

Sharing Educational Information with Educators

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Purpose

- Use the following information to support conversations with the general education teacher prior to the first day of school.
- Review these documents and highlight the information within them that is applicable to the student. (Example: Not all students will use each piece of technology.)
- Encourage an open dialogue between parent and teacher/student using the conversation bank.

Role of Instructional Team Members

The instructional team working with your child may consist of several staff members offering individualized services in specific areas. Below is a list of possible team members and a description of the role each person plays on the team. You might find it helpful to identify members specific to your child so the general education teacher knows who will serve your child and the different capacities with which he/she will do so.

Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI): The role of the TVI is to assess, provide instruction to students with visual impairments in the areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC), and collaborate with the instructional team. See attached “Services Provided by the TVI” and the “ECC Flyer”.

Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS): The role of the COMS is to assess, provide instruction to students with visual impairments, and collaborate with the instructional team. The focus of instruction is in the use of their senses for the purpose of orienting oneself in an environment and in the safe movement from one place to another. See attached “Services Provided by the COMS.”

Occupational Therapist (OT): The role of the OT is to support students in gaining access to the general education curriculum and to their learning environments. Students who qualify for OT services have undergone an evaluation identifying deficits in the areas of fine motor, visual motor, self-regulation and sensory responses, and/or self-help skills. Services are often provided in the student’s learning environment and during naturally occurring routines to ensure meaningful practice opportunities for the student, but in some cases, individual or group sessions may be necessary. The OT may consult with general education teachers about how the classroom environment can be modified to improve student attention and the ability to complete tasks successfully.

Physical Therapist (PT): The role of the PT is to prepare students for further education, employment, and independent living by addressing assessed needs in the areas of motor development and the student’s participation in everyday routines and activities which are part of the educational program. The PT performs therapeutic interventions focusing on functional mobility and safe, efficient access and participation in activities and routines in the natural learning environment, but in some cases, individual or group sessions may be necessary. The PT may also collaborate with the student and team to make appropriate recommendations or modifications regarding equipment, such as leg braces, walkers, or wheelchairs.

Paraprofessional: The paraprofessional, sometimes referred to as a Teacher’s Assistant (TA) or Educational Assistant (EA) may be assigned to work with a student through the day in a variety of educational settings. Under the direction of certified teachers and related service providers, the paraprofessional supports implementation of

goals and objectives outlined in the student's IEP. The paraprofessional must take great care to provide adequate services while encouraging peer relationships within the classroom.

Speech & Language Pathologist (SLP): The role of the SLP is to work with school children who have communication problems that affect their participation in classroom activities, social interaction, literacy, or learning. Communication disorders can involve the areas of language, articulation, voice, or fluency (i.e. stuttering). SLPs can also work with students who have difficulty with swallowing. Students who qualify may receive services in individual or group therapy sessions, or by having the SLP act as a consultant in the classroom. Teachers or parents with concerns about a student's communication development can meet with the SLP and request a screening.

Resource Specialist: The role of the Resource Specialist is to provide services, instruction and support as needed for students who are identified through the IEP process. Services may be provided in the classroom or outside of the classroom in a group setting or one-on-one situation. The Resource Specialist may also provide support, consultation and informational materials to parents and educational staff, such as the classroom teacher, to support the assessed educational needs of the student.

Services Provided by Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)

Assessment (includes reports and IEP paperwork)

- Functional Vision Assessment
- Learning Media Assessment
- Assessment in all areas of the expanded core curriculum (ECC)
-

Direct instruction with students

- Individual
- Group
- Co-teach

Collaboration (indirect instruction)

- Observe student in variety of settings
- Diagnostic teaching
- Support to school staff and families
- Collect data/evaluate

Share information (consult)

- Implication of vision loss on assessment
- Implications of vision loss for education
- Implications of vision loss on family/community life
- With eye medical professionals, especially low vision clinics

TVI is responsible for coordinating and procuring the low vision tools for the classroom

Manage materials

- Create/modify
- Obtain
- Maintain

Case management/service coordination

Attend meetings

- IEP / ARD meetings
- Transdisciplinary team
- Other district VI staff meetings (collaboration, transition and professional development)

Supervise VI paraprofessionals

Provide professional development on the topic of visual impairments in schools and classes

Services Provided by Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS)

