

Will my involvement determine my child's success?

You are the person who knows your child best. You are, therefore, his advocate. In light of this responsibility, it is important to learn what his rights are under the laws. This will become the solid foundation on which to build as you continue to steer your child toward the ultimate goal of being an independent, self-supporting functioning member of society.

*Children and youth with disabilities have the right to a free appropriate public education.
IDEA 2004*

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Washington State Department of
Services for the Blind
3411 S. Alaska St., Seattle, WA 98118
1-800-552-7103

LDA of Washington State
7819 – 159th Place NE
Redmond, WA 98052; 425-882-0820
1-800-536-2343

National Federation of the Blind
NW Chapter Parents of Blind Children
253-845-4860

American Foundation for the Blind
15 West 16th St., New York, NY 10001
1-800-232-5463/212-620-2000

National Association for Parents
of Visually Impaired, Inc. (NAPVI)
1-425-672-3362 (Edmonds)
1-509-448-7166 (Spokane)

National Information Center for Children & Youth
(NICHCY) with Disabilities
PO Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013
1-800-695-0285 (v/tty)

Washington Talking
Book & Braille Library
2021 9th Ave, Seattle, WA 98121
1-800-542-0866

**Parent Training and
Information (PTI) Offices are
located throughout the State.
Call our main office toll-free
at
1-800-572-7368 (v/tty)
for the office closest to you.**

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Parent Training and Information Program

Tips for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments

Statewide Parent Training and
Information Center
6316 So. 12th St.
Tacoma, WA 98465
(253) 565-2266 (v/tty)
1-800-5-PARENT (v/tty)
Fax: (253) 566-8052
E-mail: pave@wapave.org
Website: www.wapave.org

Third Decade of Service

What is the legal definition of a visually impaired student?

Visually impaired students are those who have a visual impairment, which, even with correction, adversely affects the student's educational performances. The term includes partially sighted and blind students (WAC 392-172-142).

Will the child tell you he/she has a vision problem?

Many times a child with a visual impairment will be unaware of the problem. The adults around the child may be the ones to realize the problem exists through social and emotional behaviors.

What are some tips to help identify a visual impairment?

- Eyes in constant motion
- Watery eyes
- Eyes crossed
- Turning head to use one eye only
- Short attention span
- Stumbling over objects
- Unusual fatigue after completing a vision task
- Excessive blinking
- Covering or closing one eye
- Complaints of headaches or blurred vision

Will the school take over responsibility for my child's progress after entrance in school?

When your child enters school, your responsibility for his success is not transferred to the school system. Ideally, it is shared with school personnel as you work as a part of the team. Because you know your

child better than anyone else, it is important to share with the teacher ways you have learned to help him/her succeed.

How can classroom materials be modified for the mainstreamed child with a visual impairment?

Writing supplies:

- A black felt-tip pen or
- If there is a need to erase, a pencil with a dark lead, but which is not too soft (example: a 465 Mephisto writing pencil #1 available at most stationary stores).

Paper:

For written work, penmanship paper gives a child the boundaries needed. In the early grades, the space should be wide and gradually made smaller as the student progresses.

_____The example at left is for 8x11 paper.

_____However, 12x14 paper may be better,

_____for instance in elementary grades.

Math Papers:

The student may need paper that helps in placement of work in the appropriate columns. For any math work, column paper may be used. College-ruled 8 ½ x 11 paper turned sideways may be used. Math problems may be copied onto column paper. The problems should be spaced a good distance apart.

The important facts in story problems should be highlighted in some way; i.e., underlined so that the student is not required to reread the problem to pick out the number.

Many adapted aids, Braille books, and large print materials, not commercially available, are available to school districts. Parents can often use the consumable materials such as dark lined paper and Braille materials rather than spending time making and adapting their own special paper.

Consumable Books:

Many subjects are available in a workbook (consumable book) format allowing the student to write directly in the book.

Large Print Book:

Many textbooks are available in large print. Other texts may be copied and enlarged as needed.

Flash Cards:

To make math and spelling flash cards, use 3x5 cards, marking them with a fat, black felt-tip pen. For math, all of the information should be on the front of the card. This method may be used to learn addition, subtraction and multiplication facts.

The same technique may be used to learn spelling words. While the student watches, print the word. Ask the student to say the word several times. Ask him then to look at the word, say it and spell it. Again ask him to close his eyes and say the word he sees in his mind. Finally, ask him to spell the word with his eyes open and without looking at the word.

Braille:

The partially sighted child may progress at a faster rate using Braille books.

Prescribed appliances:

Various aids such as magnifiers, binoculars, etc. may be prescribed. If a student needs aids, it is best for him

to begin using them as early as possible. Many children feel these appliances set them apart, making them "different" from their peers and refuse to use the device.

What can we as parents do to help our child succeed?

- Let the teacher know what you have found to be the best ways for your child to learn.
- Learn about the classroom your child will be in, especially if one subject is more of a problem than others. Your child may have problems with ditto pages, a cluttered work sheet or too much writing and/or copying from the board.
- It may be more realistic to view your child as one with a learning disability rather than one with a vision problem. Another way to describe a learning disabled child is simply as a child who "learns differently".
- Continue to read everything available concerning your child's disabilities and keep an open mind.
- Work with your child at home. There are many good workbooks on the market for all ages and subjects, which are available at variety stores, bookstores and at some toy stores. Another good place to find useful materials (posters of math tables parts of the body stickers and games) is where teachers buy their classroom extras.
- Most of all be comfortable with yourself and with the decisions you make. For example, if you cannot afford an expensive therapy program for your child, try not to waste time feeling guilty.
- Join a support group. You will receive "positive strokes" while learning ways to take care of small problems before they become big ones. The exchange of information between you and other parents will be helpful to all.