

New York City Youth and Vision Loss Coalition

Transition Handbook

NYC Youth and Vision Loss Coalition

Transition: A Guide for Parents and Youth who are Blind and / or Visually Impaired as they Prepare for Life after High School

Ages: 10 to 21 years

December 2014

Compiled and edited by:

Jean Geiger, Michael Godino, Nancy D. Miller, Lisa Senior, Diane S. Weiss
and the Members of the NYC Youth and Vision Loss Coalition

Updated by:

Michexa E. Belizaire

Funding provided by:

The New York Community Trust and the Sarah K. de Coizart Trust

Coalition Sponsor:

VISIONS/ Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Contents

Brief History of Transition Services.....	5
How does IDEA relate to Transition Services?	5
Level One Career Assessment for Students with Disabilities (mandatory)	8
• Level 1 Career Assessment Timeline.....	8
• Fact Sheet: Level 2 Career Assessment Information	9
• Fact Sheet: Level 3 Career Assessment Information	9
Diploma Objectives	9
Career and Technology Education (CTE)	24
What are school-based CTE programs and courses?	25
Region 10 RSE-TASC	26
Student Exit Summary	26
What is the role of NYSCB?.....	26
What Transition Services are Available through NYSCB?	28
What is an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)?.....	30
For Youth:.....	30
Purchasing adaptive technology.....	31
Transfer guidelines for youth turning 10 years old	31
NYSCB Contact Info: District 6: Manhattan.....	32
District 7: Hempstead.....	32
District 8: Harlem	32
Role of the Family	32
Tips for parents:.....	33
How can parents and advocates encourage students to participate in their own transition planning?	34
Service Descriptions and Terms for Youth	35
What are transition skills?.....	35
For Parents.....	36

What is networking for career development?	36
Daily living skills.....	37
For Parents.....	37
For Youth.....	37
Communications/Literacy skills	37
Dressing.....	38
For Parents.....	38
For Youth.....	38
Grooming	38
Shopping.....	39
Meal preparation	39
For Parents.....	39
For Youth.....	40
Money identification	40
Home management	40
Travel.....	40
Assistive technology (AT).....	41
For Parents.....	42
For Youth.....	42
Visual efficiency skills.....	42
College prep and college life	43
Advocacy	44
For Parents.....	45
For Youth.....	45
Tips for Career Exploration.....	45
The role of cultural institutions in reinforcing ECC and transition skills	47
Government Agencies:.....	48
New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)	48

- Manhattan 48
- Hempstead 48
- New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)..... 50
- NYC Vision Rehabilitation Service Providers..... 51**
- Helen Keller Services for the Blind..... 51
- Lighthouse Guild International..... 51
- VISIONS/ Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired 52

Brief History of Transition Services

The definition of Transition Service in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, together with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 set in motion policy changes that have enabled children and youth with disabilities to access the educational and vocational skills needed to transition to living, working, and actively participating as adults with disabilities in all aspects of community life. The goals of transition services are to enable youth with disabilities to leave high school, attain postsecondary education and training, and/or achieve employment rates and levels of wages comparable to their peers without disabilities.

- ¹ More recently reauthorized as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and signed by the President on July 22, 2014.

Transition services offered through both NYSCB and NYS ACCES-VR will be regulated under the newly reauthorized Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). It has a strong emphasis on transition services. In the law, no less than 15% of the funding must be spent on transition services. President Obama signed WIOA in July 2014 but regulations will not be completed until late 2015 or later. Nothing in WIOA removes the obligation for transition services provided under IDEA.

How does IDEA relate to Transition Services?

Within IDEA, the term "transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:

- Is designed to be within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
- Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and

- Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. [34 CFR 300.43 (a)] [20 U.S.C. 1401(34) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act].

Federal, state laws and regulations require transition planning and services to all young people at the recommended age. Therefore, school districts are responsible for initiating transition planning to ensure each child with a disability has a coordinated plan for services before leaving school, whether by graduation or aging out. According to the Center for Parent Information and Resources, a number of key words in the definition above capture important concepts about transition services:

- Activities need to be coordinated with each other.
- The process focuses on results.
- Activities must address the child's academic and functional achievement.
- Activities are intended to smooth the young person's movement into the post-school world.

For more information visit: www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/transitionadult/

In New York State, the law states that transition planning must begin by the age of 15, and may start earlier when appropriate. Transition planning is part of the IEP process and should be reviewed or updated annually. The New York State IEP addresses transition planning in two separate sections: **Measurable Postsecondary Goals** and **Coordinated Set of Transition Activities**. These two sections very clearly follow the requirements of the federal IDEA.

Once the student's postsecondary goals are established, they should be broken down into measurable, annual goals on the student's IEP. New York State has identified ten areas that should be considered when planning transition activities and services that address annual goals:

1. Education
2. Legal/advocacy
3. Personal independence/residential
4. Recreation/leisure

5. Financial/income
6. Medical/health
7. Employment
8. Transportation
9. Post-secondary/continuing education
10. Other support needs

The IEP Team should review and identify the gaps between the students' skills and what's needed to reach their goals. Selecting strategies should then be developed towards these necessary skills in each of these 10 areas. The IEP team consists of the parent/legal guardian, the child, teachers, school staff, principal, and service providers. If you need additional support you can ask someone who knows you and your child personally. Speak to your child about what goals and skills they currently have and ask them what they want to do in the future. Write as much information down prior to the meeting to ensure all information is discussed and included on the IEP accurately. Some questions you may want to ask yourself are: Can you answer questions or share information on each required area? Do you have questions about any of the areas? Be sure that every area is addressed thoroughly.

Services are "coordinated" when there is a link between each of the activities and when the school, family, and any outside agencies are connected to ensure the smooth provision of services. The coordinated activities must be based on a student's strengths, needs, preferences, and abilities. The New York State IEP divides transition services into **six** categories:

1. Instruction
2. Related Services
3. Community Experiences
4. Development of Employment and Other Post-school Adult Living Objectives
5. Acquisition of Daily Living Skills (if applicable)
6. Functional Vocational Assessment (if applicable)

For each service or activity, the IEP should specify which party is responsible for carrying out the activity. This can include the student, the parent, the school, or an outside agency or provider. Outside agencies can

and should be invited to attend IEP meetings where you will be discussing transition services. For more information visit:

http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/transition_guide.pdf

Level One Career Assessment for Students with Disabilities (mandatory)

NY State Education Dept. requires a career assessment for all children ages 12 and up. This assessment is called a Level One assessment which sets the foundation for transition planning and services. It is a team effort that includes student, close family members, and the student's teachers. The Level I Assessment identifies the starting point for the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to begin exploring career options with the student. It is also required that this Level I assessment be updated every year at the annual review of the IEP.

Below we have provided links to the various career assessment tools for your convenience; please visit the links and read through the materials as needed.

- **Level 1 Career Assessment Timeline**

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_timeline.htm

- **Level 1 Career Assessment Forms, including:**

Student Interview Form

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_student_fm.htm

Parent Interview Form

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_parent_fm.htm

Parent Interview Form (send home version)

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_parq_send_fm.htm

Strength Based Assessment Form

(This form can be used for both the student and parent interview)

Educational Staff Report

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_edstaff.htm

Annual Summary Sheet

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_annsum.htm

- **Fact Sheet: Level 2 Career Assessment Information**
(www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_lvl2_fs.htm)
- **Fact Sheet: Level 3 Career Assessment Information**
(http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_lvl3_fs.htm)
- **Fact Sheet: Learning Standards for Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) -Intermediate level**
(http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/lvl1_cdos_fs.htm)

Although not required for all students, Level II Career Assessment and Level III Career Assessments may also be available from the school depending upon the student's individual needs. For more information visit:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/>

Diploma Objectives

Based on your child's Individual Education Program, you should know what diploma or credential your child will obtain at the end of their high school career. It is important to know the difference between the various diplomas and/or credentials so that you can ensure that your child is on the right track with his/her education. Review the table below to note your child's diploma objective relative to his/her pre-transition IEP (this should be completed prior to the Transition IEP meeting). If there is a discrepancy or you feel that your child should be receiving a different diploma or credential, be sure to review this during the meeting.

Types of High School Diplomas		
Diploma Type	Available to	Requirements
Regents	All Student Populations	5 Regents exams with scores of 65+ http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#regentsdiploma
Regents with Advanced Designation	All Student Populations	8 Regents exams and the NYC Language Other Than English (LOTE) exam with scores of 65+ http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#regentsAD
Local	Students with disabilities with an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Accommodation Plan	5 Regents exams with scores of 55+, passed RCTs, or compensatory option http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#assessment

* the High School Equivalency Diploma (GED or TASC in NYS).

**Note: Only numbers 1, Regents and 2, Advanced Regents diplomas are nationally recognized. The other three options are NY State and City recognized diplomas that require additional education to attend college.

The tables below show the diplomas or credentials available in New York State and their requirements.

Non-Diploma High School Exiting Credentials		
Credential Type	Available to	Requirements
Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential	Students with disabilities other than those who are assessed using the NYS Alternate Assessment (NYSSA)	<p>Career Development: Students will be knowledgeable about the world of work, explore career options, and relate personal skills, aptitudes, and abilities to future career decisions.</p> <p>Integrated Learning: Students will demonstrate how academic knowledge and skills are applied in the workplace and other settings.</p> <p>Universal Foundation Skills: Students will demonstrate mastery of the foundation skills and competencies essential for success in the workplace.</p> <p>http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/cdlearn/</p>
Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC)	Students with severe disabilities that are assessed using NYSAA	<p>All students with severe disabilities, who attend school for not less than 12 years, excluding Kindergarten, graduate with this credential, which must be accompanied by a summary of the student's levels of achievement in academic and career development and occupational studies.</p> <p>http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1006.html</p>

If, your child is not seeking a Regents diploma with the goal of post-secondary education, she/he has the right to stay in school until the end of the school year in which she/he turns 21. Additionally, she/he should be referred to appropriate outside agencies (NYSCB, ACCES-VR, OPWDD, etc.) during her/his final two years of school. These agencies can arrange for additional training, education, or placement services upon your child's exit from the public school system. The DOE has a legal responsibility to involve outside agencies in the transition process, but it is important for parents to monitor this responsibility. For more information visit:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/gradrequirements/home.html>

You should also know the roles of your school's **transition linkage coordinators (TLCs)**. The TLC may serve as a liaison with outside agencies and help students with applications and other relevant transition activities. If your child's school does not have a transition linkage coordinator, these responsibilities will likely fall to his or her guidance counselor. For students in District 75 programs, if the program does not have a TLC located in the school, there are transition coordinators at the district level connected to each District 75 program. You should learn who your child's TLC or guidance counselor is and arrange to meet with that person to discuss the transition process: Read more at <http://schools.nyc.gov> search for "Transition Guide District 75".

Career and Technology Education (CTE)

Community work-based learning opportunities are provided to approximately 2800 students with significant disabilities in New York City, ages 14 to 21, at over 420 community training locations throughout the five boroughs. The job developer at each school develops a variety of job training sites and ensures that participating students receive whatever instruction and support is needed to optimize the benefits from each work experience. Schools also work closely with vocational rehabilitation and adult service agencies to guarantee students continue to be given any assistance needed once they graduate from school and transition into supported or competitive employment. If your child will be or is receiving Career and Technology Education (CTE) services, it should be listed on the IEP with a clear and concise set of measurable goals.

What are school-based CTE programs and courses?

School-based CTE programs and courses are designed to meet the needs of students with a wide range of abilities and include:

- Introductory career exposure for middle school and younger high school aged students prior to their participation in community work-based learning;
- Intensive in-school career instruction for high school aged students who, because of their disability, are not yet prepared to participate in work-based learning; and
- Concentrated credit-bearing courses of instruction for high school aged students in one or more career areas.

CTE programs, courses, and work-based learning opportunities currently offered in NYC schools include, but are not limited to, the following career areas:

- Automotive Technology (including Automotive Maintenance and Repair, and Bicycle Mechanics and Repair)
- Information Technology (including Data Entry)
- Fashion/Design/Esthetics (Marketing, Retail, Cosmetology, Fashion Marketing, Visual Merchandising, and Barbering)
- Agriculture (Horticulture, Landscaping and Grounds Keeping)
- Arts and Communication (Commercial Photography, Digital Photography)
- Business and Administration (including Clerical and Print Shop)
- Building and Construction Technology (Building trades – Construction Technology, Carpentry, Building Maintenance)
- Education and Training (including Teaching Assistant)
- Health Services (including Nursing Aide and Home Health Care)
- Hospitality and Tourism (Culinary Arts, Housekeeping)
- Virtual Enterprise

The New York State Department of Education (NYSED) has established 10 Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC) (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/rsetasc/locations.htm>) to act as a coordinated statewide network of special education technical assistance centers. The center in New York City is:

Region 10 RSE-TASC

New York City Department of Education
Queens Plaza North
Long Island City, New York 11101
(718) 391-6648
Fax: (718) 391-6887

Student Exit Summary

IDEA 2004 created a new requirement for schools that should help students with disabilities make a smoother transition to post-school employment or education. Schools must now provide a “Summary of Performance” called the Student Exit Summary. All students with IEP’s in New York State, prior to leaving school, will receive this summary whether their eligibility for special education services terminates due to graduation with a regular diploma or because they exceed the age eligibility for a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This summary must include information on the student’s academic achievement and functional performance as well as recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting postsecondary goals. The intention of this summary is to provide specific, meaningful, and understandable information to the student, the student’s family, and any agency, including postsecondary schools, which may provide services to the student upon transition.

Schools are not required to conduct any new assessments or evaluations in order to provide the summary. While the Student Exit Summary is not part of the formal transition planning process, the IEP team should discuss it before the student leaves school to ensure that the summary will satisfy requirements connected with the student’s post-school goals.

Read more at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed> search for “IDEA student exit summary”.

What is the role of NYSCB?

The New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) is only one of the state agencies with a role in the student’s transition. However, while the student is in school, the school districts have the primary planning, programmatic, and financial responsibilities for the provision of transition services. Financial responsibility for services, other than those mandated for school districts by

Federal or State law, may be shared by other agencies including NYSCB. In addition, NYSCB might serve as a consultant to school districts in meeting their responsibilities in areas where NYSCB has expertise (for example, providing information regarding assistive technology for college or work). NYSCB's responsibilities lie primarily in providing technical support and information to schools and preparing students for permanent employment. While the following services may be provided by NYSCB, the provision of these services should not be a substitute for the school's responsibilities.

As a participant in the school's transition planning process, NYSCB should:

- Contribute knowledge of vision rehabilitation services and outcomes;
- Identify the need for involvement by other state agencies, adult service programs, independent living centers, and community based services whose resources can assist students who are legally blind, their families, and communicate with education personnel during the transition planning and service delivery process;
- Provide information to assist in the selection of vocational goals that are consistent with labor market needs and integrated community living opportunities, including information about:
 - Reasonable and available accommodations including assistive technology
 - Employer expectations
 - Labor trends and occupational outlooks
 - Job entry qualifications
 - Work experience training internships
 - Job placement assessment and analysis of a specific job type
 - Work opportunities
 - College or vocational training scholarships and support
 - Other vocational related issues such as travel, dress for the workplace, meal preparation.

The NYSCB counselor may contribute to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) transition planning meetings as a meeting participant. If this is not possible, other alternatives may be used such as telephone conferences, so that students, parents, and school district staff can benefit from the NYSCB counselor's expertise. The Joint Agreement Between the P-12 Office of Special Education and

NYSCB provides the overview of purpose, objectives, and joint responsibilities of each party in the provision of transition services for students who are legally blind.

Note: NYSCB is responsible only for services written into the Individualized Education Program (IEP) by the CSE with the direct knowledge and agreement of the NYSCB counselor. NYSCB does not take responsibility for services the school districts are mandated to provide.

The NYSCB vocational rehabilitation (VR) program serves eligible transition-aged students ages 10 and older by providing an array of services that gives students the tools necessary to enable them to gain skills and make informed decisions about their future goals.

What Transition Services are Available through NYSCB?

Transition services from NYSCB are provided by authorization of Children's Consultants and Transition Counselors. It is expected that youth will be transferred from the state-funded Children's Program to the federally funded Vocational Rehabilitation Program at age 10. Some youth may continue to work with their Children's Consultant until age 14 when they are transferred to a Transition Counselor. Both Children's Consultants and Transition Counselors are vocational rehabilitation counselors who specialize in assisting youth who are legally blind.

After receiving an application for vocational rehabilitation services, the NYSCB counselor will make an eligibility determination. The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is jointly developed by the counselor and the student, based on the student's interests and objectives. The IPE should be completed within 90 days of eligibility determination. The youth may receive a wide range of vocational rehabilitation services depending on individual needs to achieve the planned employment outcome identified on the IPE. Federal regulations require that development and approval of an IPE must be completed as early as possible during the transition process, but, at the latest, by the time each student determined to be eligible for VR services leaves the school setting.

Collaboration in assessing student progress and participation in planning with the student, family, and school should result in consensus about desired outcomes,

goals, and services that must be reflected in both the IPE and IEP. The IPE should be developed, to the extent possible, during the annual review of the transition component of the IEP. At that time, information required on the IPE will be written to be consistent with the content of the IEP, including vocational goals, educational and rehabilitation objectives, projected dates, and responsibilities for participation in the transition process.

Services provided by NYSCB may include but, are not limited to:

- Vision rehabilitation therapy - outside of school hours in the home
- Orientation and mobility - outside of school hours in the home
- Low vision exams and devices
- Adaptive equipment for home use (not to exceed \$500 per student per year)
- Social casework services including individual and family counseling and help with access to benefits
- Summer residential pre-college programs for high school youth
- Summer or after-school youth employment and/or volunteer or paid work experience training internships, which may include
 - ✓ Job coaching
 - ✓ Reimbursement to the employer for training expenses
 - ✓ Payment to the student to cover work related expenses during work experience training internships (e.g. clothing, food and transportation) when the employer does not hire the student as an employee with paid wages.

Note: NYSCB policy places limitations on the provision of these services.

Visit Section 7 of the NYSCB (Transition Planning and Services) handbook for a better understanding of how NYSCB and the school district work together:

www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh/vocrehab_manual

Also become familiar with the various after-school, summer and weekend programs for youth with vision loss offered by NYC vision rehabilitation agencies. See contact information under resources for Catholic Guild, Helen Keller Services, Lighthouse Guild International and VISIONS and visit their websites to learn about their programs for youth with vision loss including those funded by

NYSCB.

Many museums, theaters, movies and sports facilities in NYC offer adapted arts and sports and narrated programming specifically for youth with vision loss. www.blindline.org is a database of New York resources and services specifically for people with vision loss. You can also call Blindline® toll free 888-625-1616.

What is an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)?

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is a written document describing the student's employment goal and the steps she or he will take to achieve her or his goal. This document is similar to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) the student might have had during the primary and secondary education process. The IPE is developed in accordance with the student's interests and abilities and reflects his or her choices in identifying an employment goal and the services to be provided to enable her to reach those goals.

