

# **New York City Youth and Vision Loss Coalition School Age (K-12) Handbook**

**NYC Youth and Vision Loss Coalition**

**School Age, K through 12:  
A Guide for Parents Navigating the Educational and Rehabilitation Systems for  
Youth who are Blind and/or Visually Impaired**

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

Revised by: Michexa E. Belizaire  
October 2018

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

Introduction.....	3
<b>The New York State Education Regulations</b> .....	4
<b>Advocacy</b> .....	4
<b>How do Students Become Eligible?</b> .....	4
<b>What is Special Education?</b> .....	8
Transitions During the School Years .....	8
<b>High School Diplomas and Credentials</b> .....	10
<b>Alternate Pathways to Graduation</b> .....	13
<b>Development and Education</b> .....	14
<b>Expanded Core Curriculum</b> .....	14
<b>Transportation:</b> .....	17
<b>Additional Services and Resources</b> .....	18
<b>Government Agencies</b> .....	18
<b>NYC Vision Rehabilitation Service Providers</b> .....	20
<b>NYC Youth and Vision Loss Coalition Members</b> .....	21
<b>Tools and Equipment for Learning</b> .....	25
<b>Books and Literature</b> .....	25
<b>Glossary of terms and Acronyms</b> .....	25
<b>Acronyms:</b> .....	28
<b>Disability Codes</b> .....	29

## Introduction

This School-Age Handbook is one of five handbooks created by the New York City Youth and Vision Loss Coalition to assist young people and their parents, caregivers, and guardians to better understand and cope with their child's vision loss. This coalition is made up of more than thirty agencies, organizations, consumer groups and individuals committed to the success and full equality and access within society for all youth with vision loss. There are many services available designed to best meet their needs and help them grow into productive adults. The purpose of these handbooks is to help you navigate these complex and sometimes confusing systems.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to register or enroll the student in the different services available for youth with vision loss. If the child attended an Early Intervention program or a specialized preschool program, you may already have a network and a good idea of how to find resources. This handbook can serve as a reference of the laws and services. If your child will be receiving service for the first time, this handbook can be a starting point for the development of that all-important network and will provide a list of resources that will assist you and your child now and in the future.

Each public agency must ensure that—

- i. To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and
- ii. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. See: <http://pacer.org/parent>, search for "LRE".

Each student receiving special education will receive the supports and services specific to their needs to enhance their personal learning needs and styles.

### **What are specialized services and supports?**

Supports and services are the tools and assistance that enable students within the special education program to succeed academically. Some of the supports and services that can be provided are alternative formats to the printed word (braille, large print or an electronic format) for students with low or no vision, speech therapy or the use of American Sign Language (ASL) with interpreters for students with hearing loss, or an adjustable desk or an accessible classroom (on a ground level) for students with mobility impairments. Other supports and services can include extended time on tests, testing in quiet rooms, and scribes for note taking and testing.

IDEA also provides the parents/guardians with more options when they feel the student's needs are not being met. As the caretaker and the voice of your child, you have the right to attend Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings as a full-fledged IEP team member. You have the right to request assessments and evaluations

to ensure the student is receiving the proper and adequate service and supports to meet their needs. Also, the IDEA provides parents and guardians with due process rights if they believe that the educational needs of your child are not being met.

A child with a disability who is achieving at grade level may still be eligible to receive services; however, those services can be provided either under IDEA or a 504 Plan, discussed in the next section.

## The New York State Education Regulations

Part 200 of the New York State Education Regulations provides for students with disabilities in the state. Part 201 of the regulations provides provisional safeguards for students with disabilities who are subject to discipline. These sections of the NY Education Regulations can be viewed at [NYS ED](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/lawsregs):

[www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/lawsregs](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/lawsregs). However, the NYS education law is lengthy and most of the language is written to conform to IDEA and Section 504. There are, however, plain language interpretations of IDEA and Section 504 written by many organizations. You can find these interpretations at:

- [The National Resource Center on ADHD:](http://www.help4adhd.org/education/rights/idea)  
[www.help4adhd.org/education/rights/idea](http://www.help4adhd.org/education/rights/idea)
- [Hands & Voices Pop-up IEP:](http://www.handsandvoices.org/articles/education/popup/pop_index.html)  
[www.handsandvoices.org/articles/education/popup/pop\\_index.html](http://www.handsandvoices.org/articles/education/popup/pop_index.html)
- [Wrights Law Pop-up IEP](http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/iep.specfact.popup.htm) : [www.wrightslaw.com/info/iep.specfact.popup.htm](http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/iep.specfact.popup.htm)
- National Federation of the Blind
- Search for “The IEP Process”
- [AFB: Family Connect:](http://www.familyconnect.org/info/education/know-your-rights/idea-what-parents-need-to-know/235)

[www.familyconnect.org/info/education/know-your-rights/idea-what-parents-need-to-know/235](http://www.familyconnect.org/info/education/know-your-rights/idea-what-parents-need-to-know/235)

- [National Center for Learning Disabilities:](https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/how-idea-protects-you-and-your-child)  
<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/how-idea-protects-you-and-your-child>

## Advocacy

Visit YouTube to view a video from the [January 26, 2013 NYC Special Education Conference](#) focusing on Autism, Dyslexia, and Assistive Technology. This video depicts a student who is blind and working on her Master’s degree at St. Johns University. During her presentation, the student focuses on her need to self-advocate and some of the accommodations and Assistive Technology (ATs) she uses to make education more accessible to her needs.

