

# **Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers of the Visually Impaired And Orientation and Mobility Specialists**

## **Introduction and Background**

Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialists in Wisconsin may work with any student who meets the Wisconsin Eligibility Criteria for visual impairment ([http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pi11\\_0701.html#vi](http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pi11_0701.html#vi)), including those who have additional disabilities and those who are deaf-blind.

It is required that TVIs have graduated from an accredited college/university training program, and have Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Licensure #825. It is required that O&M Specialists have graduated from an accredited college/university training program, in addition to having a DPI #826 License.

Instructional vision services provided by a TVI and/or an O&M specialist can be delivered in a variety of different models, including, but not limited to the following:

- A. Itinerant:** Services may be provided in multiple schools and/or multiple districts.
- B. Resource Room:** A physical space, separate from the general education classroom, dedicated to individualized instruction.
- C. Special Classroom:** A classroom of students who are all BVI and are instructed by one TVI. For students in this setting, the majority of their school day is spent in this segregated classroom.
- D. Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI) Short Course Programs:** Individualized and small group programming in the areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum. Typically held on the WCBVI campus in Janesville.
- E. Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WSBVI):** A residential school on the WCBVI campus in Janesville.

## Teachers of Visually Impaired (TVI) Students

Roles and responsibilities include, but not limited to, the following:

**A. Conduct Assessments:** Conduct vision-related assessments and evaluations, including all initial assessments and re-evaluations. Provide written reports that document assessment outcomes and identify needs. Set goals and objectives, and recommend the amount and level of service needed for student to achieve Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. (Note: The subscript numbers refer to definitions in the Appendix document.)

1. Evaluate to determine eligibility for vision services, according to the DPI Wisconsin Eligibility Criteria<sub>1</sub>
2. Conduct Functional Vision Assessment<sub>2</sub>
3. Conduct Learning Media Assessment<sub>3</sub>
4. Assess applicable areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)<sub>4</sub>:
  - a. Compensatory Skills
  - b. Orientation and Mobility Skills
  - c. Social Interaction Skills
  - d. Independent Living Skills and Personal Management
  - e. Recreation and Leisure Skills
  - f. Career and Vocational Education Skills
  - g. Assistive Technology Skills
  - h. Visual Efficiency Skills
  - i. Self Determination Skills
5. Preview and/or proctor standardized assessments.
6. Assist/interpret with other school-based assessments.
7. Coordinate assessment schedules for students who need additional time.
8. Procure specially formatted (electronic, Braille, large print, audio) instruction and assessment materials.
9. Transfer Braille/large print student answers onto printed scoring sheets.

**B. Provide Instruction:** Provide vision-related instruction and services required to meet the individualized educational needs of students in all school and other appropriate environments.

1. Prepare sequential and meaningful instruction geared to the student's assessed needs, as determined by the IEP team with goals and objectives that include functioning, and motivational levels. This instruction should be reflected in lesson plans, as appropriate.
2. For students who read Braille; teach students Braille:
  - a. Early literacy/pre-Braille skills
  - b. Literary code
  - c. Nemeth code
  - d. Foreign language code
  - e. Music code
3. Teach students low vision and visual efficiency skills.
4. Provide instruction in the development and maintenance of appropriate ECC<sub>3</sub> skills (see A3 above).
5. Work with students to facilitate conversations with their peers to build social skills and relationships.
6. Through Self Advocacy instruction, assist students in gaining knowledge, skills, and confidence to communicate the functional implications of their vision impairments with peers and others.

### **C. Communication/Collaboration/Consultation**

1. Assist student, parents, and special and regular education personnel in the following:
  - a. To understand the unique educational needs and learning characteristics of students who are blind or visually impaired.
  - b. To become aware of services and support available from local programs for students.
  - c. To acquire information regarding local, state, and national resources for the education of students.
  - d. To understand the student's specific eye condition, the educational implications of the visual impairment, and the results of functional vision and learning media assessments.
2. Consult regularly with the classroom teacher, other regular and special education personnel, parents, and others to coordinate programs and services for students.

