- Embed vision specific needs and goals
- Facilitate acquisition of resource materials
- Facilitate a plan of communication including student, family, teachers, counselors, administrators, medical personnel
- Role play students real-life situations related to vision
- Provide for variety, challenges, excitement, and success!

Portfolios reflect the abilities and needs of individuals in a variety of placements or facilities. The project is designed to help you get started with the organization, storage, and retrieval of useful information.

Entries may be written on paper or in electronic media or recorded on tape or video. The portfolio can be maintained by the student, teacher, transition coordinator, parent, or caregiver. The following framework is an example of some of the information that may be organized into a Vision Portfolio.

## **Personal Vision Portfolio Framework**

### **Medical**

- medical reports, low vision evaluations, letters from doctors
- list of eye care specialists and their roles, phone numbers, appointment dates and times
- medications, allergies, drug interactions, warnings etc.
- information on eye condition
- list of community, state, and national support services for specific vision condition or needs
- insurance information
- emergency information and appropriate contact person

### **Vision Devices**

- copies of prescriptions and recommendations
- purchase and warranty information
- directions for use, care, and maintenance
- plan for the replacement of broken or lost devices

### **Advocacy Skills and Strategies**

- vision statement of visual abilities and needs
- communication strategies appropriate for use with peers, doctors, teachers, pharmacists, family

### **Resources/Addresses**

- transition and rehabilitation counselors, employers, local and national support groups, catalogues, electronic resources

## Personal Vision Statement

An important activity of the Vision Portfolio is developing a statement of visual abilities. Activities help participants identify visual abilities that communicate to others what and how they see. It serves to illustrate the adaptations or techniques that help use vision most effectively.

**Provide a variety of near and distant tasks in a variety of settings. Participants formulate and record conclusions.**

“I can see detail when things are close to me.”

“With the monocular, I can read the menu on the wall.”

“I can see the science experiments from 3 feet.”

**Identify visual needs.**

“With a 4X magnifier, I can read regular print.”

“I can read better with strong light.”

“Regular print is too small for me to read comfortably.”

**Develop a plan for requesting what is needed.**

“I will need to move within 3 feet of demonstrations to see them clearly.

“I will need a sighted guide on field trips.”

Revise and condense the vision statement into a clear and concise statement of abilities and needs. These may be copied on special paper, laminated, or personalized with a distinctive border. Make copies and store in portfolio where they will be available to give to teachers, substitutes, employers, and family.

## Examples of Vision Statements

I am a visually impaired student. These are some of the things I need in order to do my best work:

- A print copy of any work or assignment on the board or the overhead
- I will need to sit within a few feet of the TV, demonstration, project, or activity to see it best.
- When we attend a program, I may need to move to the front row.
- In case of a fire or another emergency, I would like a sighted guide.
- I use the CCTV, reading glasses, felt tipped pens, and a monocular.

**This is the size print I can read without any vision devices.**

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I see out of my right eye. I have trouble seeing things close up and far away. I can use large print like this or magnifiers and smaller print. I can use a monocular to see things across the room and the TV. Please give me a desk copy of what is on the board or overhead. Some days I see better than others. The pressure in my eyes or the medicine I take may effect my vision. Thank you for helping me do my best work.

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Hi! My name is Terri. I can see some light with my right eye. I use the Big Mac on my wheel chair tray to ask for help. I will need to get my medicine before lunch every day. It is a treat for me to be the line leader.

## Sample Vision Portfolio Activities

1. Write or record on tape or video a “vision statement” that communicates to others what you see and how you see it. Your teacher has some examples. Make copies of your statement for your portfolio. These will be available for you to give to substitute teachers, rehabilitation counselors, employers etc.
2. List the vision devices you use and how they help. (magnifiers, reading glasses, CCTV, monoculars, etc.)
3. Make a page for your portfolio that lists the names addresses and telephone numbers for the doctors that you see.
4. Study the visual system and what happens when there is a breakdown in the system. Ask your teacher for a diagram of the eye appropriate for you. Study this and take it to your next appointment with your doctor. Ask your doctor for an explanation of your visual condition using the diagram you have studied with your teacher. Keep the diagram in your portfolio for future use.
5. What is your eye condition? With help from your doctor, teacher, or parent, create a portfolio entry describing your condition and what this means. The Internet has some great information. There are also many newsletters for specific conditions such as glaucoma, RP, albinism, and macular degeneration.

6. Work with your teacher to make a vision simulator that may give others an idea of how you see things. Be creative!
7. Obtain catalogues that have a variety of vision devices. Go through these with your teacher and practice your consumer skills. Some are available on disk or on line. Learn how to call for information as well as how to order and pay by phone, fax, or mail. Throw out-dated material away!
8. Create a portfolio file for the purchase and warranty information on the vision devices or equipment that you use. Have a plan for the replacement or repair of devices. Keep the instructions for care, use, and repair of devices.
9. Keep a list of the medication you are taking and have the list available when you call your pharmacist. Some pharmacies will keep a list of medications for you and a note of caution about drug interactions.
10. Obtain a copy of your latest eye exam. Read through it with your teacher. Make a list of the things you do not understand and research the information. You may want to keep a list of the abbreviations most frequently used on reports for your reference file.

11. Use a medical or low vision history form from your doctor to “practice” with your teacher the type of information you are asked to give when you visit the doctor. If you are unable to complete these forms independently, make copies of your completed practice form to take with you. The receptionist will be able to use it to obtain most of the information needed.
12. Describe the study or work area that is best for you. What type of lighting, work surface, and organization techniques do you prefer?
13. Develop a calendar or note system for keeping up with appointments and check-ups independently.
14. Know the signs and symptoms of an eye emergency. List these with the names and phone numbers you would need for your own emergency transportation and care.
15. Most of the work you create for your Vision Portfolio can be maintained on your computer. Develop a system for storage and retrieval for the files you create. For example, your vision statement could be e-mailed to your teachers at the beginning of semesters.
16. Take a trip to an office supply store. Explore the available products that will help you organize and store information you have gathered for your portfolio. Select the size, shape, color, weight, and system that is best for your needs.

17. Make a video tape illustrating your use of vision devices and adaptive skills.
18. Explore available technology that supplements your visual abilities. Attend workshops, technology fairs, and establish contact people that may be helpful. Create a list of new things to try.
19. Role-play interviews with healthcare professionals, job counselors, and caregivers to communicate a medical history or vision needs.
20. Make a video of role-play situations. Review your performance. List the points you liked most about your tape. Would you like to make any changes? List the aspects of the tape you would change.

**The vision portfolio project is designed to help you get started with the organization, storage, and retrieval of useful information. Identify at least 5 more activities that would be helpful to you. Work on these with your teacher or counselor and add them to your index.**

## **Tips for Organizing Portfolio Information**

1. Select your file names or key words carefully.
2. If any one file becomes too large, subdivide it.
3. Maintain a current index of information you have.
4. Keep a list of reports or information that needs to be updated on a yearly basis.
5. As you review new catalogues, use an index card to label information in braille. Staple it to the front cover for easy identification.
6. Select labeling systems: a.) braille directly on file tabs; b.) use Brailon; c.) use print and braille together; d.) color code files.
7. Plan a specific time once a month to review your files.
8. Bookmark key web sites for information on vision. Print these out and share with friends.
9. Keep your Vision Portfolio in a convenient place. Remember it contains personal information. Be sure it is secured in a locked cabinet.
10. Always add information to the front of each folder.

## Vision Portfolio Activity Log

Name:

Date Started	Date Completed	Activity or Project	Notes and Comments

## **How can the Vision Portfolio concept help you?**

Brainstorming Notes: