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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DEAF-BLINDNESS

“DEAF-BLINDNESS” DEFINITION

A concomitant of hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they (the children) cannot be accommodated in special education programs designed solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

34CFR, Part 300, Subpart A, 300.7 (c)(2)

REQUIRED COMPONENTS FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Four types of vision impairments may contribute to Deaf-Blindness:

1. Loss of visual acuity
2. Loss of visual fields
3. Loss of ocular motor control
4. Loss of visual processing (neurological or cortical visual impairment)

Three types of hearing impairments to consider for Deaf-Blindness:

1. Sensorineural loss
2. Conductive loss
3. Mixed loss (combination of sensorineural and conductive losses)

If the student does not have sufficient vision to compensate fully for a hearing impairment or does not have sufficient hearing to compensate fully for a visual impairment, the student may be determined eligible as Deaf-Blindness.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

A student is eligible as Deaf-Blindness when (1) both hearing and visual impairments are present; and (2) the impairments together cause severe communication, developmental, and educational needs that cannot be addressed in a program designed for either students who are blind or students who are deaf.

EXCLUSIONARY FACTORS

An individual will not be considered eligible for services under Deaf-Blindness if:

1. The student is blind or visually impaired in one eye, but the better eye has at best corrected acuity of 20/70;
2. The vision impairment or hearing impairment is determined by a qualified medical profession (MD, DO, OD, ENT) 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, otitis media, wax impactation);
3. The disability is more accurately described by another category of eligibility (i.e. hysterical blindness may qualify under ED);
4. The student has visual acuity or hearing within the normal range, but has visual perception or auditory processing difficulties adversely affecting their education, which may qualify as LD, OHI, or another disability category.

EXIT CRITERIA

1. A student would meet exit criteria from Deaf-Blindness eligibility if either of the sensory deficits were remediated through surgery or other methods, and the student no longer met the eligibility criteria for Deaf-Blindness;
2. The vision impairment or hearing impairment no longer exists, as documented by a medical professional (MD, DO, OD, ENT);
3. The student accepts a standard high school graduation certificate upon completion or required goals/objectives and credits;
4. Student completes the school year in which he/she reaches the day before the age of 22 years.