## How do Students Become Eligible?

IDEA requires that an initial evaluation of each student be completed before any specialized services can be received. Parents/guardians may request an evaluation by calling or writing to the director of special education or to the principal of their child's

school. If the school refuses the request for an evaluation, the school must give written notice of the refusal and an explanation of the parents' rights under IDEA. For example, information must be provided which explains the due process rights and how to attain an independent educational evaluation at the school district's expense. The school may request that a child be evaluated based on a teacher's recommendation or observations, or results from tests. The school cannot move forward with an evaluation without the parents' consent; however, school districts do have procedures by which they can override the parents' refusal. All written information provided to the parents must be presented in their format of choice such as language translation, braille, large print, etc. For more information visit: the [NYC Department of Education](#).

### **Evaluations:**

Evaluations must be completed by a team of professionals who represent all areas related to the suspected disability. No single procedure, test, or finding can be used to determine the need for special services. Some examples are: Comprehensive Visual Evaluation, Functional Visual Assessment, Psycho-educational, Psychosocial and Learning Media Assessment, to name a few. You can visit the [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/evaluation\)](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/evaluation) to learn more about the evaluation process.

As a parent or guardian, you have the right to dispute the results of the evaluation. You also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation by an examiner who is not employed by or involved with the school. The school may provide this referral or parents may select another evaluator. The school may pay for this evaluation or it may initiate a hearing to show that its evaluation was appropriate. If the original evaluation is judged to be appropriate, parents still have the right to obtain an independent evaluation at their own expense. In either case, the results of the independent evaluation must be considered in making any educational program decisions for the student.

### **Individualized Educational Program (IEP)**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a document that outlines all the services and supports that each student receiving special education services will receive during each year of his/her primary and secondary (K-12) education and the numbers of hours per week these services will be provided. Such services can include but are not limited to, the provision of braille/orientation and mobility (O&M) instruction and Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) services (See section ECC in this handbook). The IEP should be reviewed at least once a year at the annual review. Additionally, parents can request a review of the IEP at any time by writing to the school or one of the offices of the Committees on Special Education (CSE). For a list of committees (CSEs) or more information, click [here](#).

It is recommended that your request be mailed using certified return receipt so that you have proof that the letter was received.

For more information on the IEP process, you can download: [A Shared Path to Success: Family Guide to Special Education Services for School-Age Children](#) from the

NYC DOE website. It is available in alternative languages including Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Creole and Russian.

We would recommend you view a blank IEP prior to your first IEP meeting by visiting the NYSED webpage. This blank IEP is your starting point as a parent. You can view it, print it, write on it, and take it to the meeting. However, when viewing the document, always keep in mind that the district uses pull down menus as their starting point and the IEP team members have the ability to write in services that are not listed on the form. To view a blank NYS, IEP and other required documentation visit [NYSED/IEP](#).

To get an idea of some of the types of services that should be listed in the IEP of a visually impaired child see the information in the following links:

- [Pop – up IEP \(www.nfb.org search for “Pop-up IEP”\)](#)
- [IEP's for Parents of Blind or Visually Impaired Children \(www.wonderbaby.org/articles/ieps-parents-blind-or-visually-impaired-children\)](#)
- General pop-up IEP ([www.handsandvoices.org/articles/education/popup/pop\\_index.html](#))
- [Is My Child Getting a Quality VI Program? \(www.tsbvi.edu/seehear/summer04/gpvi.htm\)](#)

### **The IEP Team**

The following people are required to attend the Annual IEP Review: the General and/or Special Education Teacher, the District Representative, the parent, and the student if she or he is age fifteen or older. At a requested review, an initial IEP review, and a reevaluation, a school psychologist is also required to attend. Additionally, the parent and child can invite whomever they want to accompany them to the IEP meeting. A request for a Parent Member and/or a School Physician must be submitted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting: read more [here](#).

### **Purpose of the IEP**

The purpose of the IEP is to ensure that students who receive special education services receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) while having their personal educational needs met. It is important that all accommodations and services be documented on the IEP to ensure that the student receives the services, as the completed IEP represents the contracted deliverables (what services your child is required to receive) in accordance with state and federal regulations. The IEP acts as the contract between the student, represented by the parent/guardian, and the school professionals. A well written IEP can be easily monitored, maintained, and updated as the student moves through the grades.

The IEP is updated each year as the student's abilities and goals change. At the annual IEP meeting it is important to understand that it is your responsibility to ensure the student's access to a quality and challenging education. If you leave the decisions up to the school, unmonitored, important points may be neglected or overlooked during the

process. Therefore, we are providing a list of points to keep in mind while you prepare for the IEP meetings:

- Bring a copy of the most recent IEP to the meeting.
- Attend in person and, if you can, bring another knowledgeable person with you.
- Make a note of the date, time and location of the meeting and the names and titles of those people that will be attending.
- When the meeting begins, list the names and titles of those who are present.
- If your child is fifteen years or older, have him or her attend.
- Have a prepared list of questions to ask (you may want to use a blank IEP).
- Always take notes during the meeting. If you have brought another person, have them take notes as well.
- Thoroughly review the check boxes: can the student carry the technology home, will O&M be provided in the school and for the most common routes of travel to and from the school?
- Can you as the parent receive training on the use of the Assistive Technology being provided to the student?
- Never sign a final notice of recommendation unless you agree with all of the recommendations the team is proposing and the recommendations are complete.
- If you disagree with any part of the final notice of recommendation, you can request to reconvene an IEP meeting. If this fails, you have the right to due process which can be mediation or an impartial hearing.

