

Independent Living Skills

Independent living skills are the chores people perform, according to their abilities, which enable them to manage their homes and personal lives. These chores include grooming, eating and preparing meals, taking care of household chores, money and time management, and so forth.

Recreation and Leisure Skills

Recreation and leisure skills may include traditional as well as adapted physical education activities. However, as with social interaction skills visually impaired students need help identifying the array of choices available to them in this area and must be taught how to perform leisure skills that most students learn through observation. Examples include Arts/Crafts, Fitness, outdoor & Community activities.

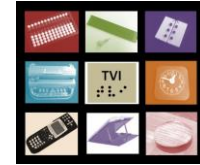
Career Education

Career education for students with visual impairments needs to begin as early as possible and include self-awareness and career exploration activities, job seeking skills instruction, information about job keeping, and encourage opportunities for gaining work experience.

Self-Determination

Self-Determination highlights the importance of believing in oneself, while understanding one's abilities and limitations. Students learn from successes and failures how to achieve one's goals in life. Self-determination is the ability for people to control their lives, reach goals they have set and take part fully in the world around them.

What School Based Vision Services are Eligible Students Entitled to?



What Services Does a Teacher of the Visually Impaired Provide?

A teacher of students with visual impairments (also called a vision specialist, VI teacher, vision itinerant teacher) is a certified teacher who has received specialized training in meeting the educational needs of students with visual impairments. The TVI is not a tutor. The TVI will assist the student in using tools or compensatory skills to access the core curriculum and will instruct the student in areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with visual impairments. The TVI will work with the educational team by advising the team about ways of enhancing the student's learning by adapting activities and materials to the student's abilities. The TVI will help choose appropriate educational materials, and will brainstorm with teachers and therapists about effective adaptations. By working together, classroom teachers, therapists, and the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments can create a classroom environment that encourages independence, academic success, and prepare the student to be the most productive member of their family and community that they can be.

For more information about visual impairments, visit these websites:

acb.org
aerbvi.org
afb.org
aph.org
familyconnect.org
nfb.org
pathstoliteracy.org
perkins.org
teachingvisuallyimpaired.com
tsbvi.edu
wonderbaby.org

What Amount of Service Will the Student Need?

There are a number of factors involved in determining the appropriate level of service and is not necessarily tied directly to extent of vision loss. The TVI will determine if the student needs short term or long term instruction in compensatory skills or use of low vision devices in order to access the core curriculum as well as other areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum.

Based on the current needs, the student may require consultation from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired to ensure staff members are aware of their unique needs and monitor use of low vision devices or the student may need direct service to instruct the student in vision specific areas.

What is an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist?

An orientation and mobility specialist has specialized training in teaching people with visual impairment to travel safely and efficiently throughout their environment. Part of O&M specialist involves working with younger students on concept development as it relates to body image, spatial awareness, and knowledge of the environment. If appropriate, they will instruct the student to use his hand to protect himself using protective techniques. They will help the student learn routes throughout the classroom and school.

The O&M specialist will also teach the student when it is appropriate to use a guide technique, and when to use a cane. For those that need it, students are taught the use of the long cane and techniques for using any remaining vision that they may have such as the use of optical devices such as telescopes or monoculars. O&M training focuses on alternatives to using sight for safe and independent travel purposes.

What is the Expanded Core Curriculum?

The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is the body of knowledge and skills that are needed by students with visual impairments due to their unique disability-specific needs. Students with visual impairments need the expanded core curriculum in addition to the core academic curriculum of general education. The educational requirements of this population are often not met since the lack of vision is considered "minor", especially when the student is severely impacted by cognitive and physical disabilities. Each area in the expanded core curriculum can be further defined to address the educational issues facing these students and assist parents and educators to fulfill their needs.

Compensatory or Functional & Communication Skills

Compensatory skills are those skills needed by students who are blind or visually impaired to access all areas of the core curriculum.

Functional skills, on the other hand, refer to skills that students with multiple disabilities learn that provides them with the opportunity to work, play, socialize, and take care of personal needs to the highest level possible. Communication needs of students will vary depending on the degree of functional vision, effects of additional disabilities, and the task to be done.

Sensory Efficiency Skills

Sensory efficiency skills includes instruction in the use of residual vision, hearing, and the other senses; for example, learning how to use optical devices, hearing aids, and augmentative communication devices, and the like. In addition, learning how to integrate all remaining senses to counter the impact of any missing or impaired sense is also integral to this area; for example, learning how to use tactual, gustatory, and olfactory input rather than visual cues to identify

one's personal possessions, or using hearing and the other senses to identify people one knows without visual cues, fits into this area.

Technology Skills

Technology can level the playing field, so to speak, for students with visual impairments and can be a great equalizer. Students who are blind or have low vision need to acquire a range of technology skills that will give them options for gathering and conveying information. Instruction in the use and maintenance of Assistive Technology is needed in the curriculum for students with visual impairments. Assistive technology enables blind and visually impaired students to access and store information from libraries around the world and the Internet. In addition, students with visual impairments can use assistive technology for note taking, studying for tests, research and a variety of other academic uses.

Orientation and Mobility

Orientation and Mobility training focuses on alternatives to using sight for safe and independent travel purposes. In this instructional area, students are taught the use of the long cane and techniques for using any remaining vision that they may have such as the use of optical devices such as telescopes or monoculars.

Social Interaction Skills

Social interaction skills must be taught to students with visual impairments because they are unable to casually observe how people interact and socialize with one another. They must be taught when and how to smile, frown, nod, wink, shrug, and the many other nonverbal communication skills.