

Visual Impairment Rules and Regulations

Definitions.

A student with a visual impairment is one whose vision interferes with functioning in a regular school program or, for preschool-age children, in learning tasks. Examples are students whose visual impairments may result from congenital defects, eye diseases, or injuries to the eye. Visual impairment is determined on the basis of a current examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

- (1) Functionally blind means a student who is legally blind and unable to use print as the reading medium. Consideration of instruction in Braille is essential to this student's education.
- (2) Legally blind means a student whose visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction or who has a limitation in the field of vision that subtends an angle of 20 degrees. Some students who are legally blind have useful vision and may read print.
- (3) Partially sighted means a student whose visual acuity falls within the range of 20/70 to 20/200 in the better eye after correction or when the student cannot read 18 point print at any distance. Some students with a visual acuity greater than 20/70 will need specialized help for a limited time. The eligibility report shall document whether the visual loss constitutes an educational disability.

Eligibility and Placement.

- (1) An eye examination report shall be completed and signed by the ophthalmologist or optometrist who examined the student.
- (2) A comprehensive education evaluation shall be administered to determine present levels of functioning. The adverse effect of the visual impairment on the student's educational performance shall be considered for eligibility.

Additional Requirements.

- (1) Students identified with visual impairments shall be evaluated to determine the need for Braille skills. The evaluation will also include the future needs for Braille instruction or the use of Braille. For students who are identified through evaluation that Braille instruction and use is indicated, the individualized education program (IEP) shall include the following: [refer to 34 CFR 300.346]
 - (a) Results obtained from the evaluation conducted for the purpose of determining the need for Braille skills;
 - (b) How instruction in Braille will be implemented as the primary mode for Learning through integration with other classroom activities;

- (c) Date on which Braille instruction will commence;
 - (d) The length of the period of instruction and the frequency and duration of each instructional session; and
 - (e) The level of competency in Braille reading and writing to be achieved by the end of the period and the objective assessment measures to be used.
- (2) For those students for whom Braille instruction is not indicated, the minutes of the IEP shall include a statement that the absence of Braille instruction will not impair the student's ability to read and write effectively