

# AFIF'S CONTRIBUTION IN ACTION

AUGUST 2013



Royal Institute  
for Deaf and Blind  
Children

## RIDBC is helping Simra learn through music and songs

Four year old Simra, who is blind, has started 'big school' at Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) Alice Betteridge School this year.

Simra was born blind and also has Joubert syndrome which causes her to have low muscle tone. Enrolling in RIDBC when she was three months old, Simra has started Kindergarten at RIDBC Alice Betteridge School.

A child with vision loss must learn to feel, touch and hold objects. Developing tactile and hearing skills is critical and Simra and her family spent a lot of time working on this in her early therapy sessions at RIDBC.

At RIDBC VisionEd Preschool, a reverse integration preschool purpose built for children with vision loss where children from the community also attend, Simra used music to help her learn.

"Simra absolutely loves music," said RIDBC VisionEd Preschool Director, Kathryn Bowie.

"We use songs to help develop an awareness of her environment. Songs with repetition help Simra learn language, and lyrics which ask her to 'touch your head' or 'stamp your foot' have helped her develop the spatial awareness that is essential for her physical independence.

Now when someone says, 'something is coming up on the left', Simra will know what to look out for."

Simra is also learning braille.

"We gave Simra access to lots of tactile books so she could understand how pictures contribute to a story. Simra also began 'scribbling' on a braille machine. Just like a sighted child will scribble with a pen - this is the stage a

blind child goes through before they begin to learn letters. Simra can now recognise her name in braille!" said Kathryn.

Simra's mum, Fatima, is happy Simra will continue her schooling at RIDBC.

**“ We'd be lost without RIDBC! The service has been so fantastic – so personalised and supportive. RIDBC is giving my daughter every opportunity to succeed. ”**  
said Fatima.

RIDBC Alice Betteridge School caters for school-age students from Kindergarten to Year 12 with a significant hearing or vision loss as well as a level of intellectual impairment.



RIDBC VisionEd Preschool Director Kathryn Bowie, with Simra and her mother, Fatima, reading one of Simra's favourite tactile books, "That's my bear".