

# Resource Services for the Visually Impaired

## Introduction - Student Profile

Do you suspect that a child may have a visual impairment?

### Parent & Teacher Checklist

#### Appearance

- Eyes Crossed
- Reddened eyes or eyelids
- Watery eyes
- Eyes in constant motion
- Drooping eyelids

#### Behaviour Indicators

- Head tilt
- Avoiding close work
- Placing head close to book or desk when reading or writing or holding materials excessively close or far away
- Losing one's place while reading
- Poor spacing in writing and an inability to stay on the lines
- Stumbling over objects
  
- Moving the head rather than the eyes when reading
- Rubbing, closing, or covering the eye(s)
- General reading difficulties

#### Complaints

- Headaches
- Nausea or dizziness
- Burning or itching eyes
- Blurred vision at anytime
- Words or lines running together or grouped together
- Pain in the eyes



## Information for Schools, Parents and Students

### Referral Process

#### Who Qualifies for Vision Services?

- A visual acuity of 6/21 (20/70) or less in the better eye after correction
- A visual field loss of 20 degrees or less
- Any progressive eye disease with a prognosis of becoming of the above in the next few years.
- An uncorrectable visual problem or reduced visual stamina such that the student functions as if his/her visual acuity is limited to 6/21.

#### What do you do if you suspect a child has a visual impairment?

1. The Classroom Teacher will contact the parent/caregiver to see if the student has had his/her eyes tested. The Vision Resource Teacher will be asked to complete a functional vision assessment.
2. The parents will be asked to take the student to an Ophthalmologist for an eye examination to obtain an eye report.
3. The student will then be referred to the School Based Resource Team. Vision Teacher will share specific information about the child's visual impairment.

### Facts About Visual Impairment

- ~ Basically vision loss is a significant reduction in vision that affects a person's life. This could be anything from a partial loss of vision to complete blindness.
- ~ A person with an acuity score of 20/200 is considered legally blind.
- ~ Currently, researchers estimate that more than one million Canadians are living with blindness or a significant loss of vision.
- ~ Approximately 23,000 Canadian students in elementary and secondary schools are living with vision loss.
- ~ About 80 percent of what people learn is through their eyes



### Programming Options

#### Description of Support Services

##### Vision Resource Teacher

- Advocates for blind and visually impaired students.
- Provide, modify, and adapt or create materials and resources appropriate for individual student needs.
- Utilize school and other resources to develop living skills, recreational and leisure activities.
- Facilitate integration of blind and visually impaired students into classes as well as work with parents, classroom teachers, support workers, and school administration to provide the best programming available for each student in their care.
- Serve as a liaison between the student, parents, school personnel, the medical community and professional resources.
- Work with Classroom Teachers to coordinate the Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for the blind and visually impaired student and are active members of the school based resource team.
- Teach braille and other skills specific to the blind and low vision students and provide support for technology related to vision.

##### Orientation and Mobility Specialist

- Facilitates independent and safe travel skills within the school community.
- Deals with accessibility issues and adaptive techniques along with developing sensory and conceptual skills within visually impaired students.
- Provide information regarding guide dogs, canes, and electronic travel aids and train students in basic life skills such as personal care, home management and recreational activities.

Role of the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkgX32G46bQ>