3. Communicate (including discussion of individual role clarification/expectations) with classroom teachers in the identification of instructional areas in which the student requires assistance.
4. Attend planning and IEP meetings for students.
5. In collaboration with education staff, schedule time efficiently for assessment, instruction, planning, preparation of materials, travel, and conferences with relevant school and other key individuals.
6. In collaboration with school staff and administrator, determine appropriate training and role of para-educators.
7. Maintain regular communication with para-educators to ensure proper reinforcement of skills and material adaptation/modification, as set forth by the TVI, in accordance with the IEP.
8. Maintain ongoing contact with parents to dialogue about child's abilities, progress, and future goals.
9. Provide in-service training for school personnel regarding the individual needs of students who have visual impairments, and the need for adaptations, and services.
10. Collaborate with other personnel such as transcribers, readers, counselors, O&M specialists, career/vocational education staff, and rehabilitation counselors.

#### **D. Acquisition of Materials**

1. In collaboration with school staff, ensure that accessible materials, adaptation, modifications, and equipment needed by the students, and the classroom teacher, are provided in a timely manner to ensure the student's maximum participation in all classroom activities. Appropriate educational materials may be prepared or adapted by the TVI, or they may be obtained from educational, clerical, or transcriber services.

#### **E. Environmental Considerations**

1. Assist the site administrator and school staff in making environmental adjustments for the student in the school.
2. Assist the classroom teacher in academic subjects and activities of the classroom that, as a direct result of the student's visual impairment, require adaptation or pre-teaching for the student.

## **F. Professional Development**

1. Maintain awareness of current professional materials and resources such as online resources, libraries, universities etc.
2. Acquire information and training regarding current research, development, technology, and best practice strategies.
3. Collaborate with colleagues regarding professional development opportunities and effective teaching strategies, tools, and equipment.
4. Participate in profession-related events such as WAER annual conference, Wisconsin Vision Professionals Conference, WCBVI-sponsored Regional Meetings.

## **Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialists**

Roles and responsibilities include, but not limited to, the following:

**A. Conduct Assessments:** Conduct O&M assessments and evaluations, including all initial assessments and re-evaluations. Provide written reports that document assessment outcomes and identify needs. Set goals and objectives, and determine amount and level of service needed for student to achieve IEP goals. (Note: The subscript numbers refer to definitions in the Appendix document.)

1. Work with the TVI to conduct the functional vision assessment as it relates to independent travel.
2. Assess areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)<sub>3</sub> to determine student need:
  - a. Compensatory Skills
  - b. Orientation and Mobility
  - c. Social Interaction Skills
  - d. Independent Living Skills and Personal Management
  - e. Recreation and Leisure
  - f. Career and Vocational Education
  - g. Assistive Technology
  - h. Visual Efficiency Skills
  - i. Self Determination
3. Evaluate the student's progress on an ongoing basis with progress reports as required by each district.

**B. Provide Instruction:** Instruct students who are blind or visually impaired (BVI) in the development of skills and knowledge that enable them to confidently travel in familiar and unfamiliar environments safely, efficiently, and independently, based on assessed needs and ability.

1. Prepare meaningful and often sequential instruction geared to the student's assessed needs, IEP goals and objectives, functioning, and motivational levels.
2. Provide instruction in O&M-related areas of the ECC<sub>3</sub> (see A2 above).
3. Accompany the student, with parental permission, and following district/agency policy, to community locations to provide meaningful instruction in all learning environments (including home, school and community).
4. Provide O&M instruction, based on IEP goals, in the following:
  - a. Body imagery
  - b. Laterality
  - c. Spatial and positional concepts
  - d. Environmental concepts
  - e. Gross and fine motor skills related to independent travel
  - f. Sensory awareness, stimulation, and training
  - g. Cardinal directions and their application to travel
  - h. Sighted guide procedures
  - i. Basic protective techniques
  - j. Information-gathering techniques, including problem solving strategies
  - k. Orientation skills
  - l. Map reading skills
  - m. Cane travel skills
  - n. Use of residual vision
  - o. Use of low vision devices related to travel
  - p. Travel in urban, suburban, and rural environments
  - q. Travel in business districts
  - r. Strategies for crossing streets, including intersection analysis, crossing at lighted and non-lighted intersections, and correcting crossing veers
  - s. Use of public transportation

- t. Using the telephone for information gathering and for emergencies
- u. Use of appropriate social skills
- v. Knowledge and application of community address systems
- w. Use of global positioning systems (GPS)
- x. Sensory/motor skills in coordination with other staff, including the physical or occupational therapist, TVI, etc.