Based on his or her needs, your child will be placed in one of the following environments specified within the IEP:

- General Education
- General Education with Related Services
- General Education with Special Education Teacher Support
- Collaborative Team Teaching/Integrated Co-Teaching
- Special Class Services
- Day and Residential Placement
- Home/Hospital Instruction

For more information visit

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/FamilyResourceCorner.htm>, there you can review, download or read the [NYC Family Guide to Special Education Services](#).

### **Related and Contractual Services:**

[Related and Contractual Services](#) are services provided to students from providers outside of the NYC education system. Contracted agencies are issued a transmittal requesting service when there are no Department of Education therapists or providers available to serve students. A Related Service Authorization (RSA) is issued only when a contracted agency cannot provide the service. The RSA allows a family to secure an independent provider paid for by the Department of Education.

Related Services are developmental or remedial and include other supportive services that are required to assist a child with a disability so that he or she benefits from an instructional program. Your child's related services may change from preschool to

school-age as his or her needs change with age. These may be the only special education services given to your child or they may be provided along with other special education services such as special class services. The following related services might be recommended:

- Adaptive Equipment
- Counseling
- School Health Services
- Interpreting Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Orientation and Mobility
- [Speech/Language Therapy](#) [Educational Vision Services](#) (EVS) [Hearing Education Services](#)

For more information visit:

[http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/D75/related\\_svcs/default.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/D75/related_svcs/default.htm)

## What is Special Education?

Special education can be pursued at any age or grade level. Under the laws stated above, all children have the right to an education. Special education was established to provide the necessary resources, tools, and accommodations bridging the gaps and promote each student's learning ability in accordance with their unique needs. For more information on Special Education in NYC visit the [NYC/DOE/SE](#).

All students have the right to a FAPE; that right also provides you and your child with choices. You can choose to have your child attend school within your local district. You can choose to have the student attend a District 75 Special Education school. a list of [District 75 Schools](#) is available on the Department of Education website. you can also choose to have the student attend a specialized school for blind children. Currently there are three local schools: the [New York Institute for Special Education](#), the [Lavelle School for the Blind](#), and the [Guild School](#). As is the case whenever you have options, there are pros and cons to each. Thoroughly investigate and visit each of the options to evaluate which school can work best to meet the needs of your child.

## Transitions During the School Years

Like most government-sponsored programs, education, or in this case Special Education, has a process. There are forms to complete and documents to provide, but primarily, it is important to know what to expect for the next step and the timetable for submitting materials. While entering and during attendance of primary and secondary (K-12) school years, your student will experience at least four transitional periods: entering Kindergarten from home or preschool, entering middle school, entering high school, and finally the transition to higher education or employment. In this section, we will provide you with information and guidance so that you may better

understand these processes and accessing the information. Visit the [NYC Department of Education](#) for applications to and information about public education programs.

1. Entering **Kindergarten**: This is a big step for you and your child, as they are turning five and leaving toddlerhood. Because this is an important transition, the NYC Department of Education runs a Turning Five program for parents that consist of: orientations, educational seminars, interviewing, and surveying of schools prior to making your selection. The whole process is available for review at [NYC DOE Transitioning to Kindergarten](#). Click on "[Transitioning to Kindergarten: Information for Families](#)" at the bottom of the list.
2. Transition to **Middle School** for New York City Public Schools includes an application process which all parents and students should participate in. Applications are done by community school districts: visit the [NYC DOE](#) website for more information. If your child is in District 75, they will have a separate admissions process. All the non-District 75 schools are required to offer middle school Information Sessions. You should attend as many as possible because different middle schools have different types of admission processes. Some of the different processes are: screened/audition, screened/language, test based, limited unscreened, unscreened, and zoned. The middle school application deadline is usually the second week in December.
3. Transition to **High School** for New York City Public Schools includes an application process which allows you to apply for any High School throughout New York City. District 75 has its own application process. Students who's IEP recommends a specialized District 75 program must enroll through the District 75 Enrollment. Students moving from a District 75 middle school to a community high school should participate in the [High School Admissions process](#). However, prior to attending a community high school, these students will need to have an IEP meeting to develop a new IEP that recommends special education services in a community high school. [Read more](#) at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/enrolling/highschool/default.htm>.
4. For non-District 75 schools, each borough has its own High School fair in addition to the citywide High School fair. Individual schools hold open houses for parents to visit the schools. There are also workshops that the Department of Education provides on the topic of applying to High School and families are encouraged to attend both the fairs and the workshops. You may choose up to 12 programs and it is advisable to choose as many as possible. The application deadline is usually the beginning of December. For more information visit NYC DOE at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/default.htm> and click on "High Schools" or read:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/default.htm>.

