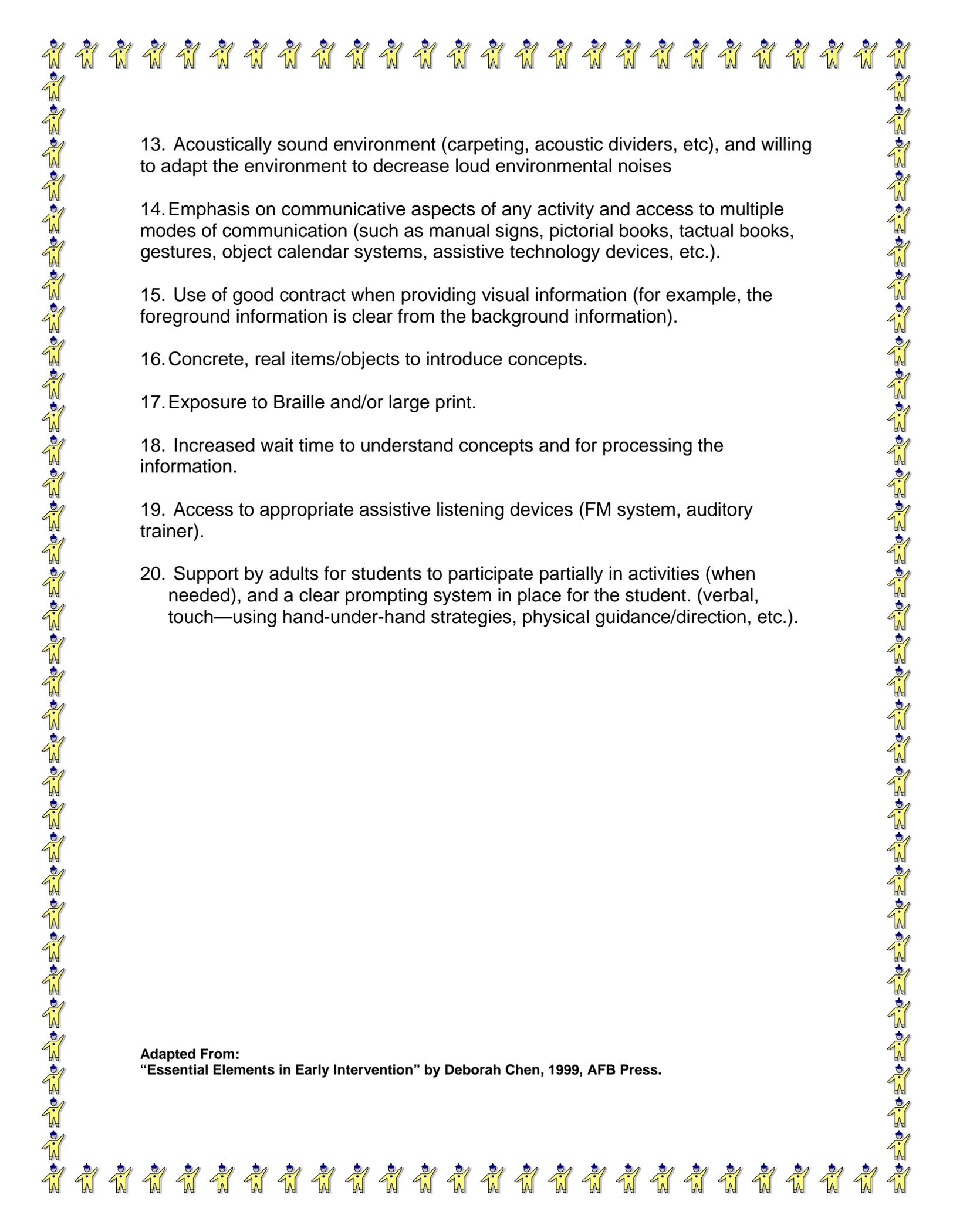


Fact Sheet
**Factors to Consider in Preschool Program Serving Children with Dual
Sensory Impairments, Multiple Disabilities, and Other Low Incidence
Disabilities**

Effective Program Indicators to Use as a Guide
By
Teresa Coonts, Nebraska Deaf-Blind Project
September 2006

These are factors that parents may want to consider when looking at preschool programs for a child having dual sensory impairments and/or severe/multiple disabilities. All indicators need not be present, and other factors may be important, but these guidelines will give parents a place to start when visiting preschool programs.

1. A stated program philosophy that all children are to be valued and respected for what they bring to school.
2. An open, warm, nurturing, flexible, and qualified staff.
3. An effective staff training program.
4. A staff-to-pupil ratio that supports all students and permits the objectives of the IFSP or the IEP to be met.
5. An emphasis on play (active and interactive) as a major avenue for learning.
6. Opportunity for interactions and friendships with students who do not have disabilities and an opportunity for learning from same-age peers without disabilities.
7. A structure that is apparent, with both specific routine-based activities and flexibility is evident so children are encouraged to make individual choices.
8. Toys which are accessible to encourage independence.
9. An environment that is clean, safe, and fun and that has age-appropriate, multisensory materials to stimulate learning.
10. Children are encouraged to interaction.
11. Teachers and support staff allow close physical proximity without providing too much support to students.
12. Sufficient lighting on task or play areas.



13. Acoustically sound environment (carpeting, acoustic dividers, etc), and willing to adapt the environment to decrease loud environmental noises

14. Emphasis on communicative aspects of any activity and access to multiple modes of communication (such as manual signs, pictorial books, tactual books, gestures, object calendar systems, assistive technology devices, etc.).

15. Use of good contrast when providing visual information (for example, the foreground information is clear from the background information).

16. Concrete, real items/objects to introduce concepts.

17. Exposure to Braille and/or large print.

18. Increased wait time to understand concepts and for processing the information.

19. Access to appropriate assistive listening devices (FM system, auditory trainer).

20. Support by adults for students to participate partially in activities (when needed), and a clear prompting system in place for the student. (verbal, touch—using hand-under-hand strategies, physical guidance/direction, etc.).

Adapted From:
“Essential Elements in Early Intervention” by Deborah Chen, 1999, AFB Press.