



Roles and Responsibilities

"Nothing replaces a human being sharing or translating the information." David, parent

The specialists who work in the field of education are also important members of the team for your child in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IEP)/Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process. These professionals may work in the home, classroom, therapy room/clinic or in your neighborhood. These roles and responsibilities are varied. Each team member has important specialized information to share. Your child's needs will determine who is on the team.

Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired (TBVI)

The TBVI holds a specialized teaching credential and has the primary responsibility for specialized instruction and services required to meet the unique educational needs of the student with a visual impairment. These services may be provided in the itinerant model daily or weekly.

Orientation and Mobility Specialist (O&M)

The O&M is credentialed and instructs children with a visual impairment in the development of skills and knowledge that enable

them to travel independently and safely in their environment.

Early Interventionist/Early Childhood Specialist

If your child is younger than 3 years old, your team may include an early interventionist, a professional who is trained to support families of young children with disabilities and has a background in child development.

Classroom Teacher

School age students with visual impairments typically attend a public school and are taught in general education classrooms with their sighted peers or in special day classes. This teacher will work closely with the TBVI to get information about the best ways to teach your child and get his/her class materials in the appropriate medium (braille, large print).

Para-educator

(also called teachers' aides, paraprofessionals) The school aide, or teaching assistant, is sometimes assigned to work with students who are visually impaired under the supervision of the classroom teacher and TBVI. This paraprofessional may be assigned to the classroom or to the individual student who is visually impaired.

Other members of your child's educational team may be a specialist in other areas, depending on his/her individual needs. All team members provide information, assessment and direct services. These team members may, or may not, have experience with children who are visually impaired.

These team members include:

Occupational Therapist (O.T.)

The O.T. is licensed to address a child's sensory/motor skills, development of fine motor skills such as dressing and oral motor skills that may have to do with eating.

Physical Therapist (P.T.)

The P.T. is licensed to work on improving and strengthening your child's gross motor skills through activities such as crawling, sitting, walking and running.

Speech and Language Pathologist-SLP (Also known as Speech Therapist)

The SLP is licensed to address the unique educational needs in the areas of improving communication, particularly language development, concept development along with academic skills, oral motor skills and sensory/motor skills. The SLP may also recommend alternative methods of communication for children with multiple disabilities.

Assistive Technology Specialist

This specialist facilitates and makes recommendations to assess the need for technology.

Certified Braille Specialist (Transcriber)

This specialist holds Library of Congress Certification in Literary Braille for preparing materials in Braille.

Counselor, Psychologist, or Social Worker

These specialists are aware of the unique educational needs of the

student with a visual impairment and the student's family.

Regular or Adapted Physical Education Specialist

This specialist is familiar with specialized or adapted equipment in the area of physical education for students who are visually impaired.

Resource Specialist

This specialist provides instruction and Special Education support services to students across disability areas including students with visual impairments.

Program Specialists

This specialist is especially knowledgeable about program options and services available within the region.

Administrator

The administrator is knowledgeable about the roles of each staff member and provides facilities that are appropriate to meet the unique needs of the student with visual impairments.

RESOURCES

Program Guidelines for Students Who are Visually Impaired, California Department of Education, Sacramento, California 1997

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