

# Intro to TSBVI and Serving Students with VI

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# Vision and Mission of TSBVI

**Vision:** All Texas students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind, including those with additional disabilities, will have high quality educational opportunities at the TSBVI campus and in their home district; empowering them to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

**Mission:** We serve as a leading center of expertise and resources, working in partnership with schools, families, communities, and organizations to transform educational outcomes for students, ages birth to 22, who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind, including those with additional disabilities.



# Legislative Mission

- Serving students with visual impairments in an on-campus residential program;
- Conducting supplemental programs;
- Providing statewide services to parents, districts, educational service centers and other agencies.



# Short Term Programs



# Short Term Programs

- 3-5 Day Classes
- Distance Options
- Individualized Instruction
- Summer Programs





# Comprehensive Programs



# Comprehensive Programs

- Providing FAPE via ARD referral
- Collaborating with the LEA for return
- Career and adult life preparation



# Outreach Programs





# Outreach Programs

- Family Engagement
- Professional Development
  - Online learning
  - Workshops and Conferences
  - Webinars, Study Groups, Coffee Hour, Tech Tea Time
    - ✦ [Events](#)
- Statewide Support
  - Consultations/Coaching
  - APH
  - Tech Loan
- [Texas Deafblind Project](#)
- Tx SenseAbilities
- [A Sense of Texas](#)



# Overview of Considerations for Young Children with VI



# Glossary

- Visual Disability—loss which cannot be corrected, that affects activities of daily living
- Visual Impairment—a vision condition which cannot be corrected to 20/20
- Visual Acuity—how well a person sees details. Clarity in vision.
- Visual Field—The area that can be seen. Typically about 180° horizontally and 60° vertically.
- Blindness—a total loss of vision; no perception of light.
- Legal Blindness—an administrative term that references the level of vision impairment at which government, social, educational services may become available. An acuity of 20/200 or a visual field of 20 degrees.



# Glossary Cont'd

- Field Loss—Parts of the visual field which cannot be seen
- Low Vision—a visual disability, not resulting in blindness, which cannot be corrected with surgery or lenses
- Functional Vision—How vision is used in real-life situations and under different circumstances
- Cortical (cerebral or neurological) Vision Impairment—damage to part of the brain related to vision. Persons with CVI may have difficulty
  - Recognizing faces
  - With depth perception
  - Interpreting visual information
  - With figure ground





# Visual impairment happens when...

- Light cannot pass through the eye to the retina
- Light cannot focus on the retina
- Transmission to the brain is affected in the optic nerve
- The brain cannot receive and interpret visual information in a typical manner



# 5 Leading Causes of VI in Children (in the US)

- Cortical Visual Impairment
- Retinopathy of Prematurity
- Optic Nerve Hypoplasia
- Albinism
- Optic Nerve Atrophy

\*As of 2016

<https://www.vabvi.org/21/5-leading-causes-of-visual-impairment-in-children>



# Basic Assumptions of Vision (Birth to 3)

- Vision is the primary data-gathering system.
- Vision is the feedback system for all other developing systems in the young child.
- Hearing is not an equal motivator in encouraging "reach"
- Vision happens in the brain, not in the eyes.
- You don't conserve vision by not using it.
- Age-of-onset is a critical factor in visual impairment.

\*Cont'd on next slide!\*



# Basic Assumptions cont'd

- At least 60% of the current population of children with disabilities, 0-3, have multiple disabilities. Visual impairments are very likely.
- Development is sequential and proceeds in an organized, predictable way.
- There are "windows of opportunity" for development and learning.
  - The concept of "readiness"—physiological, behavioral, etc.
  - Children are not born knowing "how to see"—Delayed Visual Maturation
  - The first 6 to 8 weeks of life are critical in retinal stimulation
  - Vision stimulation has a limited window
  - Even temporary, treatable vision conditions can have long term vision effects!

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180626221555/https://www.tsbvi.edu/index.php/infant-basic>





# How does vision impairment affect development?



# Sensory Development

- Will likely be:
  - Inconsistent
  - Sporadic
  - Incomplete
- WHY?



# Hearing

- Becomes the only distance sense available
  - Child has no control over sounds in their environment
- Is largely a sequential sense (gathering one piece of information at a time), and relies on vision to give meaning to sounds
  - Requires MUCH experience with tactile, motor, social experiences to give sounds meaning
- Sound cues do not elicit a reach response until 9 to 12 months



# Tactile

- What encourages a baby to touch things?
- Touch can only provide information within arm's reach (near point sense)
- Touch can only collect data sequentially—it relies on the brain to integrate the data into a meaningful whole.
- “Since the development of reach is critical for severely visually impaired infants (they will use their hands to explore their environment, and to attach meaning to their world), it should be a primary goal for all visually impaired infants.”

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180626221555/https://www.tsbvi.edu/index.php/infant-basic>





# Language Development

- Infants who are blind often jabber and imitate sooner than sighted babies
- But, they may take in the sounds which make up the language, but may not grasp the intended meaning.
- Echolalia can be prevalent
  - “The early language of the blind child does not seem to mirror his developing knowledge of the world, but rather his knowledge of the language of others.” – Chris Strickling (<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/AgingandDisability/BESB/Fall-In-Service/Impact-Of-Visual-Impairment-On-Development.pdf?la=en>)
  - Article, “You Can Say That Again! Echolalia in Visually Impaired Children” <https://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/echolalia>
- Personal Pronoun
- Concrete Experiences



# Concept Development

- How do young children without disabilities and/or VI learn?
  - Incidental learning
  - Direct experience with objects and people
  - Observation of how objects are used
- What does this mean for an infant or toddler with VI?
- “In order to develop understanding of various concepts, children with visual impairments must have **extensive and repeated experiences with real objects.**”



“People often think that the other senses of a person with visual impairment are automatically sharper. This is not necessarily true. Children who are visually impaired require experience and specific training in order for their other senses to become more useful to them.”

Kay Ferrell “Reach Out and Teach”



# How do we know something might be different?

- TSBVI Early Childhood Brochures
- Utah EI FVE Checklist
  - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CLL5stY5xRt1usCx7h63b-UoWuooJlkZ/view?usp=sharing>
- Developmental Charts from Wonderbaby
  - <https://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/development-charts>



# Some plugs

- Website: [www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu)
- Coffee Hour: <https://www.tsbvi.edu/statewide-resources/professional-development/library/coffee-hour>
  - You can sort by Early Childhood specific topics
- A Sense of Texas: find it on your favorite pod catcher
- Texas SenseAbilities: <https://www.tsbvi.edu/tx-senseabilities>
- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!



# Keep in Touch!

- <https://www.tsbvi.edu/statewide-resources>
  - Use the “Contact Outreach” button