Under "Tell Me More About" select the first choice: "Family Guide to Special Education Services for School-Age Children"

**5. Transition out of High School:** This transition is of great consequence as the young student who began this journey at five is now beginning his/her transformation into adulthood. Because this transition is so important, the discussion is mandated to begin at the age of 14, three to seven years prior to graduation. The transition sections of the IEP must be completed at the IEP meeting during the school year in which the student turns 15 and subsequently every year after that. The youth should consider getting [working papers](#) at the ages of 14, 16 and 18, as each certificate has progressively more responsibility. They should also consider participating in internships, summer jobs, work experiences, or work based learning experiences in school. Students should know if and when they are taking standardized tests, e.g. the Regent Exams, towards a high school diploma. The youth should start to plan their next steps: entering the workforce, attending college, or obtaining further training. For more information and resources about transition and the preparation for transition visit:

- a [NYC DOE:](#)  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/Graduation/transition-services/default.htm>, NYSED:  
[www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/randg.htm](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/transition/randg.htm), [US DOE:](#)  
<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>, under "Browse Major Topics" click on:  
"Secondary Transition" or: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/trans.index.htm>

## High School Diplomas and Credentials

There are five high school diplomas & credentials available to students in New York City:

1. Regents Diploma
2. Advanced Regents Diploma
3. Local Diploma
4. Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential
5. Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC)

If the student is in a mainstream setting and has a Regents path on the IEP, at some point it becomes time to evaluate the credits towards a Regents Diploma. To complete the Regents requirements, all students must attain 44 credits and pass five Regents with a grade of 65 or higher (English, U.S. History, Global Studies, Math, and Science).

For an Advanced Regents Diploma all students must attain 44 credits and pass eight Regents, the five listed above, plus an additional math, science, and a language other than English. These are the only two nationally recognized diploma options available to students attending the NYC school system.

The following options are NY State and City recognized diplomas that require additional education to attend college:

- The local diploma is only for students with disabilities and requires the attainment of 44 credits and passage of the 5 basic skills Regents exams with a 55. The student can obtain a score of 45-54 on the Global, U.S. History, or Science regents as long as the student receives a 65 or higher on another Regents exam. The score of 45-54 cannot be in Math or English. Only one low score may be accepted.
- The Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential certifies that a student is ready for entry level work. This is only for students with disabilities who are taking standardized exams. It is not a diploma by itself. It can be issued with or without a diploma.
- The Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC) is only for students with disabilities who are taking the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). It is not a High School Diploma and it is replacing the original intent of the IEP Certificate/Diploma which was also not a High School diploma. It was originally called the IEP Certificate until the 1980's when "certificate" was changed to the "IEP Diploma".

For more information see:

- a [NYC DOE](http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/Graduation/Diploma/default.htm)  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/Graduation/Diploma/default.htm>,
- b NYSED: [www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/gradrequirements/home.html](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/gradrequirements/home.html)
- c [Advocates for Children of NYC](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org) at  
[www.advocatesforchildren.org/get\\_help/guides\\_and\\_resources](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/get_help/guides_and_resources)  
under the heading "Students With Disabilities/Fact Sheets" click on: "High School Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities"

The following chart summarizes the NYS Diploma/Credential Requirements:

### Types of High School Diplomas

Diploma Type	Available to	Requirements
Regents	All Student Populations	5 Regents exams with scores of 65+  <a href="http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#regentsdiploma">http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#regentsdiploma</a>
Regents with Advanced Designation	All Student Populations	8 Regents exams and the NYC Language Other Than English (LOTE) exam with scores of 65+  <a href="http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#regentsAD">http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#regentsAD</a>
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  <a href="http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#assessment">http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#assessment</a>

### Non-Diploma High School Exiting Credentials

Credential Type	Available to	Requirements
-----------------	--------------	--------------

<p>Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential</p>	<p>Students with disabilities other than those who are assessed using the NYS Alternate Assessment (NYSSA)</p>	<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><a href="http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/cdlearn/">http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/cdlearn/</a></p>
<p>Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC)</p>	<p>Students with severe disabilities that are assessed using NYSAA</p>	<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><a href="http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1006.html">http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1006.html</a></p>

**Alternate Pathways to Graduation**

- [Transfer schools](#) or vocational schools: for student’s ages 15 through 21 who have attended at least one year of high school: visit [NYC DOE](#):
- Or read about alternative ways to graduate at:

- <http://www.nyls.edu> Search for “NYC DOE Alternative ways to graduate”
- <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/SpecialPrograms/AlternativesHS/default.htm>
- Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs) are evening academic programs designed for high school students who are behind in credit, considering dropping out, or because of adult responsibilities in the daytime. Program is for students’ ages 17.5 through 21 who have at least 17 credits and are in fifth year or more of high school. <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/SpecialPrograms/AlternativesHS/YoungAdult/default.htm>
- Other options are available and all can be discussed with a school guidance counselor or the Transition Linkage Coordinator (TLC). The transition coordinator at each school ensures appropriate transition and transition IEP planning for students. The coordinator also works closely with other school personnel to initiate, implement and monitor transition services within the school. The TLC for District 75 students is Natalie McQueen, (212) 802-1568.

Read more at:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/District75/Departments/Transition/ParentGuide/default.htm>

## Development and Education

For over 170 years, blind children and young adults have been attending specialized residential schools where they received a solid academic education. Today that educational setting includes above average exposure to the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). (See the timeline in the Youth and Vision Loss General Handbook.) Because the K - 12 education can span up to 17 years, children enter the process out of toddlerhood and by the end of their schooling they have developed into young adults who can act on their own behalf.