For Youth:

It may be helpful to learn more about vocational rehabilitation services, different types of employment, and your capabilities before your IPE plan is written. The NYSCB counselor, prevocational counselors, TVI, O&M specialist, guidance counselors, as well as your trusted network of family and friends can all assist you in finding resources that will help you do this. Your IPE will be developed on a form provided by NYSCB as part of your application for services. Before your plan can begin, it must be reviewed and approved by your NYSCB counselor and supervisory staff. After your IPE is approved, you will receive a copy in your preferred format (print, large print, braille, audio or PDF). Keep in mind, this IPE is your plan and you can review it at any time with your counselor; however, it must be reviewed at least once each year to continue the services. You can make changes to the IPE at any time but these reviews serve well in making any necessary changes. Because the IPE is a legal document committing you and the NYSCB to various levels of service and results, rights and responsibilities are a part of your IPE: e.g. NYSCB will pay state level tuition for program eligible college students who maintain a "C" average. See the NYSCB College Policy at www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbv/vocrehab_manual Section 8.32 "College Training". The IPE will list your rights and responsibilities on the form. Your

NYSCB counselor prior to your signing the document will review it with you.

Purchasing adaptive technology

When possible, the transition counselor should order assistive technology at least six months before a student pursuing post-secondary training leaves high school. Assistive technology can be purchased at the end of the junior year when an IPE has been developed and assistive technology is identified as necessary for the student to participate in vocational training, post-secondary education, or employment after high school. This will allow the student time to become proficient in the use of assistive technology before entering college, vocational training, and/or employment.

NYSCB will not take responsibility for services and assistive technology that the school district is mandated to provide.

Transfer guidelines for youth turning 10 years old

All children who are expected to graduate by age 18 and who clearly have a vocational goal must be referred to the vocational rehabilitation program during the year after the child's 9th birthday. Exceptions to this rule should be discussed with the Children's Consultant's supervisor and documented in the Electronic Case File (ECF). The Children's Consultant must discuss the case transfer with the child and his/her parent(s) or legal guardian before transferring the case to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Children's Consultants complete an "Indicators of Employability" form for all legally blind children that remain on their caseloads after the child has turned 14. The form was developed to evaluate whether youth with multiple disabilities can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services. The Children's Consultant completes the form with input from the child's teachers and parents. The completed form is submitted to the Children's Consultant's supervisor for review and signature.

Children for whom the Children's Consultant and supervisor are unsure of vocational potential should be referred to the specialized Transition Counselor no later than the year they turn 18. Referrals can take place any time between the child's 14th and 18th years. Children's Consultants should complete the "Indicators of Employability" every year and review the outcome with their supervisor to determine the child's progress/vocational progress toward their

goal.

Children who have habilitation needs only (no vocational goal), as indicated on the initial “Indicators of Employability” form, should remain an open case with the Children’s Consultant until age 21. Linkages with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) if applicable should be in place before the child leaves school. The “Indicators of Employability” form should be completed no less than every three years for these youth, until their case is closed in Children’s Services at age 21. For more information visit:

http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cb/vocrehab_manual/07_Transition.htm

Section 7.02: Transfer From NYSCB Children's Services To NYSCB Adult Services.

NYSCB Contact Info:

District 6: Manhattan

80 Maiden Lane 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10038
Telephone: 212-825-5710

District 7: Hempstead

50 Clinton Street, Suite 208
Hempstead, NY 11550
Telephone: 516-564-4311
Fax: 516-292-7448

District 8: Harlem

163 West 125th Street, Room 209 New
York, NY 10027
Telephone: 212-961-4440

Role of the Family

Below are some tips for managing your communications and record keeping skills throughout the transition period of education and working with the various systems.

Familiarize yourself and your child with what services they are entitled to. Make sure that your child can verbally explain, whenever possible, what services they

are interested in and how to express their concerns when they are feeling uneasy. As a parent, you want to help your child set short and long-range goals. You want to assist your child in this process so they do not rely only on you telling them what you want them to do. Remember to actively explore and listen to your child when talking about what she or he is trying to achieve. Guide your child with his/her decision making to ensure that all needs are being met and familiarize yourself with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as this is the law guiding the process of your child's education.

Tips for parents:

- ✓ Keep lines of communication open with the people who deal with your child. Provide positive as well as negative feedback. Even when you are angry about something that has happened, speak calmly when making your point.
- ✓ Keep things in writing! Keep a notebook for yourself and copies of all communications with school personnel and outside clinicians. Follow up on conversations with written confirmation.
- ✓ Always work towards solutions when there is a problem. Insist that your child's educators create positive plans for change to correct any problems that exist.
- ✓ Send important information by certified mail, return receipt requested. Keep your own copies of all documents and mail receipts.
- ✓ Keep a transition folder with all documents, names and contact information relevant to the transition process.
- ✓ Attend all information sessions on transition services held by your child's school or outside agencies.
- ✓ Address all questions about the transition process to a school official such as your child's guidance counselor or transition linkage coordinator.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the relevant outside agencies to know what

services are available for your child.

- ✓ Ask about the requirements and limitations of the different diploma options and discuss which is the optimal choice for your child.
- ✓ Set realistic goals for your child.
- ✓ Keep in mind that the Annual Goals portion of the IEP should correspond to the postsecondary goals and transition services listed.
- ✓ Know your rights and the DOE's responsibilities regarding the transition process.
- ✓ Be persistent. If someone says there is nothing that can be done for your child, get a second opinion.
- ✓ Bring along a friend, family member, professional, advocate or someone who knows your child outside of school to school meetings if you feel your perspective is not being heard by the DOE or to keep notes.

How can parents and advocates encourage students to participate in their own transition planning?

- ✓ Transition planning works best when students are involved, so prepare them to self-advocate.
- ✓ Encourage students to read their IEPs and transition plans, or assist them with reading and understanding both.
- ✓ You and your child should attend all scheduled transition meetings.
- ✓ Help students identify their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and goals.
- ✓ Encourage students to think about long-range goals and what they need to do to reach them.
- ✓ Help students understand their disability and teach them to ask for the

supports and accommodations they need.

- ✓ Discuss students' medical needs with them.
- ✓ Introduce students to adult role models with disabilities, whenever possible, for informational meetings about the work they do and how they chose their career.
- ✓ Encourage you child to have varied experiences and to be as independent as possible appropriate for their age.

Service Descriptions and Terms for Youth

*Note: The information in the following section is geared primarily for the transition age youth with vision loss that are using this handbook. Information specifically for parents is clearly labeled.

What are transition skills?

Transition skills are the learned methods and techniques required to change from one's current status to the next or the movement from one level to another. You should take full advantage of every opportunity to move beyond your comfort zone and experience new things whenever possible. Some of these opportunities will be in the programs supported by NYSCB and the many service providers and agencies throughout the city and state. If you have additional disabilities to vision loss, other agencies may be able to help as well (examples include the New York Deaf Blind Collaborative (NYDBC) for students who are deaf-blind and the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) for students with developmental disabilities). (See the resource section for information on other disabilities.)

