

Roles and Responsibilities of:

The Teacher of Visually Impaired Students TVI

(Teachers of the Visually Impaired) aka Vision

Consultants/Vision Strategists/Program Teachers-Vision

May have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Primary responsibility for specialized instruction and services required to meet the unique educational needs of her visually impaired students.
- Possesses the skills and abilities necessary to provide and coordinate this specialized instruction.
- Assists the student, parents, special and regular education personnel, and the student's sighted peers in
 - understanding the unique educational needs and learning characteristics of visually impaired students,
 - becoming aware of services and support available from local programs for visually impaired students,
 - interpreting the visually impaired student's specific eye condition, the educational implications of the visual impairment, and the results of functional vision and learning media assessments.
- Consults regularly with the classroom teacher, other regular and special education personnel, parents, and others to coordinate programs and services for the visually impaired student.
- Assists the administrator and teachers in making environmental adjustments for the student in the school.
- Shares responsibility with classroom teachers in the identification of instructional areas in which the student requires assistance.
- Ensures that large print or braille texts, supplementary materials, educational, aids, and equipment needed by the visually impaired student, and the classroom teacher, are provided in a timely manner to ensure the student's maximum participation in all classroom activities.



JPDasCentre MDRL

Minerva Deaf Research Lab

- Provides instruction in the development and maintenance of skills to meet the student's unique educational needs in the following areas, as indicated in the IPP:
 - low vision & visual efficiency skills (Assure that the student is trained in the use of, and has available, all optical, non-optical, and electronic technology devices necessary for learning)
 - concept development & academic skills (Instruct the student in developmental skills, academic strategies, and other activities that require modification, adaptation, or reinforcement as a direct result of the visual impairment)
 - daily living skills,
 - career & vocational education skills,
 - communication skills (these skills include braille reading and writing as appropriate),
 - social/emotional skills and abilities, & sensory motor skills.
 - seating and other environmental modifications that maximize students' utilization of visual information and facilitate movement of the student with visual impairments within the class.
 - accommodations needed for assignments or testing procedures.
- Prepares sequential and meaningful instruction geared to the student's assessed needs, IPP goals and objectives.
- Provides assistance to the classroom teacher in academic subjects and activities of the classroom that, as a direct result of the student's visual impairment, require adaptation for the student.
- Provides initial and ongoing assessment:
 - consults with assessment team to determine appropriate testing materials and modifications needed,
 - assists with assessments when needed,
 - interprets assessment results when needed.
- Conducts functional vision/learning media assessments and produces written reports.

JPDasCentre MDRL

Minerva Deaf Research Lab

- Attends School Learning Team meetings and IPP meetings for students with visual impairments.
- Schedules time efficiently for assessment, instruction, planning, preparation of materials, travel, and conferences with relevant school and other key individuals.
- Maintains ongoing contact with parents to assist them in the development of a realistic understanding of their child's abilities, progress, and future goals.
- Provides in-service training programs for school personnel and students and education for parents regarding the needs of visually impaired students and adaptations, programs, and services for these students.

The Classroom Teacher (regular, special class, or resource specialist)

May have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Provides instruction in appropriate academic and non-academic content areas to the visually impaired student in the classroom.
- Works cooperatively with the teacher of visually impaired students to
 - identify the student's areas of educational need, including unique education needs,
 - coordinate instruction and services to meet these needs,
 - provide, in a timely manner, classroom materials that need to be reproduced in another medium,
 - determine mutually convenient times during the school day for scheduling the teacher of visually impaired students to work with the student,
 - modify classroom procedures and environment to meet the specific needs of the visually impaired student for participation in classroom activities, and
 - exchange information concerning the visually impaired student with parents and other individuals on a regular basis.
 -

Substitute Teacher

When the classroom teacher is absent, a substitute teacher will have the responsibility for the student who is visually impaired. Basic information regarding the student should be on file for the substitute. A form with information for the substitute teacher, which could be easily inserted into the teacher's day plan. (See attached form)

