



East St. Louis Area Joint Agreement
 School Districts 188 & 189
 Department of Special Services

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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

“VISUAL IMPAIRMENT” DEFINITION:

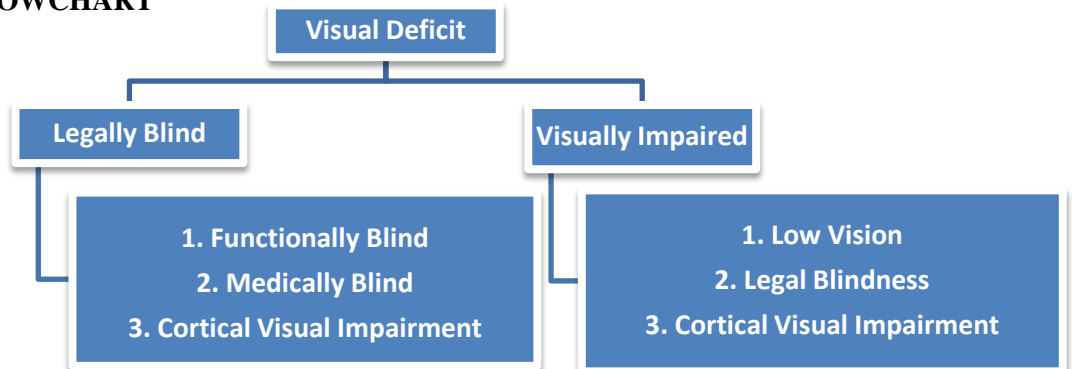
An impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – Initial Determination of Visual Impairment Eligibility

A child can be determined to be visually impaired when all of the following are met:

1. A visual impairment or a progressive vision loss has been diagnosed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist, within the past 2 years. For Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), a Visual Evoked Potential (VEP) test or neurologist report is necessary to confirm diagnosis.
2. Visual acuity has been determined to be:
 - a. For visually impaired – 20/70 to 20/200 in the better eye with best correction, or
 - b. For legally blind, 20/200 or less in the better eye with best correction or a visual field measuring 50 degrees or less or
 - c. Documentation from an optometrist or ophthalmologist of a vision deficit is required before an educational eligibility of visually impaired can be determined.
3. Teacher of students with Visual Impairments (TVI) reports the results of a Functional Vision Assessment.
4. The IEP Team determines that the Visual Impairment adversely affects the child’s educational performance.

VISUAL DEFICIT FLOWCHART



EXCLUSIONARY FACTORS

A student will not be considered eligible for Visual Impairment if:

1. The student is blind or visually impaired in one eye, but the better eye has at best corrected acuity of 20/25 to 20/60.
2. The vision loss is determined by a qualified medical professional (MD, DO, OD) to be temporary, and the duration of the loss will not substantially or permanently impact learning or academic performance (i.e., scratched cornea, swollen eye, pink eye, etc.)
3. The disability is more accurately described by another category of eligibility (i.e., hysterical blindness may qualify under Emotionally Disturbed).
4. The student has visual acuity within the normal range (20/20 to 20/60), but has visual perception problems adversely affecting their education (may qualify as Learning Disabled or Other Health Impaired).

EXIT CRITERIA

Exit decisions must be individualized and based on current best practice as determined by the appropriate IEP team members. A student is no longer eligible for special services as a student with visual impairment when it is determined that:

1. The disability no longer has an adverse effect on the student's educational performance or
2. The visual impairment no longer exists as documented by a medical professional (MD, DO, OD) or
3. The student accepts a standard high school graduation diploma upon completion of required goals/objective and credit or
4. Student completes the school year in which he/she reaches the day before 22 years of age.

The determination of continued eligibility or no eligibility is made at the IEP meeting on the basis of the reevaluation.

BEST PRACTICE

Once a student is identified as visually impaired, it is important that the parents take the child for eye exams as recommended by their optometrist or ophthalmologist. This is not only to protect the health of the student's eyes and ocular system, but also to offer accurate acuity information to the school staff so that appropriate educational programming can take place.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments

An individual with at least a Bachelor's Degree in education for vision disability and approved by ISBE to teach the visually impaired student.

LEGAL BLINDNESS

An individual who is legally blind has a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best correction, or a visual field of no more than 20 degrees. Legal blindness is a term that connotes eligibility for government

or other benefits and services. However, many people with legal blindness have useable vision and may read regular or large print.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Medically identified organic differences in the visual system which are so severe that even after medical and conventional optical intervention, the student is unable to receive an appropriate education with the regular educational setting without service or equipment from a teacher of students with visual impairments.

LOW VISION

Having a significant visual impairment but also having some useable vision with acuities ranging from 20/70 to 20/200. Acuity is not a consideration for a medically determined progressive visual disorder or for students with cortical visual impairment. For students with documented nystagmus, amblyopia or strabismus, the acuity range may differ.

CORTICAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (a.k.a. cortical blindness, cerebral blindness, or neurological visual impairment)

Temporary or permanent absence of vision caused by damage to the blood supply of the visual areas in the occipital lobe of the brain. The retina will appear normal; visually evoked electrical response (VER) is markedly diminished. Students with CVI may exhibit fluctuating vision even within the course of one day.

PARTIALLY SEEING (a.k.a. partially sighted)

This is a legal description for someone whose best corrected vision is worse than 20/70 in the better eye; may benefit from instruction by the teachers of students with visual impairments.

BLIND

Inability to see

FUNCTIONALLY BLIND

A student who is legally blind and who is unable to efficiently use print as their primary learning medium. For these students, instruction in the use of tactile/auditory learning medium is necessary. These students generally have light reception, ability to see color differences, and can see shadows.

MEDICALLY BLIND

A child who is legally blind in both eyes from a medical procedure/disorder such as retinal detachment, enucleation (surgical removal of the eyeball), anophthalmia, microphthalmia, etc.

FUNCTIONAL VISION ASSESSMENT

Conducted by a teacher of students with visual impairments to determine the student's functional vision with in the academic setting.

VISUAL ACUITY

The measurement of the sharpness of vision in respect to the ability to discriminate detail. A visual acuity measurement should not be the only criteria used to predict one's visual function or educational performance.