Carefully consider offers for service from national, state or city programs, agencies, or businesses and make sure you have all of the information to make an informed and sound decision. If the offer sounds like something you might want to try, talk it over with your family and trusted support network and maybe give it a try. One of the best and sometimes most important things you can learn

from trying something is that it is not for you. Some of the many transition programs that may be offered are pre-vocational, pre-college prep, work experience training, job shadowing, internships, and volunteering. These programs provide you with the opportunity to experiment and learn about different goals. Remember to ask questions and network whenever possible.

For Parents

You should encourage your child to engage in experiences and extracurricular group activities that will enable your transition-aged child to eventually build a trusted network. You should also have a trusted network of your own. Think of all the people you have come into contact with over the years with good judgment regarding vision loss. Do you keep in contact with them? Have you attended support groups and keep in touch with other parents? Do you have other parents' email addresses and cell phone numbers? Don't be shy. Parents of children with vision loss often love to speak with other parents. Networking is a valuable tool for both you and your child.

Both Lighthouse Guild International and VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired offer specific programs for parents and families of children with vision loss. Contact them about their telephone support groups and residential rehabilitation and recreation programs. It is a terrific way to meet other families. Explore joining NAPVI or POBC, parent support networks. See resource section for contact information.

What is networking for career development?

When networking for the purpose of career development, this means talking with friends, family members, and acquaintances about your goals, your interests, and your dreams. Most people actually learn about job openings through friends, relatives, or others who are part of their personal network, and because each person in your network has a network of his or her own, your potential contacts can grow exponentially. This is important because more often than not, hiring managers would rather talk to a potential candidate who has been recommended by someone they know or already employ.

Check out CareerConnect information for teens, an on-line community of the American Foundation for the Blind www.afb.org. From the home page search for

“CareerConnect Forum for Teens”

For more information you can also go to the “Living with Vision Loss” tab on the home page. On the right hand side of the page click on “For Job Seekers”. On the next screen click on “Find a Job”. Lastly click on “Job Seeking for Teens”.

Become familiar with LinkedIn, an on line network with personal profiles.

Daily living skills

By now you should be taking on more responsibilities such as doing chores at home as well as dressing yourself, making a meal and being prepared for the day’s activities. If you were alone in the house, would you be able to make lunch? Are you able to heat something up in the microwave? Can you travel on your own? Do you know the phone number for a cab or car service? If you use Access a ride do you know your access-a-ride identification code? Are you familiar with the nearest bus or subway to home? Do you keep your own Metrocard if you are going to travel on public transportation by yourself? This section includes a list of transition skills with examples of actual skills of daily living.

For Parents

You might want to ask yourself the following questions. Is my child responsible? Do I give my child tasks to do by himself or do I tend to do things for him? If I were to leave my child in the house while I ran errands, would she/he be able to make a meal safely? Heat something up in the microwave? Clean up juice spilled on the counter? While these transition skills can be learned over time, you cannot solely depend on a service provider to teach your child these skills. You have to reinforce them at home and encourage your child to use them. It takes patience, support, and a lot of practice. The more you allow children to do it for themselves even if it takes a little longer, the greater likelihood they will gain the confidence and know that they can do it on their own.

For Youth

Communications/Literacy skills

The skills you use when you communicate with others are evaluated with each

and every attempt you make to communicate. Careless writing or inappropriate usage of language is the best way to miss an opportunity. It only takes a minute to spell check an email, cover letter, resume, or other documents and to send them out correctly. Always speak with others using your best possible language skills. We never know who might have the ability to assist us in moving our lives or careers to the next level so it is always to your advantage to use your best communication skills. Be careful what you write on a public Internet forum or site. You never know who will be reading it.

Make sure that you are familiar with adaptive technology and you are expert in using the tools you need to communicate with others electronically, verbally, and in writing. Do you need a speech program on your computer? A magnifier when reading small print, digital books? Be sure that you always have the equipment that you need with you and that you know how to use it.

Dressing

Know what dress code is appropriate for each situation. Some of the more common terms for dress might be street clothes, casual, business attire, and formal wear. Do you use color identifiers to identify the colors of the clothing you choose so they match? Are your clothes labeled so that you can find what you are looking for without asking for help? Do you know what business casual needs?

For Parents

Do you talk to your child about what types of clothing he or she may have? Are they encouraged to pick out their own clothes? Are their clothes labeled so that they can find what they are looking for without asking you for help? If not, you can ask their NYSCB counselor for services to teach your child how to identify their own clothes as well as how to safely do other everyday tasks related to dressing.

For Youth

Grooming

Grooming is a part of daily life. Your appearance is the very first impression others have of you. The way we present ourselves usually says a lot about us, how we feel, and how we want others to see us. During your transition years, if

you haven't already, you should take on the responsibility of personal grooming without being prompted by others.

Shopping

Throughout your life, you will have to shop for clothing, household items, food, and whatever else you want or need. People have preferred methods of shopping. As a person with vision loss, your level of vision and comfort with reaching out to others for assistance may help you to identify your preferred method of shopping. The vision professionals VRTs and O&M specialists can assist you. It is critical that you learn the skills and techniques that work best for you. You may love shopping on the Internet or arranging with the store for help from someone if you need it.

Meal preparation

Have you ever cooked using a stove, prepared a lunch, or learned proper table manners? Have you ever prepared a meal completely on your own? Are you familiar with the microwave or stove? Can you pour yourself a drink? Do you know the location of plates, silverware, and cups in your kitchen? Similar to dressing and grooming, cooking and eating skills are essential to master.

If you have never cooked, washed a dish, or cleaned a kitchen, now is the time to learn. If you have never eaten a formal meal using utensils properly, now is the time to learn. Take the time to ask your VRT about learning these skills. Some handy things to know might be:

- The ability to identify salt from pepper
- Identifying items on the plate
- Locating and filling a glass
- Cutting a piece of meat
- Setting the table.

For Parents

Have you allowed your child to prepare a meal? Is your child familiar with the microwave or stove? Can they pour themselves a drink? Teach them the location of necessary items such as plates, silverware, and cups. If you are not comfortable showing your child how to prepare food, you can ask their NYSCB

counselor for VRT services to teach your child these skills.

