

eeODU: Introduction to Special Education

Blindness and Visual Impairment

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Contents

ODU: Introduction to Special Education.....	1
Important Terms.....	1
IDEA Definition.....	1
Virginia Code.....	1
Information about Eligibility Criteria (VA Checklist).....	2
Councils/Advocacy Organizations with any related mission statements/definitions?...	2
Prevalence.....	2
Causes.....	3
Academic Characteristics.....	3
Social/Emotional/Behavioral Characteristics.....	3
Sample Accommodations/Modifications.....	3
Sample Instructional Strategies.....	4

Important Terms

- Teacher of students who are blind and visually impaired (TBVI, TVI)
- Orientation and Mobility (O&M)
- Ocular visual impairment
- Cortical and cerebral visual impairment
- Expanded Core Curriculum
- Braille
- Functional vision and learning media evaluation

Overview for Virginia Educators: Created by the VI Consortium at Mason

IDEA Definition

Sec. 300.8 (c) (13)

(13) Visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

IDEA Important Clarification from OSEP

[OSEP 17-05: Eligibility Determinations for Children Suspected of Having a Visual Impairment Including Blindness under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)

Virginia Code

[Virginia Code: 8VAC20-81-80. Eligibility.](#)

W. Eligibility as a child with a visual impairment.

1. The group may determine that a child has a visual impairment if:
 - a. The definition of "visual impairment" is met in accordance with [8VAC20-81-10](#);
 - b. There is an **adverse effect** on the child's educational performance due to one or more documented characteristics of visual impairment; and
 - c. The child:
 - (1) Demonstrates the characteristics of blindness or visual impairment, as outlined in subdivisions 2 and 3 of this subsection; or
 - (2) Has any of the conditions including, but not limited to oculomotor apraxia, cortical visual impairment, and/or a progressive loss of vision, which may in the future, have an adverse effect on educational performance, or a functional vision loss where field and acuity deficits alone may not meet the aforementioned criteria.
2. A child with blindness demonstrates the following:

- a. Visual acuity in the better eye with best possible correction of 20/200 or less at distance or near; or
- b. Visual field restriction in the better eye of remaining visual field of 20 degrees or less.
- 3. A child with a visual impairment demonstrates the following:
 - a. Visual acuity better than 20/200 but worse than 20/70 at distance and/or near; or
 - b. Visual field restriction in the better eye of remaining visual field of 70 degrees or less but better than 20 degrees.

Information about Eligibility Criteria (VA Checklist)

- [Guidelines for Working with Students who are Blind and Visually Impaired in Virginia Public Schools](#)
- [Evaluation and Eligibility For Special Education and Related Services: Guidance Document \(VDOE, 2017\)](#)

Councils/Advocacy Organizations with any related mission statements/definitions?

- ACB: American Council of the Blind; consumer organization of the blind
<https://acb.org/>
- AER (AERBVI): professional organization: <https://aerbvi.org/>
- AFB: American Foundation for the Blind: <https://afb.org/>
- APH: American Printing House for the Blind: <https://www.aph.org/>
- BANA: Braille Authority of North America: Governs braille use in the U.S.
<https://www.brailleauthority.org/>
- CEC-DVIDB: Professional organization for service providers in blindness field:
<https://dvidb.exceptionalchildren.org/>
- DBVI: **Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired: VA**
<https://www.dbvi.virginia.gov/>
- JVIB: Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness; peer reviewed journal in blindness field: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jvba>

- NFB: National Federation of the Blind: Consumer organization of the blind nrb.org
- NLS: National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled:
<https://www.loc.gov/nls>
- VDBP Virginia Project for Children and Adults with Deaf-Blindness:
https://web.partnership.vcu.edu/deaf_blindness#:~:text=Overview,%2Dblind%2Fdual%20sensory%20impaired.
- VSDB: Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind: <https://www.vsdb.k12.va.us/>

Prevalence

- Schles, McCarthy, T., Blankenship, K., & Coy, J. (2021). A Mixed-Methods Analysis of State-Level Population Data for Students With Visual Impairment and Blindness. *Exceptional Children*, 88(1), 101–118.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00144029211017463>

Schles, R. A. (2021). Population data for students with visual impairments in the United States. *Journal of Visual Impairments & Blindness*.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0145482X211016124>

CDC: VHI (2020)

- Approximately 12 million people 40 years and over in the United States have vision impairment
 - 1 million are blind
 - 3 million have vision impairment after correction
- Nearly 3 percent of children younger than 18 years are blind or visually impaired, defined as having trouble seeing even when wearing glasses or contact lenses.
- Vision disability is one of the top 10 disabilities among adults 18 years and older and one of the most prevalent disabling conditions among children.

Causes

Academic Characteristics

Project idea: <http://www.projectidealonline.org/v/visual-impairments/>

Social/Emotional/Behavioral Characteristics

Project Ideal: <http://www.projectidealonline.org/v/visual-impairments/>

Sample Accommodations/Modifications

- Family Connect: APH:
<https://familyconnect.org/education/know-your-rights/accommodations-and-modifications-at-a-glance/>
- ICEVI: <http://icevi.org/accommodations-and-modifications/>

Sample Instructional Strategies

[IRIS modules from Vanderbilt](#)