Regular physical activity is important to any child. Even more so with deaf-blind children. The simple tasks of daily life put a greater physical demand on them than on sighted and hearing individuals (Buell 1983). Thus, the need for regular physical activity for children is more acute, their mobility improves. Mobility is a person’s ability to move from place to place. In a residential environment it is important for the inhabitants to be comfortable in their surroundings. Physical activity enables mobility.

Physical Activity + Mobility

A diagrammatic proposal for the design of a residential facility for the Institute for the Blind and Deaf Children in Glasgow, Scotland. The building has been designed to accommodate students with varying degrees of sensory impairment. The design is intended to be universal and able to be incorporated into any design for deaf-blind children.

The public areas are near the entry. Bedrooms are located on the southern side of the building. This allows for natural daylighting of the rooms. Support and service spaces are located in the northern bar of the building. These two bars frame an open-ended courtyard where there is much potential for activity.

In the same fashion, the building on a larger scale can help orient the students. The volumetric differences produce unique auditory sensations for students with partial hearing. Different materials can be applied to the ceiling in different locations, or a sound absorbent panel in corridors, this can help the partially-hearing child receive auditory cues as to location for students with partial sight.

The design of the corridor should accommodate mobility, corridors on the building will greatly improve the student’s mobility. The idea was first embodied in a design for the corridor, as the design continues, it is suggested that the ideas present in this design for the corridor be implemented on a building scale.

The building should enable orientation for a dual-sensory impaired student. Orientation within the building will greatly increase the student’s mobility. The idea was first embodied in a design for the corridor, as the design continues, it is suggested that the ideas present in this design for the corridor be implemented on a building scale.

In the presentation various design responses to the issue of physical activity and mobility are presented. They are not necessarily constrained to this plan, but hopefully they may be used and adapted to be incorporated into any design for deaf-blind children.

Exercise is the chief source of improvement in our faculties. ~Hugh Blair

Physical Activity + Mobility

A protected area for physical activity provides a place for children to play outdoors. The building itself should provide opportunities for physical activity. Tactile clues can be provided to help students with sensory impairment navigate safely.

Lights that provide a means for students to orient themselves can be enjoyed in such an environment.

Landmarks/Shorelines

A shoreline provides a continuous edge that provides orientation to students with partial sight.

A swing provides an opportunity for a dual-sensory impaired child to enjoy physical activity. Swing provides an opportunity for a dual-sensory impaired child to enjoy physical activity.

The bedroom is designed to enhance mobility. The floor changes to accommodate the needs of the student. The floor texture changes to accommodate the needs of the student. The floor texture changes to accommodate the needs of the student.

Sensory Orientation

Activity Space

Part/Layout

The interior of bedroom (towards bathroom)

The interior of bedroom (towards door)

The interior of bedroom (towards window)

Swing

Covered Play

For deaf-blind children, a large part of being physically active involves simply the ability and desire to interact with their environment. The design for the family room provides an interesting environment which encourages interaction. The student can climb, explore the space, escape to small secluded space or sit and rock in a chair.

Light shelf, allows diffused light to illuminate the entire bathroom.

Translucent glass awning, diffuses northern light, provides covered exterior space.

Bench for putting on shoes, socks, etc.

Interiors of bedroom (towards bathroom)

Interiors of bedroom (towards door)

Interior of bedroom (towards window)