### **C. Communication/Collaboration/Consultation**

1. Participate in IEP meetings and report assessment findings to the IEP and re-evaluation team.
2. Draft O&M-related IEP goals and report on their progress at all IEP meetings.
3. Consult regularly with relevant school staff regarding modifications, adaptations, and considerations.
4. Support and assess reinforcement of applicable O&M skills that will encourage students to travel independently.
5. Provide information and training to appropriate school staff and parents concerning the individualized O&M needs of the student.
6. Provide information to staff, and where appropriate, students, about strategies and procedures for interacting with students who are B/VI to foster maximum independence and safety.
7. Work with students to facilitate conversations with their peers to foster understanding.
8. Assist students to gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to communicate the functional implications of their vision impairments with peers and others.

### **D. Acquisition of Materials**

1. Prepare or acquire equipment and materials, such as tactile maps, models, distance low vision devices, and long canes, for the instruction/development of O&M skills.

### **E. Environmental Considerations**

1. Assist the site administrator and teachers in making appropriate accommodations for the student in all school-related environments.

## **F. Professional Development**

1. Maintain awareness of current professional materials and resources such as online resources, libraries, universities etc.
2. Acquire information and training regarding current research, development, technology, and best practice strategies.
3. Collaborate with colleagues regarding professional development opportunities and effective teaching strategies, tools, and equipment.
4. Participate in profession-related events such as WAER Annual Conference, Wisconsin Vision Professionals Conference, WCBVI-sponsored Meetings.

## Appendix

### **1. Wisconsin Eligibility Criteria for Visual Impairment**

**VISUAL IMPAIRMENT:** Visual impairment means even after correction a child's visual functioning significantly adversely affects his or her educational performance. The IEP team may identify a child as having a visual impairment after all of the following events occur:

(a) A certified teacher of the visually impaired conducts a functional vision evaluation which includes a review of medical information, formal and informal tests of visual functioning and the determination of the implications of the visual impairment on the educational and curricular needs of the child.

(b) An ophthalmologist or optometrist finds at least one of the following:

1. Central visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after conventional correction.
2. Reduced visual field to 50 degrees or less in the better eye.
3. Other ocular pathologies that are permanent and irremediable.
4. Cortical visual impairment.
5. A degenerative condition that is likely to result in a significant loss of vision in the future.

(c) An orientation and mobility specialist, or teacher of the visually impaired in conjunction with an orientation and mobility specialist, evaluates the child to determine if there are related mobility needs in home, school, or community environments.

### **2. Functional Vision Assessment**

**What is it?** A functional vision assessment measures how well a child uses vision to perform routine tasks in different places and with different materials throughout the day. The functional vision assessment "paints a picture" of how a child uses vision and what visual skills the child needs to develop further.

It is important to remember that the actual effects of any one child's visual impairment, especially a child with dual-sensory loss or multiple disabilities, may be hard to determine. Each child's experience and way of "seeing" is unique. Close observation in a variety of places and with a variety of materials is essential to evaluate the child's effective use of vision.

**How is a functional vision assessment conducted?** Since each child and every environment is different; it is crucial to assess the child in everyday settings, doing his or her usual activities and tasks.

Some general guidelines include:

- Observation of the Child's Use of Visual Skills
- Visual Acuity at Near Distance - (16 inches) with and without correction.
- Visual acuity at Far Distance - (10 feet) with and without correction
- Visual Fields - seeing objects to the sides, above or below the eye level
- Localizing - spotting or finding the visual stimulus.
- Fixating - maintaining gaze directly on the object, person or event.
- Scanning - systematically examining an area when completing a task.
- Tracking - following the movement of an object, person or event.
- Shifting Gaze - looking back and forth from one object or person to another.
- Eye Preference - using one eye more frequently than the other.
- Eye-hand Coordination - reaching out to touch something or to pick up an object.
- Color Vision - ability to perceive color out of the context of a functional task.

**Observation of the Child in a Variety of Settings:** The vision specialist will observe the child in his or her usual surroundings to learn how the child uses vision. These observations can take place at home, school, or in the community. Observations can also be specific to what parents or teachers want to know about a particular task that they find critical to the child's visual functioning.

