The Effect of the Building on Encouraging Dual Sensory Impaired Children to Develop Healthy Physical Habits
Andrew Barnes

Regular physical activity is important for children. It aids in a child’s development, improves quality of life, increases attention, improves psychological health and leads to the development of basic living skills (Avyazoglu 2006). Physical activity is even more important for dual sensory impaired children because daily life places a greater physical demand on them than on the sighted, able-bodied individual (Buell, 1983). Their bodies must develop the strength to excel in the performance of basic tasks. Due to their condition, they are at a disadvantage to learning the normal physical habits of children. While the benefits of physically intense activity should not be ignored, physical activity as relating to deaf-blind children in a broad sense may simply be the ability to cope with, exist in, and interact confidently with people and the surrounding environment (natural or built). Deaf-blind children that exhibit healthy, non-sedentary physical activity habits are more likely to be mobile. Mobility is important to an active lifestyle. Mobility in this sense is a person’s ability to get from one place to another, successfully navigating their environment. Physical activity and mobility each affect the other. To be active, one must be mobile; to be mobile in society, a dual sensory impaired individual must have a healthy level of physical activity. Design impacts mobility and either accommodates or disallows physical activity. Interior and exterior spaces of a residential facility for deaf-blind individuals must encourage an active and mobile lifestyle. For example, ready access to the outdoors from every room is encouraged (Nellist, 1970). Regular physical activity and a stimulating, accommodating environment can not only improve physical health, but emotional and social health as well. The focus of this investigation is to answer the question: how can a residential facility encourage active behavior for dual sensory impaired students?