

Assessing Students with Visual Impairments for Additional Disabilities

A Collaborative Approach

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Handouts and Additional Resources

[Statewide Leadership Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#); www.slsbvitexas.org/eval

Ask questions at [slido.com](https://www.slido.com) with the event code **#R889**

(3) Simulation Activity

**For those on live stream – visit www.slsbvitexas.org/eval for an alternate activity

- Form a Group of 3 or 4
- Each person except 1 will select a vision stimulator - one participant must select a blacked out simulator
- Sighted person can only direct one person at a time
 - Each person will blow up a balloon and secure it with masking tape
 - Each other person will blow up their balloon and secure it with masking tape to the previous balloon
 - After the first round, repeat in the same order with another balloon
 - Assistant for the person “blind” may provide directions only to that person
 - After 7 minutes, determine which group was able to build the tallest tower

(4) Collaborate

1 : to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor -Merriam Webster

(5) Why Collaborate?

[Full Position Paper: Intelligence Testing of Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#)

By Stephen A. Goodman, Carol Evans, and Marnee Loftin

- All members of the team bring their particular areas of expertise
- Based on the input of expertise, evaluators can determine appropriate adaptations
- Collaboration brings about appropriate presentation procedures and instruments that will provide accessibility for the student with a visual impairment



(6) What is a visual impairment?

[§300.8 \(c\)\(13\)](#)

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

[§89.1040 \(c\)\(12\) \(A\)](#)

A student with a visual impairment is one who has been determined to meet the criteria for visual impairment as stated in 34 CFR, §300.8(c)(13). The visual loss should be stated in exact measures of visual field and corrected visual acuity at a distance and at close range in each eye in a report by a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist. The report should also include prognosis whenever possible. If exact measures cannot be obtained, the eye specialist must so state and provide best estimates.

Legally Blind

Central vision acuity in the better eye of 20/200 or worse after the best correction possible, or a field of vision of 20 degrees or less.

Low Vision/Partial sight

Visual acuity better than 20/200 after correction in the better eye. Vision loss that is severe enough to impede performance in everyday life but still allows some useful visual discrimination. Vision loss that cannot be corrected to normal with eyeglasses or contact lenses

The majority of persons who are legally blind are included within this classification

Blind

A person who is sightless, having less than 1/10 of normal vision in the more efficient eye when refractive defects are fully corrected by lenses - this condition is rare amongst students with visually impairments

Functionally Blind

Educationally this is any visually impaired student who uses touch as the primary sense, even if some light or form is perceived. This is determined by a Learning Media Assessment, and Braille would typically be the literacy medium.

(7,8) Visual Impairments in Texas

2017 VI registration

Total Students with Visual Impairments in Texas 10,074

Students with Braille as their learning medium, 414

Students with a Visual Impairment and additional disabilities, 7,573



Part A: Provided to TVI/COMS prior to FVE, LMA and OME

(9) A Report (State of Texas Eye Report) from a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist that includes:

- ★ Visual loss in exact measures of visual field and corrected visual acuity at a distance and at close range in each eye; or
- ★ If exact measures cannot be obtained, provides best estimates of the visual loss; and prognosis whenever possible;
- ★ Eye report must state that the child has :
 - no vision or to have a serious visual loss after correction; or
 - a progressive medical condition that will result in no vision or a serious visual loss after correction.

(10) A Functional Vision Evaluation (FVE) by a Certified Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments(TVI), or a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) that includes:

- ★ Performance tasks in a variety of environments requiring the use of both near and distance vision; and
- ★ Recommendations concerning the need for a clinical low vision evaluation;

(11) A Learning Media Assessment (LMA) by a TVI that includes:

- ★ Recommendations concerning which specific visual, tactual, and/or auditory learning media are appropriate for the student; and
- ★ Whether there is a need for ongoing evaluation in this area;

(12) An Orientation and Mobility Evaluation (OME) performed by a COMS in

- ★ a variety of lighting conditions and
- ★ a variety of settings including in the
 - child's home,
 - school,
 - community
 - in settings unfamiliar to the child

Part B: Multiple Sessions/Multiple Environments

When is an OME required?

According to TEC §30.002 an OME is required:

- ✓ As part of the initial evaluation for determination of eligibility for visual impairment
- ✓ The scope of any reevaluation must be determined by a multidisciplinary team that includes a COMS



Special Factors

(13) Braille

300.324 (a)(2)(iii) In the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, provide for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille), that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child;

TEC 30.002 (f) When developing the IEP for the child who is [functionally blind](#), according to the Texas Education Agency's criteria:

- Proficiency in braille reading and writing is presumed to be essential for the child's satisfactory educational progress;
- Each person assisting in the development of the child's IEP must receive information describing the [benefits of braille instruction](#);
- The ARD committee must provide for braille reading and writing instruction that is sufficient to enable the child to communicate with the same level of proficiency as other children of comparable ability who are at the same grade level;
- Braille instruction may be used in combination with other special education services appropriate to the child's educational needs;
- The ARD committee must specify the appropriate learning medium based on the full individual and initial evaluation; and
- The ARD committee must ensure that instruction in braille will be provided by a teacher certified to teach children with visual impairments.

