

## **Fast Facts About VI**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students be in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). For students who are visually impaired, LRE means that they must be educated with their sighted peers to maximum extent appropriate in the school they would attend if not visually impaired. Accommodations and modifications may be implemented in the general education classroom if deemed necessary and documented in the student's IEP.

**Definition of Visual Impairment:** 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, 2004). There are three categories of a visual impairment. Low Vision is when the child's corrected visual acuity is less than 20/70 in the better eye. Legally Blind is when the child's corrected visual acuity is less than 20/200 in the better eye. The child is Totally Blind when he or she has no functional vision.

### **Expanded Core Curriculum**

When your student is with his or her VI teacher, they will be learning areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). This is a curriculum specifically for students with visual impairments and address specific knowledge and skills that are needed due to their unique disability-specific needs. This is in addition to the core academic curriculum of general education and include self determination, independent living skills, orientation and mobilities, recreation and leisure, career exploration, social skills, assistive technology, compensatory skills, and sensory efficiency skills.

### **What to Know About Interacting with a Student Who is Visually Impaired**

1. Utilize the TVI. The TVI will work closely with you to meet the visual needs of your student and can also provide suggestions for your classroom layout, differentiated teaching methods, and modifications/accommodations specific to that child.
2. Verbalize everything. When you call on students in the classroom, use their names rather than just pointing. Include verbal descriptions of everything whenever possible.
3. Do not worry about using phrases such as, "Look over here" or, "See this." These are common terms and students who are visually impaired are used to hearing them.
4. Provide opportunities for tactile exploration. Whenever possible, allow the child to touch objects. Their hands are their eyes.
5. Always let the child know when you are leaving or approaching. Identify yourself by name, especially if the child does not know you well so the child can learn your voice.
6. Always ask before providing physical assistance. Then offer your hand or forearm and verbalize this to the child.
7. High Expectations. Consider this child more like other children rather than different from them. Expect this student to follow the same rules as everyone else.

Inclusion Facts [http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/lre\\_faqs\\_inclusion.htm](http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/lre_faqs_inclusion.htm) Expanded Core Curriculum <http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/professional-development/teachers/expanded-core-curriculum/the-expanded-core-curriculum/12345>  
Michigan Department of Education- Low Incidence Outreach <https://mdelio.org/blind-visually-impaired>  
Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired <http://www.tsbvi.edu/>  
Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired <http://aerbvi.org/>