Assessment (includes reports and IEP paperwork)

- Orientation and Mobility Assessment
- Assessment in the expanded core curriculum (ECC)

Direct instruction with students

- Individual
- Group
- Co-teach

Collaboration (indirect instruction)

- Observe student in variety of settings
- Diagnostic teaching
- Support to school staff and families
- Collect data/evaluate

Share information (consult)

- With educational team and family concerning implications of vision loss on orientation and mobility in home, school, and community
- With educational team and family concerning implications of vision loss for accommodations to student travel strategies
- With eye medical professionals, especially low vision clinics

Manage materials

- Create/modify
- Obtain
- Maintain

Attend meetings

- IEP/ARD meetings
- Transdisciplinary team
- Other district O&M staff meetings (collaboration, transition and professional development)
-

Provide professional development on the topic of orientation and mobility in schools and classes

IEP Summary

How to Use this Document:

- It is not recommended that you simply photocopy the IEP. Often times, this information is quite lengthy.
- Highlight or point out the most important information. (See below for suggestions.)
- This information may be summarized verbally and presented in a brief handout. Best practice is to share this information in writing for future reference.

Share information about:

1. Goals and objectives
2. Accommodations/modification page
3. Special education service delivery (amount of service for VI and other related/special education services as applicable)
4. Special information related statewide assessment
5. Recommendations from FVA* / LMA* and O&M* evaluation

NOAH Project Notation: The CARE Project (**C**reating an **A**lbinism **R**esource for **E**ducation) provides parents of school-aged children with albinism, educators and other professionals with resources and information to assist them in formulating a child with albinism's education document. For more information on the CARE Project visit: www.albinism.org/CARE.

*List of acronyms found in section **V. Resources: List of Acronyms**

Technology I Find Useful

Monocular or telescope: I use this for reading and copying from the board, watching assemblies, looking at things that are more than 8 feet away from me (e.g., a ball game, signs across the road, overhead menus).

Magnifier: for reading smaller print on school handouts, in textbooks, on food packages, etc.

Reading glasses: are for reading longer sections of text where my hands are free to hold the material. These may be called microscope glasses or high ADD glasses.

Audio App for Smartphones, Tablets, MP3 Player: This app allows me to listen to audible textbooks that I get from the Learning Ally.

JAWS: software installed on a computer to help access websites (this program will read out what is on the monitor).

ZoomText: software installed on a computer to enlarge print on the monitor.

TI Graphing Calculator ViewScreen Enlargement Solution: This enlarges the readout on my graphing calculator.

Portable video magnifier: This can hook up to a laptop. It swivels to view the board, or I can use it with books and other print materials.

Tablet: This can enlarge materials, take a snapshot of something at a distance and then enlarge it, and/or load auditory books.

Educational Considerations

Eye Condition Albinism	Effects On Vision	Educational Considerations
<p>Total or partial absence of pigment, causing abnormal optic nerve development</p> <p>Lenses and tinted lenses may be prescribed.</p>	<p>Decreased acuity</p> <p>Photophobia</p> <p>Increased sensitivity to glare</p> <p>High refractive error</p> <p>Astigmatism</p> <p>Central scotomas</p> <p>Nystagmus</p> <p>Eye muscle imbalance</p> <p>Eye fatigue with close or detailed work</p> <p>Reduced depth perception</p>	<p>Magnification (e.g., hand-held magnifier, electronic magnifier, screen enlargement software, monocular / telescope, etc.)</p> <p>Close viewing</p> <p>High contrast materials</p> <p>May need to use sunglasses, visors, or hats outdoors and indoors as well</p> <p>Lighting from behind</p> <p>Reduced glare</p> <p>Line markers, templates, placeholders</p> <p>Frequent breaks</p> <p>Prosthetic, iris occluding contact lenses</p>

Special Procedures and Considerations

(Playground, Gym, Field Trips, Sun Safety, Fire Drills)

Emergency Situations & Drills:

- Discuss each scenario with your classroom teacher to understand school procedures.
- Choose a partner from the class to support your student during emergency situations using guide technique.
- Walk the routes in advance for fire drills and school evacuations rather than relying on verbal instructions alone.
- Include a sun hat and sunscreen in classroom/schoolwide emergency kit.