For Youth

Money identification

You may already have had learned money handling: counting, making change, and identifying bills. If you have not had experience handling money, you might want to ask your TVI or VRT to teach you how to identify money and maintain your daily finances. They include money identifiers, telephone apps, and folding methods with or without the use of a divided wallet or coin purse. Many of the tools are available free for the asking, so make the request, learn what works for you, and make it part of your daily practice. You will learn over time that you work hard for your money and that you never want to lose it or give it away in error! You should also begin to learn about money management skills including budgeting and banking options such as large print bills and talking ATM machines.

Home management

Home management skills include making a bed, sweeping or mopping the floor, dusting, washing dishes, cleaning the bathroom, and laundering your clothes.

Travel

Travel is an important aspect of an independent life. So many things start with travel; it is something we need to master. You may learn to use a prescribed red and white long cane with your orientation and mobility specialist; you may plan to apply for a dog guide but you must have good mobility skills first in order to attend dog school training; some prefer using a human guide especially for complex or dangerous street crossings; some people rely on para-transit vans some time or all of the time (Access a ride); and some people choose to use no tool at all but still safely navigate outdoors.

If you are between age 14 or older, you probably already know how to or have been trained to travel around your neighborhood, school, and places you frequent. What happens however, when you are in a strange place? Do you know how to find and use the rest room? Knowing how to travel within an unfamiliar building is important. Your O&M specialist can assist you in mastering these skills and techniques.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) skills are critical to traveling independently. We cannot get where we need to go if we are not sure where we are. Whether you travel independently, only a route traveler, or an Access-A-Ride user, mastery of travel is critical to success. O&M specialists teach you things like the use of your other senses to know your environment, travel using a prescribed cane, route travel, using land marks, and how to find your way home if you do not know where you are. If your O&M specialist feels you are ready, you can have him/her take you to places you have never been, or ride trains and buses outside of your local neighborhood. The O&M instructor is there to teach and assist you to become more proficient in knowing the space around you and how to travel safely. People with vision loss are much more likely to be working if they have good travel skills.

Assistive technology (AT)

Assistive technology refers to any tool that allows an individual to function beyond his or her limits. Singers use microphones to project their voices throughout a theater because their unassisted voice would not reach to the last row. People who use lenses are using assistive technology to enhance their vision. Babies push a box out in front to help their balance. People who are blind have been using AT for as long as it has been available to access what they cannot see. Fortunately, new and improved AT is constantly being introduced in this modern fast paced world of technology. Again, these are tools that you get to know better over time as you practice using them.

- **Low tech:** These are typically not computer-related and are meant to help you write, take notes, and read books and other hard copy documents. These include slates, styluses and braille writers (if braille is part of your reading tool kit). They also include hand magnifiers, 20/20 pens (for thicker lines when writing), and standard digital voice recorders.
- **High tech** makes use of digital technology. These can include a wide variety of battery operated and or plug in devices such as computers, mobile devices, smart phones, and tablets (including commercial and proprietary note-takers).

For inaccessible mainstream devices there are many hardware and software add-ons that change the devices into accessible High Tech. Some of the

technologies are speech output, screen-magnification, refreshable braille displays, braille embossers, Optical Character Recognition (OCR) or scanning technology, and video magnifiers.

While you are in school, it is their job to evaluate your assistive technology needs. If you are legally blind, before you graduate high school you should also receive an Assistive Technology (AT) evaluation from NYSCB as part of the transition process. It is important to make sure that assistive technology appears on your IPE. Make sure that any recommendations made by your TVI or VRT that are in your IEP are also on your IPE. Make sure that you talk with your TVI about exactly how you use the technology provided for you. These are important things to know as you prepare for the transition AT evaluation.

Remember, when you leave school, the devices you had as a high school student are returned to the school. If you are legally blind it is NYSCB that is responsible to provide you with the technology you need for your next step, either in training or employment. It is critical that you talk with your counselor, explain your history and experience with technology, and how you intend to use it moving forward.

Make sure that you “try before you buy.” You need to be comfortable with the devices being purchased on your behalf.

For Parents

Prior to returning technology items to the school when your child finishes high school, make a list with your child and ask them how useful each device was for them. You will then know what technology your child will still need and what items they do not need, enabling you to help your child have a successful transition.

For Youth

Visual efficiency skills

Low vision is reduced vision or loss of side vision that cannot be corrected with ordinary glasses or contact lenses. Low vision can make daily activities such as reading, writing, watching television, and walking difficult unless it is properly corrected by special magnification or techniques to compensate. A comprehensive low vision examination carefully assesses your current visual status, and identifies

optical aids and adaptive visual techniques. A low vision evaluation typically includes the prescription of glasses specific to your vision and/or low vision devices and lighting that you find helpful. Low vision services help people with vision loss make the most of their remaining vision. No two people see alike even if they have the same diagnosis or acuity.

If you haven't had a low vision evaluation in over two years or your vision has changed significantly, you should ask your NYSCB counselor to see if you are eligible for a new low vision exam.

College prep and college life

You are, or may be preparing to attend college. Congratulations! Attending college is exciting but can also be difficult and will require your full concentration and use of every skill you have learned to this point. Throughout your primary and secondary education, your teachers, counselors, professionals and your family to assist you. However, in college, you are now an adult and will manage your own needs, expecting to know how to acquire your services independently. All colleges are required to have an office for students with disabilities. Staff is able to provide the support you need in many cases, but you must be confident enough to approach them. Offices for students with disabilities WILL NOT contact you to offer their services; you must get in touch with them to register on your own. This will make your college life much more easier, as they now who you are and your needs for a successful academic career.

Each college is different in what information they require, but registering provides them with the ability to seek funding on your behalf and assist you with requesting accommodations. Some of the services the offices for students with disabilities provide are:

- Reasonable accommodation requests: in many cases, the office will have applications that informs the instructor that a student in his or her class has a disability and what accommodation the student needs to be successful in the class. Examples include having an aide in the class to take notes or read what is written on the board or projected, reserving a seat in the front of the class, taping the class, needing additional time for exams or having an aide presents during exams. Reasonable

accommodations can be many things to different people therefore, it is important to know what you need to assist in your success. Only you can determine what is needed.

- Getting you the books you need in an accessible format: you will still have to buy the books, but Section 219 of the education law requires publishers to make all text books available in digital formats such that they can be easily formatted into and provided to students in alternative formats. However, to get a copy of the text in an electronic format, publishers can require the presentation of a receipt of purchase. The best way of dealing with this is to find out what your required text books are as early as possible so that you have enough time to acquire them in the format that you need. It is the college's responsibility to provide you as the student with access to and use of all the same educational tools and information available to all attending students. After all, you are a paying student and/or using your financial aid to attend college. This is another reason to know what works for you, but also understand how reasonable accommodation is interpreted at your college. For example, you might request Jaws®, ZoomText ® or Magic® software be installed on a computer within a lab you frequent, but requesting full campus access on every computer might be considered unreasonable.

