

Program for Students with Visual Impairment
Unique Visual Needs
For Students Following a Modified Course of Study

Student's Name:

IEP Date:

Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments:

The student's visual impairment interferes with his maximum learning potential and requires special programming to meet the student's visual needs.

Summary of Visual Impairment:

Include a summary from the Functional Vision Evaluation on the student's current visual performance.

The following is a checklist of adaptations, requirements, and special considerations to be provided by the school, so that the student with visual impairment can be successful in the classroom.

Incorporate only those that are appropriate in the student's unique needs.

Visual Functioning

- Be aware that the student's visual functioning may differ from one time to another or from one environment to another. Differences in visual functioning are due to a variety of factors, such as the student's physical state, the particular materials used, and how those materials are presented.

Minimize glare

Glare is a constant consideration for all individuals with low vision. Glare can create discomfort or inhibit visual functioning depending on the source or type of glare experienced. Highly reflective surfaces – including flooring, walls, ceilings, work and play surfaces, and instructional and play materials (particularly those that have been laminated) – can all be sources of glare for individuals with low vision. The following suggestions can be helpful in minimizing glare for children with low vision:

- When selecting positioning for the student, **avoid creating shadows** and reflecting light directly into the student's eyes
- Care should be taken to select **materials that maximize light absorption** (for example, matte-finish rather than glossy finish photos)
- Be sensitive to changing **lighting conditions outdoors** as well. Sunglasses, visors or hats with a minimum three-inch brim can help to eliminate some of the glare experienced outdoors.

Space

Space is an important organizer of visual perceptions for individuals with low vision. The following considerations will help in planning positive visual experiences:

- Simple and regular patterns** are more easily viewed than complex ones.
- Provide appropriate and regular **spacing between items** to avoid visual clutter and overwhelming sensory input for the student. Objects placed too close together may be difficult for the student to distinguish from one another.

Time

Individuals who are visually impaired may require additional time to complete tasks that require the use of vision or when adjusting to changes in lighting. The student may need additional time to complete tasks that depend on the use of vision. With regard to time, the following approaches may help young children feel more confident and complete tasks more successfully:



- The student should be given **extra time** to complete visual tasks.
- The student will likely be more successful in **tracking a slow-moving target** than a fast-moving target because he will have more time to do so.
- Allow The student adequate **time to adjust to changes in lighting** prior to asking him to negotiate obstacles or stairs or complete part of a daily routine.

Contrast

Maximizing contrast between objects and work and play surfaces can help children who have low vision maintain a greater sense of control over the items that they manipulate. Contrast can be enhanced through the use of increased illumination, careful choice of colors, or selection of black and white materials. Higher-contrast items are easier to locate, distinguish, and keep track of. The following approaches can be used to enhance contrast:

- Contrasting mats** on the tabletop help children to define their space and to locate items more efficiently.
- Present items against a **plain background**; do not hold them up in space, as this tends to make them appear to “blend in” to the background.
- Use a **good contrast** background for items in order to help the student visually detect and fixate on them.

Visual Attention

- Encourage the student to visually fixate on items before giving them to her.
- When attempting to gain the student’s visual attention, place items in her visual field and move them slightly if necessary.
- The student needs longer than average time to visually attend to materials/toys.
- Familiarity and hands on experience with items will increase the student’s ability to understand what they are visually. Imbed visual tasks into functional routines (feeding, diapering, dressing, etc.)

Positioning

- Remember that **comfortable positioning** is important for visual alertness.

TVI Role as Facilitator

- The TVI acts as a facilitator, encouraging the student to assume more and more responsibility and thereby to gain more independent control over the visual environment. In this process of gradual naturalization, the student moves from activities in an artificial, highly controlled environment to those in a natural environment in which he can tolerate distraction and multiple features. The goal should be to expand the individual’s visual capacity and potential. Older and more capable students can learn to adapt their own visual environment, but they must first recognize the advantages of the adaptations.

