

Support in our Schools for your Child who is Blind or Low Vision

The physical exceptionality of Blind/Low Vision is a condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that affects educational performance adversely, even with correction. Students who are identified with this exceptionality may demonstrate a need for special materials, teaching strategies, classroom accommodations, and/or equipment in order to access the Ontario Curriculum and/or as a means to show their learning.

Students who are identified with this exceptionality may exhibit some or all of the following:

- a vision impairment that cannot be corrected with eyeglasses to a visual acuity of 20/70 (6/19 metric) in the better eye
- a restricted visual field

Where to Start

Parents are important partners in education. Information from home will assist in appropriate programming and planning. If your child has been diagnosed with a vision impairment that may affect their learning, please bring this information to the attention of the school principal. A written statement or letter from the Optometrist or Ophthalmologist is requested.

You can Help your Child by...

- providing your child's teacher and applicable staff with any updated reports from the Optometrist or Ophthalmologist
- following the Optometrist or Ophthalmologist's direction for return visits to ensure your child's eye condition is monitored properly
- maintaining positive, open communication with the school staff
- communicating with professionals if you notice anything different in terms of your child's vision and/or any struggles they may be encountering
- sharing reports from outside agencies
- supporting two way communication between home and school to ensure that everyone is reinforcing the same learning goals
- learning when, where, and how the use of technology or special equipment will help learning
- advocating at school by participating in meetings, opportunities for discussions, and parent-teacher events

Next Steps

Accessibility of the School Environment

Depending on your child's vision impairment, an assessment of the school environment from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind may be recommended by an Educational Resource Consultant through Vision Resource Services Department for Deaf, Blind, & Deafblind Programs for the Ministry of Education (W. Ross MacDonald School).

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Community Partners and Resources

W. Ross MacDonald School for Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Blind, And Deafblind
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON | N3T 3J9
519.759.0730
1.866.618.9092

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (Peterborough office)
159 King Street
Peterborough, ON | K9J 2R8
705.745.6918

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (Barrie office)
20 Anne Street South
Barrie, ON | L4N 2C5
705.728.3352

Simcoe County and Muskoka Parry Sound Children's Development Services
705.739.5696
or 1.800.675.1979

Tri Regional Blind Low Vision Program
York Region, Durham Region, Peterborough, Northumberland, Haliburton Counties and City of Kawartha Lakes
1.888.703.5437
www.childdevelopmentprograms.ca

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Individual Education Plan (IEP)

A student may require “Accommodations” and/or “Modifications” to the curriculum. Accommodations may include special teaching, supports, and assessment strategies as well as changes or specific requirements in the environment. Modifications are significant changes to the number of curriculum expectations and/or a change to the grade level at which the student is working. Depending on the student’s vision impairment, an “Alternate” expanded curriculum (i.e. Braille, Orientation & Mobility, Sensory Efficiency Skills) may need to be taught in addition to the core curriculum.

Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

A student may be formally identified through an IPRC process. Please see the Special Education Program page at tldsb.ca for more information. Students do not need to be identified to access special education support.

Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)/Department Head of Special Education

The elementary school Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) or secondary school Department Head of Special Education supports the needs of students who require assistance beyond that provided by the regular classroom teacher. This assistance can be direct to the student or by providing programming support to the classroom.

Special Education Equipment and Assistive Devices

Depending on your child’s specific needs, a variety of assistive technology devices ranging from low tech to very high tech may be recommended by a qualified professional in order to have your child access the Ontario Curriculum and/or as a means to show their learning.

TLDSB Specialized Services Staff

Based on the level of visual impairment, The Itinerant Teacher for Blind/ Low Vision for Trillium Lakelands District School Board may provide direct or consultative support to students and/or school staff. The Itinerant Teacher for Blind/ Low Vision may make programming suggestions and support staff with tasks such as IEP development, assistive technology instruction, and with getting appropriate instructional, environmental, and assessment strategies in place.

More Information

For more details, please visit tldsb.ca/programs/special-education or contact your child’s school.