**Environment Considerations:** The child's environment needs to be assessed along with the child's behaviors. Environmental considerations which the teacher certified in the area of visual impairment will evaluate include:

- Illumination - Is adequate lighting available? How much lighting does the child need given the eye condition?

What kind of lighting is of the greatest help for the child to utilize his or her vision?

- Color and Contrast - Is there good contrast between the background and the object, person, or event which the child looks at?

- Size - If a smaller or larger object is used, will the child perform the task more easily?
- Distance - If the visual task is moved closer or further away, will the child see it better?
- Time - If the child were given more time, would it be possible for him/her to complete the task better?

**Interviews:** Information from parents, teachers and other professionals can be gathered to learn about how the child uses vision during the day. Caregivers can describe the way the child grasps utensils, pencils and toys and how he or she moves indoors and outdoors. This information will give the vision specialist many insights which can be only available from those who are with the child daily.

**When should it be done?** Students who have usable vision should have a functional vision assessment on an annual basis.

For information regarding the amount of time necessary to complete assessments, please refer to the following survey:

<http://www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us./assets/documents/outreachforms/2004/resultgoal6-040908.pdf>

### **3. Learning Media Assessment (LMA)**

**What is it?** The Learning Media Assessment (LMA) offers a framework for selecting appropriate literacy media for a student who is visually impaired. A Functional Vision Assessment (FVA) should be done first, in order to determine what the student is able to see and how he or she is using his or her vision. These two assessments should be used together to help to guide the team decision about the best instructional medium for a given student, such as braille, print, dual media (both print and braille), auditory, tactile or some combination.

**When should it be done?** The LMA scale should begin no later than age 3, when a child begins the transition to preschool. It should be updated annually and/or as visual functioning changes.

**Why should it be done?** The primary reason to perform a Learning Media Assessment is to ensure that all children have access to literacy and to education. In addition, Braille Bills require the determination of literacy media exist at both the Federal and State level. These various Braille bills assume that Braille is the modality to be used unless otherwise demonstrated through appropriate assessment. Learning Media Assessment offers the tool to make that determination and monitor it over time.

Legislation in IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), states the following about Braille:

Consideration of Special Factors: The IEP Team also shall –  
(iii) In the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, provide for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille **unless the IEP Team determines**, after a determination of the child’s reading and writing skills, needs and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child’s future needs for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille), **that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child.**” 34 CFR Section 300.346 (a) (2) (iii) and 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)

For information regarding the amount of time necessary to complete assessments, please refer to the following survey:

<http://www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/assets/documents/outreachforms/2004/resultgoal6-040908.pdf>

**4. Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC):** From the “Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) Policy Guidance 2000 – Educating Blind and Visually Impaired Students”

In order to receive an appropriate education under Part B, it is generally understood that students who are blind or visually impaired must be provided appropriate instruction in a variety of subjects, including language arts, composition, and science and mathematics. However, in order to be educated in these subject areas effectively, blind and visually impaired children must be taught the necessary skills to enable them to learn to read and to use other appropriate technology to obtain access to information. It also is very important for blind and visually impaired children, including those with other disabilities, who need orientation and mobility services, to receive appropriate instruction in orientation and mobility as early as possible. Providing these children with needed orientation and mobility services at the appropriate time increases the

likelihood that they can participate meaningfully in a variety of aspects of their schooling, including academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities.

**What is the ECC?** Every student is expected to leave high school with a strong grasp of “core” subjects like math, language arts, science, and history. But in order to master these subjects, and to eventually live and work independently, students who are blind or visually impaired must learn an additional set of skills known as the “expanded core curriculum.” Essential life skills including social interaction, independent living, career education, and communication modes such as braille, must be taught alongside basic academics.

For a student who is blind, learning about world geography from books is not enough. That student must also learn orientation and mobility skills and practice using a white cane for safe, independent travel. The expanded core curriculum empowers students with disabilities to access their education and make their own choices throughout life.

**Compensatory Skills, Including Communication Modes:** Compensatory Skills, Including Communication Modes, involve the use of tools, adaptations, modifications and behaviors that maximize the student's opportunity to access the environment, educational activities, information, and basic human needs. "Communication needs of students with visual impairment will vary, depending on the degree of functional vision, the effects of additional disabilities, and the task to be done. Children may communicate through braille, large print, print with the use of optical aids, regular print, tactile books, a calendar system, sign language, recorded materials, or combinations of these means." Other compensatory skills may include, but are not limited to: writing adaptations, computer keyboarding, study and organizational skills, abacus, use of the tape recorder and accessing information through the auditory and tactile senses. Visual impairment and blindness may result in a need for specialized instruction in concept development, spatial awareness, and listening skills. Use of compensatory skills will minimize the effects of reduced vision and will provide access to the same learning opportunities that sighted peers have.