Refer to many of the childhood development books that are available to track and monitor the development of your child. Although your child may have vision loss in addition to other disabilities, their development will follow a track similar to the development of every other child. It is important to follow your child’s progress, meet with the teachers, attend the annual IEP meetings, and know what the IEP recommends and whether or not your child is receiving the full range of listed services while progressing through their developmental milestones. All children grow and develop into young adults; grow with them and support them through the process.

## Expanded Core Curriculum

It is the position of DVI (Council for Exceptional Children Division on Visual Impairments) that children and youth with visual impairments require carefully designed instruction in independent living skills, facilitated by individuals who understand the impact of visual impairment on the acquisition of general information and learning. Development of independent living skills is vital for full integration in society. Specialized assessment and instruction must be provided. In addition, sufficient time, resources,

and support must be available to teachers of students with visual impairments to allow them to address all the educational needs of their students, including those related to independent living skills. Teachers, parents, and administrators must work together in these efforts to achieve the promise of equal opportunity, which is the overarching goal of education.

The purpose of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is to provide blind and visually impaired students with the compensatory and functional skills required for becoming a successful adult along with acquiring the knowledge outlined in the Core Curriculum. The ECC has nine (9) specific subtitles that provide a means for the visually impaired child to attain this “incidental” knowledge.

The nine (9) areas of concentration are:

1. **Compensatory or functional academic skills:** concept learning, spatial understanding, and speaking and listening skills. With no visual feedback, the child must receive alternative affirmations of their improvement throughout their education.
2. **Orientation and mobility:** learning their everyday environments and learning to travel as independently as possible. Space is a concept learned by viewing the surroundings. Children with low or no vision must be taught to investigate the space surrounding them. For this, the school should be using the services of a Certified Orientation and Mobility (O&M) instructor.
3. **Social interaction skills:** methods of interpreting the social interactions: body language, smiling etc. Body language is learned by watching others; therefore, a child with low or no vision must be taught to interpret the language of others and the art of projecting their feelings and opinions without misleading others.
4. **Independent living skills:** money management, time management, organization, food preparation, and personal hygiene. These tasks are commonly acquired skills that are observed and then attempted by our children as they grow. Try to remember how you learned to brush your teeth or pour milk. Children with low or no vision must be actively taught these basic skills that non-blind children can learn on their own through watching and imitating.
5. **Recreation and leisure skills:** physical fitness. The next time you watch a game on television or on the sidelines, close your eyes and think about what you might know about the game if you could not see the players on the field. Then, think about how you might explain the players’ actions and reactions to the game being played. Youth with low or no vision must be taught the physical aspects of the game to understand it and to decide whether or not to play. As with Independent living skills (above), games and sports are activities that children without visual impairments observe before they participate.
6. **Career education:** basic work skills and career exploration. Although this is something all children should receive, the IDEA and the

Rehabilitation Act provide for these services in the school setting to assist youth who are visually impaired to better understand their strengths and limitations.

7. **Use of assistive technology (AT):** learning braille, using a Closed Circuit TV (CCTV), note-taker, magnifier, Smart Pen, etc. These and other assistive devices are your child's access to all other media; having a mastery of how to use these devices is critical to his or her development. Having the opportunity to see various devices and the ability to select those that meet your child's personal needs means your child will use them more efficiently and for a longer period of time. However, the use of these products must be taught and practiced for greater success.
8. **Sensory efficiency skills:** using other senses, learning how to identify, detect, and protect one's belongings and surroundings. With vision loss, stepping outside to check the weather or choosing the bakery over the butcher is a different process. Not having the ability to look out the window or make a selection by reading the sign, youth with low or no vision must be taught to interpret the environmental cues. Do you know the scent of rain or snow? Have you ever noticed the scents of a flower shop compared to a butcher, baker card store or pizzeria? Children can be taught the difference between the scent of rain or snow. They can learn to distinguish between the scents of a florist, bakery, card store, or pizzeria.
9. **Self-determination:** building self-esteem. A fist-pump of approval or the unstated "no" might not be seen by a child with vision loss. Young people learn quickly how to interpret the eyes of their parents or other adults. The child who cannot see those eyes to have the positive reinforcement from a coach or teammates or the quiet guidance of a parent or teacher, must find other means of self-satisfaction to build determination and esteem.

To read more about the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) visit:

- a. [American Foundation for the Blind \(AFB\): www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/professional-development/teachers/expanded-core-curriculum/the-expanded-core-curriculum/12345](http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/professional-development/teachers/expanded-core-curriculum/the-expanded-core-curriculum/12345),
- b. [Paths to Literacy: www.pathstoliteracy.org/expanded-core-curriculum#overview](http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/expanded-core-curriculum#overview)
- c. [Perkins's Scout: www.perkinselearning.org/scout/expanded-core-curriculum-ecc](http://www.perkinselearning.org/scout/expanded-core-curriculum-ecc).

### **How are the Student's Rights Protected?**

The laws listed above provide the parent/guardian and the child with various levels of protection:

- 1 First, when an issue arises, start at the source in your attempt to resolve the problem. Approach the teacher or the TVI, or request a meeting with the Principal.
- 2 Next, you can request an IEP meeting to insure the IEP team members are all in full understanding of the goals and expectations of the student: [read more](#) at:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/SEP/default.htm> Click on: "Step 5-The Review".