The Orientation and Mobility Specialist

May have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Instructs the visually impaired student in the development of skills and knowledge that enables him or her to travel independently, based on assessed needs and ability.
- Teaches the visually impaired student to travel with proficiency, safety, and confidence in familiar and unfamiliar environments.
- Consults regularly with the student, parents, classroom teachers, physical education teachers, and/or other special education personnel to assist in home and classroom environmental modifications, adaptations, and considerations and to ensure reinforcement of appropriate O&M skills that will encourage the visually impaired student to travel independently in these settings.
- Conducts assessments that focus on both long and short-term needs of the student.
- Includes in the assessment report the needs and strengths of the student and an estimate of the length and frequency of service necessary to meet identified needs.
- Prepares sequential and meaningful instruction geared to the student's assessed needs, IPP goals and objectives, functioning, and motivational levels.
- Prepares and uses equipment and materials, for example, tactile maps, models, distance low vision devices, and white canes, for the development of O&M skills.
- Participates in School Learning Team meetings.
- Provides inservice training to regular and special education personnel, sighted peers, and parents concerning the O&M needs of the student and appropriate methods and procedures for interacting with the visually impaired person that will foster maximum independence and safety.

Education Assistant/Teaching Assistant

The Education Assistant (EA) is a member of the School Learning Team who may be assigned to work in the classroom to assist the classroom teacher and the teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI).

The EA plays a vital role in the classroom but is not a teacher. Usually the EA will be under the supervision of the classroom teacher, but in matters related to visual impairment, the EA will be provided with educational support from the TVI or the O&M Specialist. The EA provides practice, reinforcement, and monitoring of skills and communicates with the Learning Team.

The EA duties may include:

- **supporting and reinforcing instruction:** The teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI), classroom teacher, or other members the student's educational team may ask the educational assistant (EA) to assist the student during instructional times in the classroom. For example, the EA may need to provide verbal descriptions to your child of visual presentations, such as classroom demonstrations or videos. At other times, the EA may take your child aside and help reinforce concepts taught in the regular class lessons.
- **preparing materials:** The TVI may ask the EA to prepare or obtain accessible versions of instructional materials for the student so that she/he can have them at the same time as his/her classmates. For example, if the class is reading a book together, the EA may be asked to prepare a braille copy of the book with tactile illustrations in it. The EA may enlarge charts or maps in a textbook on a photocopy machine or prepare a tactile version for a child who reads braille.
- **helping your child practice skills:** The TVI or the orientation and mobility (O&M) instructor, may have taught your child a new skill and the EA may be asked to reinforce it. For example, if the TVI has taught the student how to braille math problems on the braillewriter, the EA may be asked to guide him/her as he/she completes their math assignment using braille.



JPDasCentre MDRL

Minerva Deaf Research Lab

- **monitoring safety:** The EA may supervise the visually impaired student if they need support in monitoring their own safety in such situations as walking through the halls, playing on the playground, or participating in hands-on projects in the classroom. This allows the child to participate safely in the class's activities, while learning to do so independently. Or, the EA might be assigned to "shadow" the student while they practice an O&M technique in the school environment.
- **assisting with self-care tasks:** The EA may assist younger children or children with multiple disabilities who need assistance with such tasks as toileting, dressing, and eating, while encouraging them to learn to do these tasks independently.
- **supporting social interactions:** The EA helps the visually impaired student practice appropriate social skills such as facing the person she is talking to, using appropriate body language, joining a group, or asking for assistance when they need it.
- **serving on the visually impaired student's School Learning Team:** The EA may spend time with the student in different classes or as she/he works with other team members such as the occupational therapist or O&M Instructor. The EA can share their perspective on how the student is progressing and how he/she responds under different circumstances and situations around the school with other team members.

School Administrators

The primary issue when educating students with a visual impairment is access to the learning environment and equal access to opportunities to learn.

Education is more than academic skill – it is a whole range of functional skills that prepare students for life *after* school. What typical students learn incidentally cannot be assumed to occur for students with visual impairments. Some skills need to be deliberately taught.

The administrator's attitude influences the attitudes of others, therefore creating a climate of acceptance or of rejection. An administrator who believes in the inclusion of a student with a visual impairment will:

- make a commitment to the student that is reflected in the actions of the administrator
- work to educate others to assist them in overcoming fear and prejudices
- provide opportunities for teachers to communicate with each other.
- establish a school-based support team and encourage collaboration, consultation and cooperation. Be an active member of this team.
- provide the necessary release time so that collaboration may occur;
- encourage staff members to attend inservice sessions and to network with other teachers
- establish partnerships with parents and increase opportunities for parent involvement
- assign an EA upon student need. A student with a visual impairment does not always require this support. The role of the teacher assistant must be defined.
- support the assistive technology training needs of members of the learning team.