



## **Functional Vision & Learning Media Assessment**

The purpose of this document is to give TVI/COMS a resource they can share and use to support/improve the Child Find process within their district(s).

The Ohio Department of Education defines a “visual impairment,” including blindness, as an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

### **What is a Functional Vision Evaluation?**

A Functional Vision Evaluation is conducted by the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments to analyze how the child uses his/her vision to perform daily tasks and determines the following:

- Is the child’s vision negatively impacting his/her education?
- What accommodations are needed to allow the child to use his/her vision effectively?
- What are the areas within the Expanded Core Curriculum that the child needs direct instruction from the TVI?
  - Expanded Core Curriculum is composed of nine specialized areas of knowledge and skills that allow the child with a visual impairment to access the curriculum, classroom instruction, and the environment, as well as prepare for higher education, vocational training, and independent living.

### **What is a Learning Media Assessment?**

As part of this evaluation, the Learning Media Assessment is conducted to determine the primary learning medium of the student. Because of this, the assessment is often referred to as the FVLMA. Under IDEA, the primary learning medium of a student with a visual impairment is considered to be Braille, until determined otherwise with input from the educational team. If not Braille, other options can include: regular print, large print, and print options with the use of assistive technology. For prereaders and students with additional disabilities, the use of multisensory or tactile symbols may be appropriate. Auditory is not a form of literacy, but can be used to support learning.

### **Why is a Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment requested?**

- To determine if the child needs Specially Designed Instruction and accommodations to access the curriculum (IEP).
- To determine the most appropriate accommodations needed to access the curriculum (504).

## **Who should be referred for a Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment?**

Based on medical information, any child with a diagnosed eye disease or condition. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Albinism
- Amblyopia
- Cataracts
- Coloboma
- Cortical Visual Impairment
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Glaucoma
- Nystagmus
- Optic Nerve Atrophy
- Optic Nerve Hypoplasia
- Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)
- Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)
- Stargardt's Disease – juvenile form of Macular Degeneration
- Strabismus (misalignment of the eyes)
- Usher's Syndrome
- Any student receiving accommodations (504) based on a visual diagnosis.

Based on individual need, the TVI should consult with the IEP team to determine if a child with one or more of the following medical diagnoses is in need of an FVLMA specifically for Neurological Visual Impairment.

- Structural abnormality of the brain
- History of neurological events (congenital or acquired) such as brain bleed, infection of the brain, or shunt placement.
- Anoxic or Hypoxic event
- Cerebral Palsy
- Seizure disorder
- Traumatic Brain Injury (cancer, trauma, surgery, or repeated concussions).
- Autism

Based on observations by the classroom teacher, any student that exhibits the following should be referred for a Functional Vision & Learning Media Assessment.

- Eyes:
  - seem to move constantly (uncontrollably).
  - do not seem to be equal in size or shape.
  - inward or outward turn of one eye
- Complaints of headaches after reading/writing.
- Constant squinting.
- Consistent head turn when viewing (seems to look out of the corner of the eye).
- Shield eyes from overhead lights.
- Seems to stare at lights or windows.
- Leans forward to view or holds materials extremely close to view.
- Handwriting is much too large and/or dark.
- Seems to only look at objects of a specific color.
- Visual attention is impacted by the visual complexity of the presented materials and/or competing visual and auditory stimuli of the environment.

# Orientation and Mobility

## **What is Orientation and Mobility?**

Orientation & Mobility (O&M) is a curriculum of age-appropriate skills needed to remain oriented and travel safely in familiar and unfamiliar environments. An O&M curriculum includes basic conceptual development of objects, spatial relationships, distance and time, and learning to use additional sensory information, a white cane or mobility device, and/or low vision tools for viewing. A Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) conducts an O&M assessment to identify the individual needs of the student.

## **Who should be referred for an Orientation & Mobility Assessment?**

Based on information gathered during the Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment or observation from the team, an Orientation and Mobility assessment should be requested on the following:

### Visual Diagnosis/Information

- blind
- legally blind
- does not meet the visual requirements to obtain a driver's license
- progressive vision loss is expected

### Observation

- trips over items on the floor or bumps into doors and furniture
- difficulty traveling independently even in familiar environments
- seems to walk cautiously in low lighting
- seems to walk cautiously in crowded environments
- difficulty traveling across surfaces that change in color or texture
- does not recognize familiar environmental information

### **For more information on assessments and services, please visit:**

- AER e-Learning <https://aerbvi.org/>
- OCALI Outreach Center for Deafness & Blindness <https://deafandblindoutreach.org/>
- Ohio Department of Education <https://education.ohio.gov/Students-with-Disabilities/Blind-and-Visually-Impaired>
- Ohio State School for the Blind <https://ossb.ohio.gov/our-departments/statewide-services/statewide-services>
- Perkins eLearning <https://workshops.perkinselearning.org/>