Playground:

- Tour the playground in its entirety, pointing out in which direction the student's classroom, restrooms, school office and lunch room are located.
- When touring the school grounds at the beginning of the school year, request that your student has an opportunity to play on the play structure by himself or herself to become familiar with the structure's layout.
- When the school year starts, support the student in a conversation with friends about where they might meet up or "hang out" during recess times.
- Watch for signs that the student is lost or unable to find friends to interact with during playground time.
- Consider additional points in the "Facts Regarding Children with Albinism for Physical Education and Recreation Professionals" document.
- Look for potential points of low visibility such as metal poles or door openings; work with the TVI and team members to make accommodations such as using neon duct tape to create a visual aid for areas of low contrast.

Gym:

- Inform the classroom teacher that special considerations should be made for sun safety and visual needs regarding participation in PE classes.
- Provide copies of the document, "Facts Regarding Children with Albinism for Physical Education and Recreation Professionals" to the physical education teachers working with your student.

Field Trips:

- When making field trip reservations, encourage your classroom teacher to inform the destination that there is a student with a visual impairment in the group.
 - This may allow the group to be seated towards the front of a large auditorium. The classroom teacher can also request a seat in the front of the audience seating for your student and a classroom friend in addition to the TVI/chaperone.

- If the destination limits the number of chaperones, this information could allow for an additional adult in the group, i.e. paraprofessional or parent of the student with a visual impairment.
 - NOTE: IEP Accommodation – An accommodation can be written into your student’s IEP that states one of the student’s parents / guardians be invited to all field trips to assist with visual needs.
- Consider additional points in the “Facts Regarding Children with Albinism for Physical Education and Recreation Professionals” document.

Sun Safety:

- Discuss school policies regarding safe use and storage of sunscreen.
 - Allow time in the event that student must travel to the nurse or other location to apply sunscreen.
 - Plan for communicating when sunscreen needs to be replenished.
 - Inform staff as to the appropriate application intervals for your student.
- Request that there be a consistent storage area in the classroom for hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen. This allows for independent access to sun protection items throughout the day for the student.
 - Keep an extra hat and pair of sunglasses at school in case of loss or damage.

Additional Considerations:

- Always keep an extra set of eyeglasses, sunglasses and extra hat in your student’s backpack.
- Have your student or classroom teacher send home empty sunscreen bottles from school as a cue that more sunscreen is needed in the school supply basket.

ECC Flyer

What is the Expanded Core Curriculum?

Developed by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The term **expanded core curriculum** (ECC) is used to define concepts and skills that often require specialized instruction with students who are blind or visually impaired in order to compensate for decreased opportunities to learn incidentally by observing others. In addition to the general education core curriculum that all students are taught, students with visual impairments, starting at birth, also need instruction in the ECC. The ECC areas include (A) needs that result from the visual impairment that enable the student “to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and (B) other educational needs that result from the child’s disability” as required by IDEA (34 CFR 300.320 (a)(2)(A)(B)). Texas Education Code (TEC) 30.002(c)(5) and (e)(5) require the flexibility of school districts to make arrangements for services to occur “beyond regular school hours to ensure the student learns the skills and receives the instruction” in the ECC.

With the passage of Senate Bill 39 in 2013 (Texas 83rd Legislative Session), evaluation in all areas of the ECC is required for students with visual impairments. Priority needs must be identified by the IEP team and instruction provided in these areas.

Nine Areas of the ECC

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is an umbrella term that includes assistive and adaptive tools as well as instructional services that can enhance communication, access, and learning. It can include electronic equipment such as switches, mobile devices, and portable notetakers; computer access such as magnification software, screen readers, and keyboarding; and low-tech devices such as an abacus, a braille, Active Learning materials (e.g., Little Room®), and optical devices.

Career Education

Career education will provide students with visual impairments of all ages the opportunity to learn through hands-on experiences about jobs that they may not

otherwise be aware of without the ability to observe people working. They also learn work-related skills such as assuming responsibility, punctuality, and staying on task. Career education provides opportunities for students to explore and discover strengths and interests and plan for transition to adult life.

Compensatory Skills

Compensatory skills include skills necessary for accessing the core curriculum including concept development; communication modes; organization and study skills; access to print materials; and the use of braille/Nemeth, tactile graphics, object and/or tactile symbols, sign language, and audio materials.

