

Standards for Special Education Evaluation & Eligibility

The following standards for special education evaluation and eligibility shall be effective July 1, 2017.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

I. Definition

Visual Impairment, including blindness, means impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Visual Impairment includes at least one (1) of the following:

- (1) Visual acuity in the better eye or both eyes with best possible correction:
 - (a) Legal blindness – 20/200 or less at distance and/or near; or
 - (b) Low vision – 20/ 70 or less at distance and/or near.
- (2) Visual field restriction with both eyes:
 - (a) Legal blindness – remaining visual field of 20 degrees or less;
 - (b) Low vision – remaining visual field of 60 degrees or less; or
 - (c) Medical and educational documentation of progressive loss of vision, which may in the future affect the student's ability to learn visually.
- (3) Other Visual Impairment, not perceptual in nature, resulting from a medically documented condition (i.e., cortical visual impairment).

II. Evaluation

The characteristics as identified in the Visual Impairment Definition are present.

Evaluation Procedures

A multi-disciplinary team approach to individual evaluation procedures that include varied sources of information and the appropriate use of instruments sensitive to cultural, linguistic, and environmental factors or sensory impairments to include the following:

- (1) Evaluation by an ophthalmologist or optometrist that documents the eye condition with the best possible correction;
- (2) A written functional vision and media assessment* to determine primary learning style, including reading, writing, listening, and tactile skills, to be completed or compiled by a licensed teacher of students with visual impairments and includes:

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- (a) Observation of visual behaviors at school, home, or other environments;
- (b) Educational implications of eye condition based upon information received from eye report;
- (c) Assessment and/or screening of the nine expanded core curriculum areas (orientation and mobility**, social interaction, independent living skills, recreation and leisure, career education, assistive technology, sensory efficiency, self-determination, and compensatory/access skills); and
- (d) School history and levels of educational performance including student, teacher, and parent interviews.

* Non-traditional students (i.e., non-readers or nonverbal students, as well as those with cortical visual impairments) will need a modified functional vision assessment to determine their primary learning media as well as their visual, tactile, and auditory needs.

** Orientation and mobility may be screened by a TVI; however, if a full assessment is needed, it must be completed by an orientation and mobility specialist.

- (3) Documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Visual Impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment and the need for specialized instruction and related services (i.e., to include academic and/or nonacademic areas).

Evaluation Participants

Information shall be gathered from the following persons in the evaluation of Visual Impairment:

- (1) The parent;
- (2) The child's general education classroom teacher; and
- (3) A licensed teacher of students with Visual Impairments;
- (4) A licensed special education teacher;
- (5) An ophthalmologist or optometrist; and

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- (6) Other professional personnel, as indicated (e.g., low vision specialist, orientation and mobility instructor, school psychologist).