- 3 If you are unable to resolve the issue at the local level, Special Education Mediation is available. Special Education Mediation is a form of due process. It is conducted by trained mediators who work for an outside organization and not for the Department of Education. It involves you, a representative from the Department of Education and an impartial mediator. Each borough has a mediation center. All decisions made by the mediator are binding. Mediation Centers are overseen by the New York State Dispute Resolution Association. For more information visit [Special Education Mediation](#)
  - a. <http://nysdra.org/?page=SpecialEd>
  - b. <http://nypeace.org/special-education-mediation> at the bottom of the page the following link will lead you to a PDF version of their mediation manual: "New York Peace Institute Manual of Guidelines and Procedures on Special Education Mediation".
  
- 4 Impartial Hearings are another form of due process. This process involves you and/or a lawyer or advocate, an attorney from the department of education and an impartial hearing officer. Witnesses can be called to testify by both parties. Decisions made by the hearing officer are final; [read more](#) at: <http://schools.nyc.gov> search for "Impartial Hearing" or visit [www.advocatesforchildren.org/get\\_help/guides\\_and\\_resources](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/get_help/guides_and_resources) under Students With Disabilities/Guidebooks click on "Guide to Special Education Impartial Hearings".

However, your protection under the law is always dependent on the evidence. Good record keeping is essential to proving your case. Some tips for maintaining good records are:

- Be sure to put all correspondence in writing.
- Always use certified return receipt for mailed correspondence.
- Maintain a file of all past records (eye reports, IEPs, report cards, correspondence, telephone notes, and progress reports). It is better to maintain this file as your child progresses through school than attempt to recreate it if a problem arises.

### **Transportation:**

Schools under the Department of Education must provide transportation for children residing in New York City who are in the special education program. Transportation can include a yellow school bus or public transportation with a MetroCard and is determined by each child's Individual Education Program (IEP). Transportation is provided from the child's home to school and back home. To have the child dropped off at a different location than where they are picked up, a Request to Change a Special Education Student's After School Drop-off Location form must be completed and approved. The drop-off location must be within the child's home borough: Visit the [NYC DOE Transportation for students attending Special Education](#) at

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Transportation/ServicesandEligibility/DoortoDoor/default.htm> for more information.

## **Additional Services and Resources**

In doing the research for the handbooks, we found information that was published less than a year ago but already outdated. Although we have done our due diligence to provide the latest information and resources available, we cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information. Therefore, whenever possible, we have made every attempt to include a webpage or URL address providing you with access to the source of the information. As you find updated or more accurate information, please let us know so that we can update the handbooks.

## **Government Agencies:**

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

### **New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)**

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cb>

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. [www.labor.ny.gov/home](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](http://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>

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)**

[www.omh.ny.gov](http://www.omh.ny.gov)

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 [www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/contact](http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/contact)

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

[www.opwdd.ny.gov](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. It provides services directly and through a network of approximately 700 nonprofit service-providing agencies, with about 80 percent of services provided by the private nonprofits and 20 percent provided by state-run services.

Supports and services, which 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. Largely because of intensive treatment needs, about 1,200 people (down from approximately 30,000 in the 1970s) continue to reside in institutional settings such as developmental centers, secure facilities, and residential schools for children jointly operated by OPWDD and the New York State Education Department. 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)**

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

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

Social Security delivers a broad range of services online at 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.

[www.ssa.gov/disability/disability\\_starter\\_kits\\_child\\_eng.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits_child_eng.htm)

## **NYC Vision Rehabilitation Service Providers**

### **Catholic Guild for the Blind**

1011 First Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10022

T: 212-371-1011

[www.archny.org](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](mailto:info@helenkeller.org)

[www.helenkeller.org](http://www.helenkeller.org)

**Lighthouse Guild International**

250 West 64th Street  
New York, NY 10023T: 212-769-6200  
F: 800-284-4422  
[www.lighthouseguild.org](http://www.lighthouseguild.org)

**VISIONS/ Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

500 Greenwich St., 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr.  
New York, NY 10013  
T: 212-625-1616  
Toll Free: 888-245-8333  
F: 212-219-4078  
E-Mail: [info@visionsvcb.org](mailto:info@visionsvcb.org)  
[www.visionsvcb.org](http://www.visionsvcb.org)

Blindline® ([www.blindline.org](http://www.blindline.org)) is a NYS information and referral website and center staffed by blind interns (888) 625-1616

## NYC Youth and Vision Loss Coalition Members

**American Council of the Blind of New York (ACBNY)**

104 Tilrose Avenue  
Malverne, NY 11565  
800-522-3303  
[www.acbny.org](http://www.acbny.org)

**Art Beyond Sight/ Education for the Blind**

589 Broadway, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10012  
212-334-8720  
[www.artbeyondsight.org](http://www.artbeyondsight.org)

**Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID)**

27 Smith Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
718-998-3000  
[www.bcid.org](http://www.bcid.org)

**Bronx Independent Living Services**

4419 Third Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10457  
718-515-2800

[www.bils.org](http://www.bils.org)

**Catholic Guild for the Blind**

1011 First Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
212-371-1011

[www.archny.org](http://www.archny.org)

**City Access New York**

1207 Castleton Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10310  
718-285-6548

[www.cityaccessny.org](http://www.cityaccessny.org)

**Dominican College**

470 Western Hwy  
Orangeburg, NY 10962  
845-359-7800

[www.dc.edu](http://www.dc.edu)

