

FAQs about Educational Supports and Services for Your Child Who is Visually Impaired/Blind

How does the Ohio Department of Education define “visual impairment?”

“Visual impairment” including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Your child may have one or more vision-related medical diagnoses. It is the school district’s responsibility to evaluate your child to determine if the educational definition applies to them.

Scan the QR code for more information from the Ohio Department of Education or [click here](#).



Who is the professional responsible for assessing my child’s vision?

A Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) is a specially trained and licensed intervention specialist who evaluates and teaches children who are visually impaired/blind. They hold a state K-12 intervention specialist license in the visually impaired (Pre-K–12) teaching field. The child’s school district of residence is responsible for obtaining the services of a TVI in order to ensure that assessments are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel and to ensure that the student with a visual impairment is receiving a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

How will a TVI assess my child’s vision?

A TVI should directly assess your child to learn how your child may be using his or her vision to perform daily tasks. The TVI may conduct a Functional Vision Assessment (FVA). As part of the FVA, the TVI may review your child’s medical eye report, relevant medical records and any previous educational records. The TVI may also observe your child during a play-based assessment (when transitioning to preschool), or in their classroom. The TVI may also interview you and/or teachers and therapists who work with your child.

The FVA will help the TVI answer the following questions:

- Is your child’s vision negatively impacting his or her access to education?
- What accommodations are needed to allow your child to use his or her vision effectively?

- Does your child need assistive technology (AT) to help them use their vision more efficiently, or to provide them with alternative ways for learning and accessing their education with limited or no vision?
- In what areas within the Expanded Core Curriculum will your child need direct instruction from a TVI?

Scan the QR code below or [click here](#) to learn more about the nine specialized areas of knowledge and skills that make up the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with visual impairments:



How will I know if my child should learn to read print, braille, or both?

Often a Learning Media Assessment (LMA) is done in addition to the Functional Vision Assessment (FVA). This assessment can be used to determine your child's main way of learning (visual, auditory, tactile).

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the primary learning medium for a child who is visually impaired is considered braille, unless determined otherwise with input from the evaluation results and the child's educational team (which includes you as the parent or guardian). IDEA also says that the IEP team needs to consider a child's future needs, so braille instruction may begin even when a child is currently able to see/read print.

The literacy options for a child with a visual impairment are regular print, large print and print that is read with the use of assistive technology. Auditory is not a form of literacy but can be used to support learning. For children who are prereaders and students with multiple disabilities, a multisensory learning approach may be used and tactile symbols can be introduced to support communication.

Scan the QR Codes below or [click here](#) and [here](#) to learn more about multisensory learning and the use of Tactile Symbols:



When is a Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment (FVLMA) needed?

If your child is being evaluated for special education and related services with a diagnosed visual impairment, you should request that a TVI assess your child as part of this process.

As part of the initial evaluation, or reevaluation process to determine if your child needs special education and related services, a TVI should complete the FVLMA. Special education and related services consist of specially designed instruction delivered through an Individual Education Plan (or IEP).

The FVLMA may also be used to determine the most appropriate accommodations needed to access the curriculum through a 504 Plan. A 504 plan is an option when your child is found not eligible for special education and related services.

For more information about a 504 plan, please scan the QR code below or click here:



What is Orientation and Mobility?

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) is a collection of age-appropriate skills needed to remain oriented and to travel safely in familiar and unfamiliar environments. A Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) can teach body concepts, sensory awareness, spatial & positional concepts, location & travel concepts and following simple directions. Additionally, a COMS can teach your child to use a white cane or other mobility device and utilize certain low vision tools.

Should my child receive Orientation and Mobility instruction?

O&M is a related educational service and all students with visual impairments, regardless of additional disabilities, should be evaluated by a COMS to determine their needs and the level of support or services a child may need in this area.

For more information about the above assessment scan the QR Code below or click here:

