



Typical Roles and Responsibilities of VI Professionals

Taken from Quality Programs for the Visually Impaired, developed by Nancy Toelle

The **Teacher of Visually Impaired Students (TVI)** has the following roles and responsibilities:

- Has primary responsibility for specialized instruction and services required to meet the unique educational needs of her visually impaired students.
- Possesses the skills and abilities necessary to provide and coordinate this specialized instruction.
- Assists the student, parents, special and regular education personnel, and the student's sighted peers in
 - understanding the unique educational needs and learning characteristics of visually impaired students,
 - becoming aware of services and support available from local programs for visually impaired students,
 - acquiring information regarding local, state, and national resources for the education of visually impaired students, and
 - interpreting the visually impaired student's specific eye condition, the educational implications of the visual impairment, and the results of functional vision and learning media assessments.
- Consults regularly with the classroom teacher, other regular and special education personnel, parents, and others to coordinate programs and services for the visually impaired student.
- Assists the site administrator and teachers in making environmental adjustments for the student in the school.
- Shares responsibility with classroom teachers in the identification of instructional areas in which the student requires assistance.
- Assures that large-type or braille texts, supplementary materials, educational, aids, and equipment needed by the visually impaired student, 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 VI teacher, or they may be obtained from educational, clerical, or transcriber services.)
- Provides instruction in the development and maintenance of skills to meet the student's unique educational needs in the following areas, as indicated in the IEP:
 - low vision & visual efficiency skills,
 - concept development & academic skills,

- daily living skills,
 - career & vocational education skills,
 - communication skills (these skills include braille reading and writing as appropriate),
 - social/emotional skills and abilities, & sensory motor skills.
- Prepares sequential and meaningful instruction geared to the student's assessed needs, IEP goals and objectives, functioning, and motivational levels. This instruction should be reflected in weekly or monthly lesson plans, as appropriate.
- Provides assistance to the classroom teacher in academic subjects and activities of the classroom that, as a direct result of the student's visual impairment, require adaptation for the student.
- Provides initial and ongoing assessment:
 - consults with assessment team to determine appropriate testing materials and modifications needed,
 - assists with assessments when needed,
 - interprets assessment results when needed.
- Conducts functional vision/learning media assessments and produces written reports.
- Attends ARD and IEP meetings for students with visual impairments.
- Schedules time efficiently for assessment, instruction, planning, preparation of materials, travel, and conferences with relevant school and other key individuals.
- Maintains ongoing contact with parents to assist them in the development of a realistic understanding of their child's abilities, progress, and future goals.
- Provides in-service training programs for school personnel and students and education for parents regarding the needs of visually impaired students and adaptations, programs, and services for these students.
- Makes available pamphlets, films, and other public information materials that may be useful in developing realistic and unprejudiced attitudes toward visually impaired students.
- Coordinates with other personnel, such as transcribers, readers, counselors, O&M specialists, career/vocational education staff, and rehabilitation counselors.
- Maintains a current reference library of professional materials and resources.
- Acquires information and training about current research, development, and technology.
- The Classroom Teacher (regular, special class, or resource specialist has the following roles and responsibilities:
- Provides instruction in appropriate academic and non-academic content areas to the visually impaired student in the classroom.
- Works cooperatively with the teacher of visually impaired students to
 - identify the student's areas of educational need, including unique education needs,
 - coordinate instruction and services to meet these needs,
 - provide, in a timely manner, classroom materials that need to be reproduced in another medium,

- determine mutually convenient times during the school day for scheduling the teacher of visually impaired students to work with the student,
- modify classroom procedures and environment to meet the specific needs of the visually impaired student for participation in classroom activities, and
- exchange information concerning the visually impaired student with parents and other individuals on a regular basis.

The **Orientation and Mobility Specialist** has the following roles and responsibilities

- Instructs the visually impaired student in the development of skills and knowledge that enables him or her to travel independently, based on assessed needs and ability.
- Teaches the visually impaired student to travel with proficiency, safety, and confidence in familiar and unfamiliar environments.
- Consults regularly with sighted peers, parents, classroom teachers, physical education teachers, and/or other special education personnel to assist in home and classroom environmental modifications, adaptations, and considerations and to ensure reinforcement of appropriate O&M skills that will encourage the visually impaired student to travel independently in these settings.
- Works with the teacher of visually impaired students to conduct the functional vision assessment as it relates to independent travel.
- Conducts assessments that focus on both long and short-term needs of the student.
- Includes in the assessment report the needs and strengths of the student and an estimate of the length and frequency of service necessary to meet identified needs.
- Prepares sequential and meaningful instruction geared to the student's assessed needs, IEP goals and objectives, functioning, and motivational levels. This instruction should be reflected in weekly or monthly lesson plans, as appropriate.
- Prepares and uses equipment and materials, for example, tactile maps, models, distance low vision devices, and long canes, for the development of O&M skills.
- Transports the student with parent permission to various community locations, as necessary, to provide meaningful instruction in realistic learning environments.
- Is responsible for the student's safety at all times and in all teaching environments while fostering maximum independence.
- Evaluates the student's progress on an ongoing basis with progress reports each 6/9 weeks as required.
- Keeps progress notes on each student.
- Participates in necessary parent conferences and meetings.
- Provides inservice training to regular and special education personnel, sighted peers, and parents concerning the O&M needs of the student and
 - appropriate methods and procedures for interacting with the visually
 - impaired person that will foster maximum independence and safety

- Provide O&M instruction, where appropriate, in a number of specific areas:
 - body imagery,
 - laterality,
 - environmental concepts,
 - gross and fine motor skills related to independent travel,
 - sensory awareness, stimulation, and training,
 - spatial concepts,
 - compass direction concepts,
 - sighted guide procedures
 - basic protective and information-gathering techniques
 - orientation skills
 - map skills
 - cane skills,
 - use of residual vision
 - low vision devices related to travel skills
 - urban, suburban, and rural travel,
 - travel in business districts,
 - procedures for crossing streets including how to deal with traffic control signals,
 - use of public transportation systems,
 - procedures for use of the telephone for information gathering and for emergencies,
 - procedures for interacting with the public
 - knowledge and application of community address systems,
 - procedures for travel and independent functioning in places of public accommodation,
 - skills of daily living,
 - sensory/motor skills in coordination with the physical or occupational therapist and teacher of visually impaired students, and
 - skills for independent living.