**Harlem Independent Living Center**

289 St. Nicholas Avenue, Suite 21  
New York, NY 10027  
212-222-7122

[www.hilc.org](http://www.hilc.org)

**Helen Keller International**

352 Park Avenue, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10010  
212-532-0544

[www.hki.org](http://www.hki.org)

**Helen Keller Services for the Blind**

57 Willoughby Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
718-522-2122

[www.helenkeller.org](http://www.helenkeller.org)

**Hunter College**

695 Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10065  
212-772-4000

[www.hunter.cuny.edu](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu)

**IncludeNYC**

116 E. 16th Street, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10003  
212-677-4650  
[www.includenyc.org](http://www.includenyc.org)

**Lavelle Fund for the Blind**

307 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 2010  
New York, NY 10018  
[www.lavellefund.org](http://www.lavellefund.org)

**Lavelle School for the Blind**

3830 Paulding Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10469  
[www.lavelleschool.org](http://www.lavelleschool.org)

**Metropolitan Museum of Art**

1000 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
New York, NY 10028  
212-535-7710  
[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

**Modest Community Services**

88 New Dorp Plaza, Suite 306  
Staten Island, NY 10306  
718-516-5444  
[www.modestservices.org](http://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 63<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11220  
718-567-7821  
[www.nfbny.org](http://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](http://www.qc.cuny.edu/community/nydbc)

**NY Institute for Special Education**  
999 Pelham Pkwy  
Bronx, NY 10469  
718-519-7000  
[www.nyise.org](http://www.nyise.org)

**Parents of Blind Children of NY**  
(POBCNY)  
471 63rd Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11220  
718-567-7821  
[www.Pobcny.blogspot.com](http://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](http://www.parenttoparentnyinc.org)

**Readers Digest Partners for Sight**  
100 South Bedford Road  
Mount Kisco, NY 10549  
800-877-5293  
[www.partnersforsight.org](http://www.partnersforsight.org)

**SUNY College of Optometry**  
33 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10036  
212-938-4000  
[www.sunyopt.edu](http://www.sunyopt.edu)

**VISIONS Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired**  
500 Greenwich St., 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr.  
New York, NY 10013

212-625-1616  
[www.visionsvcb.org](http://www.visionsvcb.org)

**Whitney Museum**  
99 Gansevoort St.,  
New York, NY 10014  
(212) 570-3600  
[www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)

## Tools and Equipment for Learning

American Printing House for the Blind (APH)  
[www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

Independent Living Aids  
[www.independentliving.com](http://www.independentliving.com)

MaxiAids  
[www.maxiaids.com](http://www.maxiaids.com)

LS&S  
[www.lssproducts.com](http://www.lssproducts.com)

## Books and Literature

National Library Services (NLS)  
[www.loc.gov/nls](http://www.loc.gov/nls)

Andrew Heiskell Library  
[www.nypl.org/locations/heiskell](http://www.nypl.org/locations/heiskell)

Learning Ally  
[www.learningally.org](http://www.learningally.org)

Bookshare  
[www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org)

Audible  
[www.audible.com](http://www.audible.com)

## Glossary of terms and Acronyms

**Early Intervention (EI):** Early intervention is a program for babies and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Children must be under the age of 3 years old with an established developmental delay or confirmed disability as defined by the State.

**Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC):** assists the family with developing the right plan for their child.

**Educational Vision Services (EVS):** provides instruction in utilizing braille, Nemeth Code, large print, optical and non-optical low vision devices and other skills that are necessary to attain academic, social, vocational and life adjustment skills, literacy and acquisition of information using tactile, visual, and auditory strategies.

**Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):** A required component of IDEA, FAPE mandates that school districts provide access to general education and specialized educational services. It also requires that children with disabilities receive support free of charge as is provided to non-disabled students. It also provides access to general education services for children with disabilities by encouraging that support and related services be provided to children in their general education settings as much as possible.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the national law that provides children with disabilities access to Special Education Programs prescribed under Federal Law.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** The IEP spells out the child's individual needs and goals for the school year while documenting and describing the supports and services the child will receive throughout each school year.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):** An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) documents and guides the early intervention process for children with disabilities and their families. The IFSP is the vehicle through which effective early intervention is implemented in accordance with Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It contains information about the services necessary to facilitate a child's development and enhance the family's capacity to facilitate the child's development. Through the IFSP process, family members and service providers work as a team to plan, implement, and evaluate services tailored to the family's unique concerns, priorities, and resources.

**Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE):** a written plan which describes the youth's employment goal and the steps the youth will take to achieve that goal. This document is similar to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) the youth might have had during the primary and secondary education process. The IPE is developed in accordance with the interests and abilities of each youth and reflects their choices in identifying an employment goal and the services to be provided to enable them to reach their goals. It may be helpful for the youth, as well as parents and guardians, to learn more about vocational rehabilitation services, different types of employment, and their own capabilities before the plan is written.

**Opticians** are trained in filling prescriptions for eyeglasses, determining the proper eyeglass frames, and adjusting frames for proper fit. In some states, opticians may be licensed to fit contact lenses. Opticians often work closely within the same location as an optometrist or ophthalmologist, or an optician may have an independent practice.

