

The information provided here should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. It is not a substitute for professional care. If your child has any health concerns, please consult your health care provider.

Visual Impairments / Legal Blindness

Introduction

The legal definition of blindness is with best correction (i.e. with glasses) 20/200 or greater in both eyes or less than 20 degrees visual field loss in both eyes. A vision impairment in the educational context is vision loss that constitutes a limitation of visual capability resulting from disease, trauma, or a congenital or degenerative condition.

Some terms to know are:

Low Vision / Partially Sighted: Low vision applies to all individuals with limited sight who are unable to read standard print materials. They use a combination of residual vision and adaptive devices (glasses and other means) to learn.

Totally blind: These individuals rely on braille and other non-visual forms of media (such as books on tape). is the complete lack of form and light perception and is clinically recorded as "NLP" an abbreviation for "no light perception.

Features and Characteristics

The degree to which visual impairments affect development may depend on many factors such as the type of visual loss, severity, age of onset, intellectual ability, and environmental experiences. The lack of vision or reduced vision may result in delays or in motor, cognitive, and social development. Other senses are heightened as a result of the impairment.

Diagnosis

An ophthalmologist and other primary professionals will do an assessment to examine for any visual impairment. Yearly exams and check-up are also important. It is recommended that a child has a visual examination by the time the child is four years old. Early detection is important to an individual with a visual impairment.

What to Expect

Children with a visual impairment may need adaptive means to learn about their environment. For example, a parent can facilitate the learning of the child by using sensory and verbal techniques (a cotton ball is like the shape of a cloud). Some children who have multiple disabilities may also have visual impairments resulting in motor, cognitive, and/or social developmental delays.

Related links: <http://dbs.myflorida.com/>
Division of Blind Services

Related Links: <http://www.fcb.org/>
Florida Council of the Blind

Related Links: <http://www.nfbflorida.org/>
National Federation of the Blind of Florida