(14) Expanded Core Curriculum

TEC 30.002 (c)(4)(B) instruction in an expanded core curriculum, which is required for students with visual impairments to succeed in classroom settings and to derive lasting, practical benefits from the education provided by school districts, including instruction in:

- I. compensatory skills, such as braille and concept development, and other skills needed to access the rest of the curriculum;
- II. orientation and mobility;
- III. social interaction skills;
- IV. career planning;
- V. assistive technology, including optical devices;
- VI. independent living skills;
- VII. recreation and leisure enjoyment;
- VIII. self-determination; and
- IX. sensory efficiency;



(15) ARD committee must develop an IEP that

TEC 30.002 (e) (3) reflects that the student has been provided a detailed explanation of the various service resources available to the student in the community and throughout the state;

(4) provides a detailed description of the arrangements made to provide the student with the evaluation and instruction required under Subsection (c)(4); and

(5) sets forth the plans and arrangements made for contacts with and continuing services to the student beyond regular school hours to ensure the student learns the skills and receives the instruction required under Subsection (c)(4)(B)

(16) Considerations for Additional Disabilities for Students with Visual Impairments

(17) How do you RULE OUT the presence of a Visual Impairment as the cause of the problem?

IDEA does NOT require that the visual impairment be “ruled out” but rather that it be determined to not be the “primary cause” of difficulties.

To make the determination that vision is not the “primary cause” of the difficulties the student is experiencing by following a process that:

1. Determines appropriate intervention for student with VI was followed
2. Best practice guidelines for testing students with VI has been followed
3. Attendance and service delivery have been appropriate for IEP implementation

(18) 34 Code of Federal Regulations

§ 300.304 Evaluation procedures.

... (c) Other evaluation procedures. Each public agency must ensure that—

... (4) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities

Evaluating for Additional Disabilities

(19) Purpose of the Evaluation

How will the student benefit?

Will the evaluation provide justification for a change in programming or placement?

Will the student have access to outside agencies that he/she would otherwise not have access to?

(20) Considering the Data

Is the student failing even with appropriate accommodations for vision loss?

Does the student demonstrate a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in a variety of areas?

Do you have other data to consider from the service providers, family and teachers?



(21) Planning for the Evaluation - A Collaborative Approach

Team of Professionals

Ongoing communication and collaboration with the TVI and COMS will be necessary when planning for assessment and evaluating results. Also consider additional team members (OT, PT, Speech, AU) when warranted.

Meet with the team members prior to developing a plan for evaluation. Consider their input and role in the process. How will each of their expertise help in identifying the strengths and needs of the student?

Functional Vision Evaluation and Learning Media Assessment

Results of these assessments must be reviewed prior to developing a plan for additional testing. Utilize your Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments and Orientation and Mobility Specialist to review the results with you and interpret eye medical information.

Testing Instruments

As a team make decisions on appropriate testing instruments and consider individualized accommodations necessary

Test should be given in the most appropriate learning medium. This could include low vision devices such as a magnifier or CCTV; braille and/or braille devices or a combination of both print and braille. The teacher of students with visual impairments may be present during the testing to ensure visibility of the testing items, assist with device management and interpret braille reading and writing skills.

(22) Evaluating for Additional Disabilities - Setting the Stage

- Select a room that would allow for maximum vision
- Orient student to room prior to evaluation
- Plan for extra time (May need multiple days)
- Check equipment and devices that may be used (batteries, power sources, low vision devices)
- Make arrangements to test students that read Braille with the TVI present

(23) Case Study

Additional Considerations

(24) Reasons for Evaluation

- More specific information as to how student learns and interventions strategies that can be provided to improve learning/progress
- More in depth information for teachers and planning for life after high school
- Services from agencies post-graduation



(25) Transition

- Which agency will support the student after high school?
- What type of information do they require?
- Does the student have the appropriate assessment to access services?
 - Universities, Colleges, Technical Schools
 - Texas Workforce
 - Health and Human Services*
 - Employment

* Sept. 1, 2017, marked another major milestone in this transformation: moving the remaining Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) functions to HHS. So the information you used to find on the DADS website has moved to the [HHS website](#)

(26) Evaluation Resources

- Curriculum Based Measurement
- Rtl
- WJ III-Ach available in large print from APH (Braille coming soon)
- WISC-IV
- WIAT II
- DAB II
- Key Math-available in Braille from APH
- Johns Basic Reading Inventory (Large Print and Braille)
- Brigance

(27) Consideration of Additional Disabilities

It is not about a label but more about a full picture of a child's learning needs.

(28) References

[2017 Guidelines and Standards for Educating Students with Visual Impairments in Texas](#)
by Texas Action Committee for the Education of Students with Visual Impairments

[The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)

[Full Position Paper: Intelligence Testing of Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#),
by Stephen A. Goodman, Carol Evans, and Marnee Loftin

[Making Evaluation Meaningful Determining Additional Eligibilities and Appropriate instructional Strategies for Blind and Visually Impaired Students](#), by Marnee Loftin

[Psychoeducational Assessment of Students Who Have Visual Impairment: Perspectives of Teachers of Students Who Are Blind or Who Have Low Vision and School Psychologists](#),
by Carol Evans, PhD