**Optometrist** is a Doctor of Optometry (O.D.). To become an optometrist, one must complete pre-professional undergraduate college education followed by 4 years of professional education in a college of optometry. In optometrist school, the student receives education primarily about the eyes and receives a comprehensive education regarding the rest of the body and systemic disease processes. The graduate is then eligible to become licensed by a state as an optometrist. Some optometrists also do further postgraduate residency in a subspecialty of optometry such as low vision rehabilitation, primary eye care, geriatric optometry, pediatric optometry, family eye care, contact lenses, sports vision, or vision therapy. ([www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org))

**Ophthalmologist** is a medical doctor who is specialized in eye and vision care. In order to become an ophthalmologist, acquisition of an M.D. or a D.O. (doctor of osteopathy) degree is necessary following the completion of college. After 4 years of medical school and a year of internship in general medicine, every ophthalmologist spends a minimum of 3 years in a university and hospital-based residency specializing in ophthalmology. During residency, the eye M.D. receives special training in all aspects of eye care, including prevention, diagnosis, and medical and surgical treatment of eye conditions and diseases. ([www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org))

**Orientation & Mobility Specialist (O&M):** Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialists teach people who are blind or visually impaired the skills and concepts they need in order to travel independently and safely, indoors and outdoors, at home, in the school, worksite, classroom, and/or in the community and around New York City. Certification is available through the national Academy for the Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals ACVREP. There is no NYS licensure for O&M professionals so it is important to ask if the O&M specialist is certified. ([www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/orientation--mobility-specialist.html](http://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/orientation--mobility-specialist.html))

**Occupational Therapist (OT):** Occupational therapists are NYS licensed health care professionals who assist patients of all ages with disabilities and chronic health conditions so they can participate in all activities of daily life as independently as possible. ([www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org))

**Physical Therapist (PT):** Physical therapists are NYS licensed health care professionals who help patients improve or restore mobility and physical function. PTs assess each individual and develop a plan, using treatment techniques to promote the ability to move, reduce pain, restore function, and prevent disability. In addition, PTs work with individuals to prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness- and wellness-oriented programs for healthier and more active lifestyles. ([www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org))

**Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA):** a term used by the federal Social Security Administration (SSA) defined as: A person who is earning more than a certain monthly amount (net of impairment-related work expenses) is ordinarily considered to be engaging in SGA. The amount of monthly earnings considered as SGA depends on the nature of a person's disability. The Social Security Act specifies a greater SGA amount for statutorily legally blind individuals. Federal regulations specify a lower SGA amount for non-blind individuals. Both SGA amounts generally change with changes in the national average wage index.

**Teacher of Children with Visual Impairment (TVI):** TVIs are certified by NYS and provide educational services to students of all ages and ability levels, as well as adaptive skills needed for success inside and outside of the classroom. TVIs plan effective instruction and develop a clear understanding of the unique complex issues facing students with vision loss and their parents. ([www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/teacher-of-students-with-visual-impairments.html](http://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/teacher-of-students-with-visual-impairments.html))

**Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (VRT):** Vision rehabilitation therapists offer individuals of all ages who are blind or visually impaired instruction, service plans, and equipment they need to lead successful, productive, and independent lives. They provide specialized methods or adaptive techniques for efficient and effective communication, home management, medication management, child care, leisure activities, and coping with the demands of daily living as a child, youth, or adult with vision loss.

The broad sphere of communication includes Braille, computers, handwriting, listening and recording technology, low-vision technology, mathematical calculation and keyboarding. Instruction in daily living skills includes food preparation, personal management, home management, home mechanics, leisure and recreation activities, and orientation and movement in familiar indoor environments.

Certification is available through the national Academy for the Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals ACVREP. There is no NYS licensure for VRT's so it is important to ask if the VRT is certified.

(<http://vrt.aerbvi.org/>)

## Acronyms:

ACB American Council of the Blind  
ADA Americans with Disabilities Act  
ADL Activities of Daily Living  
ADT Assistive Technology Device  
AFB American Foundation for the Blind  
AYP Adequate Yearly Progress  
CPSE Committee on Preschool Special Education  
CSE Committee on Special Education

ECC	Expanded Core Curriculum
ECDC	Early Childhood Developmental Center
EI	Early Intervention
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment
NAPVI	National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments
NCEO	National Center on Educational Outcomes
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NFADB	National Family Association for Deaf-Blind
NFB	National Federation of the Blind
NYCDOE	New York City Department of Education
NYDBC	New York Deaf-Blind Collaborative
NYSCB	New York State Commission for the Blind, previously known as:
CBVH	Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped
O&M	Orientation and Mobility
OPWDD	NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
OT	Occupational Therapy
PT	Physical Therapy
SGA	Substantial Gainful Activity
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income (SSA program)
TVI	Teacher of Children with Visual Impairment
VCB	VISIONS Center on Blindness formerly: Vacation Camp for the Blind
VRT	Vision Rehabilitation Therapist
YAI	National Institute for People with Disabilities

## Disability Codes:

The below coding is most commonly found in the legal documents: the IFSP and the IEP.

AU Autism  
Deaf Deafness  
DB Deaf-Blind  
ED Emotional Disturbance  
HI Hearing Impairment  
ID Intellectual Disability  
LD Learning Disability  
MD Multiple Disabilities  
OHI Other Health Impairment  
OI Orthopedic Impairments  
SLI Speech or Language Impairments  
TBI Traumatic Brain Injury  
VI Visual Impairment

1 Source: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr104.html>