Advocacy

The definition of advocacy is the act of speaking or writing on behalf of or in support of a person, place, or thing: (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/advocacy>). For years your parents or guardians have advocated on your behalf as a means of obtaining the best services and supports to meet your needs. They may have listened to the professionals who provided them with information and referrals in the best interest of their child. During your transition from high school into the “real world” you need to learn how to best advocate for yourself.

When you are 18 years old, your parents are no longer permitted to speak for you, without your approval and permission. That means you will have to speak for yourself or sign a release that permits someone else to speak on your behalf. If you get into a college and find you are struggling, it is up to you to advocate for yourself to find assistance.

The Americans with Disabilities Act establishes rights for people with disabilities but they must disclose the need by disclosing their disability. In the US system of civil laws, the right of action falls on the person who has the need. For example, if you do not use a wheelchair, you cannot pursue a case for a wheelchair ramp within a public facility. On the other hand, as a person with vision loss, you can request an accommodation of accessible signage within a public building such as a school, thereby providing you with the ability to identify your class or the restroom. Indoor signage is included in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. However, these laws are not widely understood by the general public or business community. If you find you need more or better access or a specific accommodation, a good place to start is your college's office for students with disabilities. What is self-advocacy? Many of the skills and techniques discussed in this handbook are self-advocacy. Some examples are:

- Knowing what works for you
- Knowing how and who to ask
- Knowing what to ask for to meet your needs.

For Parents

Parents, although you will still be providing support for your child, you should allow them to communicate for themselves. An example of beginning to advocate for themselves would be telling a counselor or a teacher that a device is not working for them and they need something different. Or they could tell a service provider that they would like to learn more advanced skills. Make sure that your child is comfortable explaining what their visual impairment is, or other disabilities they have, and the types of accommodations they need.

For Youth

Tips for Career Exploration

In order to effectively explore careers, it is important to first consider what you have to offer a prospective employer. One way to accomplish this first step is to prepare a self-analysis profile sheet.

The steps in this process are:

Write down your **top ten interests** (the things you most enjoy doing). When you

consider your interests, think broadly and don't limit yourself to simply writing down interests that you think are popular.

- What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
- What do you enjoy doing when you are in school, at home, and in the community?
- What activities bring you the most pleasure?
- Do you like to work on your own or in a group?
- Do you consider yourself outgoing or shy?
- Do you have a special hobby?
- Do you like to be challenged or do you prefer a comfortable known situation?

Write down your **top ten abilities** (the things you are best at doing). Again, think broadly about the skills or abilities that you have and can demonstrate.

- What were your best subjects in school?
- What kinds of activities do others ask you to perform?
- What skills or abilities have you used in the past to accomplish your work or maintain your home or personal space?
- Do you speak a language other than English?
- Have you created something, written a book, written a computer program, developed a power point?

Write down your **top ten values** (what you believe in). Writing about your values can be more difficult than writing about your interests and abilities because the things you believe in are rarely discussed. They are in evidence typically in your behavior and attitude. It is the things that we believe in that often motivate us in work and attract us to others who hold similar beliefs.

Some possible value areas include:

- health
- wealth
- fame
- adventure
- security
- independence

- family and friends
- religion
- giving
- volunteering

Values are important in career exploration because people who believe in the goals of their employers and whose values are in sync with their coworkers' values are more likely to be successful getting and keeping a job than those whose values conflict with others in the workplace.

Write down what you consider your three most critical work-related barriers (difficulties or problems). Consider what is most likely to make it hard for you to go to work. For example, some common barriers are:

- Lack of transportation or limited access to transportation
- Limited or no prior work experience
- Limited vocational training
- Personal difficulties (child care concerns, poor health, family problems, homelessness, etc.)
- Difficulty with communications or travel skills

More information on career exploration can be found on the AFB website: Go to the “Living with Vision Loss” tab on the home page. On the right hand side of the page click on “For Job Seekers”. On the next screen click on “Find a Job”. Lastly click on “Job Seeking for Teens”.

The role of cultural institutions in reinforcing ECC and transition skills

Cultural institutions can play an important role in the social, educational, and career development of young people who are blind or visually impaired. Many organizations have tailored programs to meet the needs of young people with disabilities. As noted earlier in this handbook, one of the nine ECC skill areas concerns recreation and leisure. Skills relating to this area help young people explore new recreational options and make choices about how to spend leisure time.

In addition, participation in cultural activities can improve many other skills.

Complementing classroom instruction and parental support, cultural organizations can help students to develop ECC and other skills in an informal environment bridging education and recreation. Young people with vision loss may participate in school tours to cultural organizations as well as family programs, teen programs, and high school and college internships. All of these experiences support skill development including social interaction, sensory efficiency, self-determination, and job readiness. Talk to your teacher about opportunities to visit cultural organizations through school. Contact New York City.

Government Agencies:

See below a list of Government agencies that provide the funding for services.

New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)

www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh/

The NYSCB was established in 1913 to create and retain a list of blind people in NY and to provide rehabilitation services to blind adults seeking employment. While those initial goals are still in place, the NYSCB present day goals are to assist and insure the quality of life for NYS residents who meet the criteria of legal blindness, age 3 and older with no age cap. Their offices are listed below:

- **Manhattan**
80 Maiden Lane 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10038
Telephone: 212-825-5710
Serves: Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island (VR only)

- **Hempstead**
50 Clinton Street, Suite 208
Hempstead, NY 11550
Telephone: 516-564-4311
Fax: 516-292-7448
Serves: Nassau, Suffolk, Queens (VR and Independent Living Only)

- **Harlem**
163 West 125th Street, Room 209 New York, NY 10027
Telephone: 212-961-4440 Serves: Manhattan and the Bronx
- **Queens Outstation**
Telephone: 718-557-8871

Department of Labor (DOL)

The mission of the New York State Department of Labor is to protect workers, assist people who are unemployed, and connect job seekers to jobs. The Department of Labor administers state and federal laws and regulations.
<http://www.labor.ny.gov/home/>

New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH): Responsible for public health, issuing dog licenses, birth and death certificates. They also offer up to date information about people with disabilities. www.nyc.gov/health

New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE): Offers free, public education from Pre-K to 12th grade
<http://schools.nyc.gov/default.htm> New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/default.asp>

New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

OCFS is dedicated to improving the integration of services for New York's children, youth, families, and vulnerable populations by promoting their development; and to protecting them from violence, neglect, abuse and abandonment. The agency provides a system of family support, juvenile justice, childcare services, and child welfare services that promote the safety and well-being of children and adults. Among the operating principles across all program areas are that services should be developmentally appropriate, family-centered, and family-driven, community-based, locally responsive, and evidence and outcome based. The State Commission for the Blind is also part of OCFS.