Independent Living Skills

Independent living skills include the tasks and functions people perform in daily life to increase their independence and contribute to the family structure. These skills include personal hygiene, eating skills, food preparation, time and money management, clothing care, and household tasks. People with vision typically learn such daily routines through observation, whereas individuals with visual impairments often need systematic instruction and frequent practice in these daily tasks.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

O&M instruction enables students of all ages and motor abilities to be oriented to their surroundings and to move as independently and safely as possible. Students learn about themselves and their environments, including home, school, and community. O&M lessons incorporate skills ranging from basic body image, spatial relationships, and purposeful movement to cane usage, travel in the community, and use of public transportation. Having O&M skills enables students to acquire independence to the greatest extent possible, based on their individual needs and abilities.

Recreation and Leisure

Being unable to observe others reduces awareness of recreation and leisure options. Instruction in recreation and leisure skills will ensure that students with visual impairments will have opportunities to explore, experience, and choose physical and leisure-time activities, both organized and individual, that they enjoy. This instruction should focus on the development of life-long skills.

Self-Determination

Self-determination includes choice-making, decision-making, problem solving, personal advocacy, assertiveness, and goal setting. Students with visual impairments often have fewer opportunities to develop and practice the specific skills that lead to self-determination. Students who know and value who they are and who have self-determination skills become effective advocates for themselves and therefore have more control over their lives.

Sensory Efficiency

Sensory efficiency includes instruction in the use of vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. It also addresses the development of the proprioceptive, kinesthetic, and vestibular systems. Learning to use their senses efficiently, including the use of optical devices, will enable students with visual impairments to access and participate in activities in school, home, and community environments.

Social Interaction Skills

Social interaction skills include awareness of body language, gestures, facial expressions, and personal space. Instruction also includes learning about interpersonal relationships, self-control, and human sexuality. Almost all social skills are learned by visually observing other people. Instruction in social interaction skills in school, work, and recreational settings is crucial. Having appropriate social skills can often mean the difference between social isolation and a fulfilling life as an adult.

For additional information on the ECC, refer to:

- <http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/professional-development/teachers/expanded-core-curriculum/ecc-resources/12345>
- <http://www.perkins.org/resources/scout/education/expanded-core-curriculum.html>
- <http://www.familyconnect.org/parentsites.aspx?FolderID=23&TopicID=382>
- <http://www.tsbvi.edu/recc/>
- www.tsbvi.edu/attachments/EducatingStudentswithVIGuidelinesandStandards.pdf

Parent / Teacher Conversation Bank

Parent to Teacher Questions

1. Do you have any experience in teaching a student with a visual impairment?
2. Have you seen any information on my child? Is there anything I need to clarify?
3. Has my child's Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) and/or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) contacted you yet?
4. Glare and reflective light is uncomfortable for my child. Can we find the best place for him/her to sit so that glare is reduced, but he / she can still access the parts of the room where the most instruction will take place?
5. Will my child be expected to perform tasks on a computer? If so, the TVI can provide support for accessing these tasks.
6. What are some typical near and distance tasks students will be expected to perform in different subject areas?
7. Sometimes my child will act like he/she sees what you are doing when this is not the case. I find that checking for understanding is helpful.
8. What is the best time/way for my child to communicate visual needs or difficulties?
9. What is the best time/way for me to contact you to share information?

Teacher to Parent Questions

1. Who is your child's Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS)?
2. What are some things, both close up and far away, that your child can see easily?
3. What are some things, both close up and far away, that your child has difficulty seeing?
4. What are some things your child likes to do and does well?
5. Where is the best place for your child to sit?
6. Does your child use optical devices independently? Which ones?
7. What is your child's visual stamina like? Are there times of the day when his/her eyes are especially tired?
8. What are some signs that your child is struggling visually?
9. Is your child comfortable traveling independently in different parts of the school?
10. What are some things I should know about outdoor / sports equipment and safety for your child?
11. What precautions does your child use in the sun? Does he/she do this independently, or do they need reminders and / or support?
12. What are some signs that your child might be struggling socially?
13. How can I help classmates to understand albinism and your child's visual needs?
14. What are the biggest educational concerns for your child?
15. What is the best time / way for me to contact you to share information?