Strategies of Intervention Services for Visually Impaired Children during Early Childhood Stage

General Introduction about the UETS:
Uma Educational & Technical Society is a registered non-Government Voluntary organization. It was registered during 1988 under the Society of Registration Act 1860. The noble view of the organization is to render all sorts of Rehabilitation services for the Welfare, Education and Rehabilitation for the persons with disabilities at all walks of life and people below poverty line.

We have strongly dedicated to serve the differently abled and looking for their bright, fruitful and independent future. The organization has been maintaining various programmes for their all-round development such as

- Special school for the Mentally Challenged,
- Exclusive Early Intervention Center for the Exceptional Children,
- Workshop for fabricating and fitting of Aids & Appliances,
- Community Based Rehabilitation programmes,
- Integrated Education for Disabled programme in normal schools etc.

Apart from these services the organization has been also exercising various other developmental activities such as

- Partnership for Sexual Health project,
- Vocational Training in Electrical Household equipments repairs & maintenance for school dropouts,
- Girls Hostel for School going girls from rural and remote areas etc.

The organization has received NATIONAL AWARD 2003 from Govt. of India through his Excellency Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, the Hon’ble President of India on 3rd December 2003 and Best Institution Award from Govt. of Andhra Pradesh during year 2001-02 for its outstanding contribution for the cause of Action for Disabled.
Importance of Early Childhood Intervention services for the Visually Impaired Children:
As we know that any impairment leads to disabilities and any disabilities leads to Handicapped, without any exposures of rehabilitation measures taken at proper time. The prevention of disabilities in Early Childhood stage can arrest the secondary complication due to impairment, which leads to more disabling conditions in these children, through the implementation of appropriate intervention services i.e. Education, Awareness, Medical and Surgical Intervention, Therapeutic Intervention etc in Multidimensional way.

Thus the nurturing habits during the early childhood of children with Visually Impaired, at risk or developmentally delayed, including with exposures of different wings of rehabilitation services and its experience will play very important role. There are many reasons for it, such as:

- Most of the Neuronal development occurs within 2 years of life
- Plasticity of Brain
- Fastest learning pace during early childhood stage.
- Immature muscles tone.
- Less impact of disabilities
- High degree of sensory-motor integration.
- Reflex inhibition pattern
- Less degree of deviant learning etc

Objectives of the Early Childhood Intervention:
- To detect the significant illness and prevent further disabling condition of the child during early stage of life.
- To reduce the impact of disabilities.
- To accelerate the rate of development in the child.
- To facilitate the acquisition of new behaviors and skilled by the child
- To enhance independent functioning skills of the child.
- To render the support to the families of these children to cope the challenged.

Major causes of Visual Impairment during Early Childhood stage are:
- Cataract
- Corneal Opacity
- Glaucoma
• Trachoma
• Malnutrition (Vitamin A Deficiency)
• Infectious Disease
• Optic Neuritis
• Injuries

**General Symptoms for Identification of Visual Impairment during Early Childhood Stage:**

- If child blinks when looking at something
- Any normal Anatomical Deviation of Eyes
- If the child pupils are hazy
- If Child eyes are tearing excessively
- If Child turns his/her head abnormally
- If child does not follow an object and not reach for toys in his visual field
- If child does not play with hands or other objects
- If Child does not make eye contact when being fed.
- If the motor of the child not develop as normal development pattern
- If the child bombs into large objects when crawling
- If the child does not imitate simple motor play such as waving bye-bye,
- If the child complains of Headache, Nausea, Dizziness, itching of eye, blurring of vision

**Modes of Prevention of Impairments & Disabilities:**

- Awareness Generation at grass root level.
- Reproductive & Child Health Care
- Immunization
- Proper Guidance & Counseling
- Exposures of Resource materials on the issues related to Visually Impairment, its impact and its prevention.
- Training to the community key persons etc.

**Different approaches for the Intervention services for the Visually Impaired children during Early Childhood stage:**

- Sensory Motor Integration Techniques
- Be-activity Box Stimulation
- Special Training through sense organ
• Physiotherapy for Reflex inhibition, Sensory motor Integration, Mobility & Orientation etc.
• Neurodevelopment Therapy
• Psychosocial Interventions
• Medical Intervention
• Multidisciplinary Intervention etc.

Services for Parents/ Care Takers:
• Guidance & Counseling
• Psychosocial intervention to cope with the challenged
• Parents / Family Education
• Appropriate Training to the parents on significant illness of their child and its management.

UETS Experience in Intervention services for the Visually Impaired children during Early Childhood stage:
We have been implementing an Exclusive Early Intervention Center for the Exceptional children of age group 0 to 6 years, at Kakinada. In order to implement this programme, we have developed special strategy and effective infrastructure to provide the appropriate intervention measures to the special needs of these children, which are well accepted in the rural communities. Thereby allowing the smooth and effective running of this programme. We are utilizing and stimulating the existing structure and creating awareness regarding the ability of these children among the community.

Apart from the Education, we are also engaging in all-round development of these children. The major motivation is to provide special needs, enhance physical, social, psychological and societal integration and develop attitudinal change towards the abilities of the differently abled and facilitates the equalizations of opportunities, which exist in the community.

Recreations, sports and cultural programmes:
Age appropriate recreational skills are very essential for a human being to become more socially acceptable in the normal mainstream of society and these are much more essential for the differently abled children to exhibit their talents in general public, which will earn them an equal status and opportunities in the society.