New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

New York State has a large, multi-faceted mental health system that serves more than 700,000 individuals each year. The Office of Mental Health (OMH) operates psychiatric centers across the State, and also regulates, certifies and oversees more than 4,500 programs which are operated by local governments and nonprofit agencies. These programs include various inpatient and outpatient programs, emergency, community support, and residential and family care programs.

For questions about mental health services, to find a mental health service provider, or to make a complaint, call OMH Customer Relations toll-free at 1-800-597-8481 or visit <http://www.omh.ny.gov/index.html>.

New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

<http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/>

The New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is responsible for coordinating services for more than 126,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, and other neurological impairments.

Supports and service include Medicaid funded long-term care services such as habilitation and clinical services, as well as residential supports and services, are primarily provided in community settings across the state. In addition to these Medicaid services, OPWDD also provides New York State-funded family support services, which are designed to assist families in providing care for their loved ones who live full-time in their family home, and employment supports, which include ongoing job coaching, job matching, and vocational training.

Social Security Administration (SSA)

<http://www.ssa.gov/>

1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778)

Social Security delivers a broad range of services online at www.socialsecurity.gov and through a nationwide network of over 1,400 offices that include regional offices, field offices, card centers, teleservice centers, processing centers, hearing offices, the Appeals Council, and State and territorial partners, the Disability Determination Services.

Children from birth up to age 18 may get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. They must be disabled and they must have little or no income and resources.

Social Security has a strict definition of disability for children:

- The child must have a physical or mental condition(s) that very seriously limits his or her activities; and
- The condition(s) must have lasted, or be expected to last, at least 1 year or result in death.

http://www.ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits_child_eng.htm

NYC Vision Rehabilitation Service Providers

Catholic Guild for the Blind

1011 First Avenue, 6th Floor

New York, NY 10022

T: 212-371-1011

<http://www.archny.org>

Helen Keller Services for the Blind

57 Willoughby Street

Brooklyn, NY 11201

T: 718-522-2122

F: 718-935-9463

E-Mail: info@helenkeller.org

<http://www.helenkeller.org>

Lighthouse Guild International

15 West 65th Street

New York, NY 10023

T: 212-769-6200

F: 800-284-4422

<http://www.lighthouseguild.org/>

VISIONS/ Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

500 Greenwich St., 3rd Flr.

New York, NY 10013

T: 212-625-1616

Toll Free: 888-245-8333

F: 212-219-4078

E-Mail:

info@visionsvcb.org

www.visionsvcb.org

NYC Youth and Vision Loss Coalition

Participating Agencies

American Council of the Blind of New York (ACBNY)

104 Tilrose Avenue

Malverne, NY 11565

800-522-3303

www.acbny.org

Art Beyond Sight/ Education for the Blind

589 Broadway, 3rd Floor New York, NY 10012

212-334-8720

www.artbeyondsight.org

Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID)

27 Smith Street, 2nd Floor Brooklyn, NY 11201

718-998-3000

www.bcid.org

Bronx Independent Living Services

4419 Third Avenue

Bronx, NY 10457

718-515-2800

www.bils.org

Catholic Guild for the Blind 1011 First Avenue, 6th Floor New York, NY

10022
212-371-1011
www.catholiccharitiesny.org

City Access New York 1207 Castleton Avenue Staten Island, NY 10310
718-285-6548
www.cityaccessny.org

Dominican College
470 Western Hwy
Orangeburg, NY 10962
845-359-7800
www.dc.edu

Harlem Independent Living Center 289 St. Nicholas Avenue, Suite 21 New
York, NY 10027
212-222-7122
www.hilc.org

Helen Keller International 352 Park Avenue, 12th Floor New York, NY 10010
212-532-0544
www.hki.org

Helen Keller Services for the Blind
57 Willoughby Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-522-2122
www.helenkeller.org

Hunter College
695 Park Avenue New York, NY 10065 212-772-4000
www.hunter.cuny.edu

IncludeNYC
116 E. 16th Street, 5th Floor New York, NY 10003
212-677-4650
www.includenyc.org

JP Morgan Chase 277 Park Avenue New York, NY 10017 212-270-6000
www.jpmorganchase.com

Lavelle Fund for the Blind
307 West 38th Street, Suite 2010 New York, NY 10018
www.lavellefund.org

Lavelle School for the Blind
3830 Paulding Avenue
Bronx, NY 10469 www.lavelleschool.org

Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Avenue New York, NY 10028 212-535-7710
www.metmuseum.org

Modest Community Services
88 New Dorp Plaza, Suite 306 Staten Island, NY 10306

718-516-5444

www.modestservices.org

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB)

141 Middle Neck Road

Sands Point, NY 11050

1-800-255-0411

<http://nfadb.org/>

National Federation of the Blind New York (NFBNY)

471 63rd Street

Brooklyn, NY 11220

718-567-7821

www.nfbny.org

New York Deaf Blind Collaborative (NYDBC)

Queens College

65-30 Kissena Blvd, KP 325

Queens, NY 11565

718-997-4856

www.qc.cuny.edu/community/nydbc

NY Institute for Special Education

999 Pelham Pkwy

Bronx, NY 10469

718-519-7000

www.nyise.org

Parents of Blind Children of NY (POBCNY) 471 63rd Street

Brooklyn, NY 11220

718-567-7821

www.Pobcny.blogspot.com

Parent to Parent NY, Inc.
S.I. Special Education Parent Center Institute for Basic Research
1050 Forest Hill Road Staten Island, NY 10314 718-494-4872
Fax: 718-494-4805
www.parenttoparentnyinc.org

Readers Digest Partners for Sight
100 South Bedford Road Mount Kisco, NY 10549 800-877-5293
www.partnersforsight.org

SUNY College of Optometry
33 W. 42nd Street New York, NY 10036 212-938-4000
www.sunyopt.edu

VISIONS Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
500 Greenwich St., 3rd Flr. New York, NY 10013
212-625-1616
www.visionsvcb.org

Tools and Equipment for Learning

American Printing House for the Blind (APH) www.aph.org

Books and Literature

National Library Services (NLS) www.loc.gov/nls/

Audible www.audible.com

Andrew Heiskell Library www.nypl.org/locations/heiskell

Learning Ally www.learningally.org/

Bookshare www.bookshare.org/