**Orientation and Mobility:** Orientation and Mobility is a "vital area of learning, which requires delivery by teachers with specific preparation. It emphasizes the fundamental need and basic right of people who are visually impaired to travel as independently as possible, enjoying and learning to the greatest extent possible

from the environment through which they are passing. Students will need to learn about themselves and the environment in which they move from basic body image to independent travel in rural areas and busy cities." Developing body concepts, spatial awareness, orientation strategies and an understanding of the world are building blocks for age-appropriate, independent travel for students who are blind or have low vision. Students need to develop problem-solving strategies necessary to travel in familiar and unfamiliar school and community settings. All students with visual impairment need an Orientation and Mobility assessment regardless of the mode of travel (foot, wheelchair, walker, or other) and whether vision is the only impairment or one of several. Optimizing the use of residual vision may require the use of low-vision aids such as telescopes and sunglasses, or strategies such as wearing hats or visors to reduce glare. The white cane is a common travel and identification tool used by many individuals who are blind or visually impaired. A certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist is qualified to provide instruction in the use of the white cane and to address the specialized assessments and needs referred to in this paragraph.

**Social Interaction Skills:** Good Social Interaction Skills are essential if students are to successfully apply skills learned in other curricular areas. "Sighted children and adults have learned almost all their social skills by visually observing other people and behaving in socially appropriate ways based on that information. Individuals who are blind and visually impaired cannot learn skills of social interaction in this casual and incidental fashion. They learn them through careful, conscious, and sequential teaching." These skills enable the student to access basic human needs, such as companionship, healthy and safe social relationships, information to solve their own problems, enjoyment of recreation/leisure activities, and to advocate for themselves. Understanding the role of body language, facial expressions, gestures and vocal tones is especially important when the visual cues cannot be seen. Students need to be self-advocates in a socially acceptable manner, and accept or decline help graciously. "Instruction in these skills is such a fundamental need that it can often mean the difference between social isolation and a satisfying and fulfilling life as an adult."

**Independent Living Skills and Personal Management:** Independent Living Skills and Personal Management skills are an essential and often overlooked need area for students who are visually impaired. "This area encompasses all the tasks and functions people perform, according to their abilities, in order to live as independently as possible. These curricular needs are varied and include among others, skills in personal hygiene, food preparation, money, time management,

home management, and organization of personal belongings." In addition, students need to learn self-advocacy skills and develop an understanding of how a society functions. "Traditional classes in home economics and family life are not enough to meet the learning needs of most students with a visual impairment because they assume a basic level of knowledge, acquired incidentally through vision. As with the skills of social interaction, blind and visually impaired students cannot learn these skills without direct, sequential instruction by knowledgeable people."

**Recreation and Leisure:** Recreation and Leisure experiences and skills are important for quality of life during the school age years and beyond. With adaptations, modifications and safety supervision, students who are blind or visually impaired can participate in many of the same individual and group activities enjoyed by sighted peers. "Sighted people usually select such activities by visually observing them and choosing those in which they wish to participate. Recreation and leisure skills must be deliberately planned and taught to blind and visually impaired students and should focus on the development of life-long skills." In addition to traditional games and activities, there are games such as goalball and beeper baseball, which were designed for playing with low or no vision. Basic motor skills, as well as cooperative play strategies, often need to be taught in a specific manner in order to maximize success. Students need exposure to a healthy balance of solitary, social, passive and physical activities. Students should be aware of state and national organizations that promote recreation, leisure and sporting activities for the visually impaired. There is high correlation between recreation experiences, satisfaction with life, and self-esteem because of the opportunity for human interaction.

