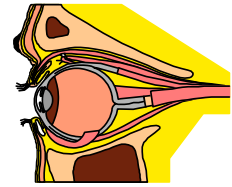


VISUAL IMPAIRMENT



DEFINITION:

Visual Impairment: An impairment in vision which, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performances. This term includes children who are partially sighted and blind.

TYPES OF VISION:

Refractive Vision (Acuity): The degree of detail that can be seen in an object. The product of light rays bending and reaching receptors (rods and cones) of the retina. Refraction is influenced by the size and shape of the eyeball which changes with age.

Refractive vision includes myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness) and astigmatism (blurring or distortion of the image).

Orthoptic Vision: Refers to the activity of the six external muscles of the eye responsible for providing coordinated movements of the eyes.

Orthoptic vision includes binocular vision (the ability of the eyes to coordinate), depth perception (including strabismus, amblyopia and alternating) and nystagmus (constant involuntary movement of the eyeballs).

Visual acuity is commonly tested using the Snellen Eye Chart. The effect of impaired vision can negatively impact motor development. The age onset commonly determines future problems in these areas.

Refractive problems are commonly corrected using prescription glasses or surgery.

Orthoptic vision problems can sometimes be treated with surgery; however, the problem may be corrected with a special lens or with eye exercises. When depth perception problems exist, students should refrain from participating in activities that require judging where in space moving objects are located.

INDICATORS OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS:

- Lack of coordination in directing vision of both eyes
- Eyelids are crusted and red
- Squinting

- Body tension
- Faltering or stumbling
- Walking overcautiously
- Frequent rubbing of eyes
- Bloodshot eyes
- Sensitive to normal light levels
- Avoidance of climbing apparatus
- Going down steps one at a time
- Failure to visually track a moving object

TEACHING TIPS:

- Assess posture - give feedback.
- Ensure optimal lighting in all possible situations to ensure use of residual vision.
- Provide opportunities for movement experience.
- Encourage the student to explore the environment.
- Provide many opportunities to practice.
- Teach running with a guide rope or use a sighted guide.
- Keep the activity area free of clutter.
- Modify texture of equipment.
- Use brightly colored objects and boundaries.
- Place audio devices inside balls, bean bags, by goals and on bases.
- Protect the students' eyes.
- Keep equipment and objects in the same place. Moving objects around can frustrate the student and cause an accident.
- Alter the playing surface texture (i.e., sand, dirt, asphalt), increase or decrease the grade to indicate play area boundaries.
- Limit the number of participants.
- Use tactile cues for proper body mechanics.
- Provide strengthening and stretching activities.
- Use sounds for new experiences.
- Make safety the number one priority.
- Use peer buddies when possible.
- Teach activities that can be done independently.
- Provide Braille, large print texts, audio tapes, or oral tests when necessary.

Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.