Seeing is Believing CHEER Project

Executive Summary for research undertaken by Perkins

Perkins International has partnered with organizations around the world to provide support in the education of children with visual impairments. This commitment to improving educational services has spanned decades and countless initiatives.

In line with Perkins International’s long history of pursuing excellence in blindness education, the *Seeing is Believing CHEER Project* has sought to increase the educational capacities of a preschool serving children with visual impairments in the Shanxi region. This report will detail the findings of this project, providing insight into the impact of Perkins International trainings.

The goals of this project have been guided by two important questions:

* What is the impact of Perkins International’s trainings on teachers’ skills and behaviors, and did the trainings result in improved educational services for children with visual impairment?
* What assessment and teacher training protocols can the CDPF preschool and other preschools across the region implement that will increase the educational outcomes for children with visual impairment?

**Takeaway Findings**

Perkins International conducted teacher trainings that spanned five days, covering topics ranging from orientation & mobility to teaching strategies to vision loss to task analysis. Upon completion of the training, twelve out of the sixteen respondents on a post-training questionnaire listed the “5 Big Ideas” as the most important thing that was learned during the training. These ideas were: 1) Follow child’s lead, 2) Partnerships with families, 3) Use real objects & meaningful activities, 4) Build independence, and 5) Routines/choice-making.

Follow-up interviews revealed that teachers implemented principles from the training that aligned with naturalistic interventions (represented in the “5 Big Ideas”), which was confirmed by observations in the classroom. Teachers also shifted from deficit-based approaches to a more holistic view of the child. These changes are instrumental in building an educational program that builds off of children’s strengths and abilities. Future teacher education initiatives should integrate naturalistic-based approaches to highlight that all children can learn when their interests are respected, real objects/situations are used for learning, understanding how to let the child guide the learning process.