**Career and Vocational Education:** Career and Vocational Education focuses on skills, experiences, and adaptations necessary to understand, prepare for and access the world of work. "However, many of the knowledge and skills offered to all students through vocational education will not be sufficient to prepare students who are blind and visually impaired for adult life." Career and vocational education must be specifically designed to fit students' needs, "because here, too, general instruction assumes a basic knowledge of the world of work based on prior visual experiences. Career and vocational education in an expanded core curriculum should begin in the earliest grades." This can provide "visually impaired learners of all ages the opportunity to learn first-hand about the variety of work people do," through strategies such as role-playing, peer mentoring, and job shadowing. As the students progress, curriculum must be structured to address personal strengths and weaknesses, work habits, ethics, workplace

social skills, vocational interests, personal options, and specific skills training programs. For older students needs may include, but are not limited to, such areas as:

- Media-adapted tests (SAT, ACT, vocational interest inventories, civil service exams, etc.)
- Resources:
  - financial assistance (general and those specific to the blind and visually impaired);
  - coordination with adult service providers--vocational rehabilitation or local county support services, or specialized training programs;
  - specialized product or equipment adaptations Self-advocacy skills (understanding disclosure issues of visual impairment to potential employers, etc.)
- Employment-seeking skills (locating job openings, completing job applications, interview skills, etc.)
- Employment-keeping skills (developing personal on-the-job adaptations as the need arises)

"Unemployment and underemployment continue to be leading problems facing adult visually impaired individuals in the United States, making this portion of the expanded core curriculum vital for students of all ages."

**Assistive Technology:** Assistive Technology enables a person with a visual impairment to independently perform a task or job that they might otherwise be able to complete only with assistance. Assistive technology is any tool, piece of equipment or system used or adapted to fill a specific need, or to assist a person with a visual impairment in completing a task. Assistive technology can include tools made specifically for the visually impaired, such as: braille devices, closed circuit televisions, magnifiers, and monocular telescopes. It can also include large screen monitors, adapted computer system software, voice output devices and commonly used aids such as white canes, visors, and sunglasses. Training in the efficient use and maintenance of assistive technology increases the potential for maximum involvement in all areas of curriculum and in life.

**Visual Efficiency Skills:** Visual Efficiency Skills refer to the manner, technique or approach a student uses to complete a visual task as effectively and efficiently as possible. "The visual acuity of children diagnosed as visually impaired varies greatly. With thorough, systematic training, most students with functional vision can learn to use their remaining vision better and more efficiently." Using the best strategies to maximize acuity levels is one component of efficient visual

functioning. Interpreting visual information is another component. Efficient use of vision, aided by optical and non-optical aids and strategies, correlates highly to success in the classroom. Students learn about their eye condition and how it affects visual tasks, what aids and strategies are most useful, and how to explain their visual needs to others.

**Self-Determination:** This area of the ECC highlights the importance of believing in oneself, while understanding one's abilities and limitations. Students learn from successes and failures how to achieve one's goals in life. Self-determination is the ability for people to control their lives, reach goals they have set and take part fully in the world around them.

**Summary of the ECC:** Bringing together all of these skills learned in the expanded core curriculum produces a concept of the blind or visually impaired person in the community. It is difficult to imagine that a congenitally blind or visually impaired person could be entirely at ease and at home within the social, recreational, and vocational structure of the general community without mastering the elements of the expanded core curriculum. What is known about congenitally blind and visually impaired students is that, unless skills such as orientation and mobility, social interaction, and independent living are learned, these students are at high risk for lonely, isolated, unproductive lives. Accomplishments and joys such as shopping, dining, attending and participating in recreational activities are a right, not a privilege, for blind and visually impaired persons. Responsibilities such as banking, taking care of health needs, and using public and private services are a part of a full life for all persons, including those who are blind or visually impaired. Adoption and implementation of a core curriculum for blind and visually impaired students, including those with additional disabilities, will assure students of the opportunity to function well and completely in the general community.

The components of the expanded core curriculum present educators with a means of addressing the needs of visually impaired children with additional disabilities. The educational requirements of this population are often not met since the lack of vision is considered "minor", especially when the child is severely impacted by cognitive and physical disabilities. Each area in the expanded core curriculum can be further defined to address the educational issues facing these children and assist parents and educators to fulfill their needs.

This expanded core curriculum is the heart of the responsibility of educators serving visually impaired students. These areas are not adequately addressed by regular classroom teachers, nor should they be, for this is the core curriculum that is essential to students who are blind and visually impaired, and it epitomizes their "...right to be different..."