



Southern Minnesota Education Consortium

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SMEC SERVICES FOR LEARNERS WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

SMEC is dedicated to providing families, and the seven consortium school districts, the assistance and support in identifying the educational support services required to meet the unique needs of each learner with a severe visual impairment. Students from birth to 21 years of age will be provided services by a licensed teacher of the blind and visually impaired throughout all SMEC school districts.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR VISION SERVICES?

According to Minnesota Administrative Rule 3525.1345, "Visually impaired" means a medically verified visual impairment accompanied by limitations in sight that interfere with acquiring information or interaction with the environment to the extent that special education instruction and related services may be needed. A student with visual impairments and a functional need may be considered for special education under the Blind – Visually Impaired (BVI) category.

A. Documentation needed from licensed eye specialist for special education qualification:

_____ Visual acuity of 20/60 or less in better eye with best conventional correction

1. Estimation of acuity for difficult to test pupils
2. For pre-kindergarten, measured acuity must be significantly deviant from what is developmentally age appropriate.

_____ Visual field of 20 degrees or less or bilateral scotomas

_____ Congenital or degenerative condition: _____

B. Documentation of functional evaluation of visual abilities, at least one area evaluated by a teacher of the visually impaired.

_____ 1. Limited ability in accessing program appropriate education media without modifications.

_____ 2. Limited ability to access full range of program appropriate materials or media without accommodating actions (changes in posture, body movement, squinting, focal distance, etc.)

_____ 3. Variable visual ability due to environmental factors (contrast, color, movement, or weather) that can't be controlled.

_____ 4. Reduced or variable visual ability due to visual fatigue or eye condition factors.

HOW CAN I REFER A STUDENT?

- Referral is made from the district's Child Study Team or Early Childhood Service.
- Use family release to receive the learner's most recent clinical eye report.

- Medical eye report (as in Part A from Page 1) will be reviewed and a functional vision assessment will be scheduled, if needed.

WHAT SERVICES CAN BE PROVIDED?

Based on the learner's eye condition and functional vision assessment, the following services may be provided:

- evaluation, focusing on functional vision
- Interpretation/clarification of clinical eye reports
- social skills instruction
- braille instruction
- daily vision skills instruction with emphasis on visual needs
- self-advocacy skills
- low vision instruction (magnifiers, etc.)
- orientation and mobility
- transition/vocational assistance
- support services for families
- assistive technology
- deaf/blind services

Vision Resource Teacher may also make recommendations regarding adaptations/modifications needed within the school and classroom, consult with school and classroom staff, present in-service regarding vision impairments, assist with special programs or vocational transition and coordinate with the State Vision Network and State services for the Blind. Collaboration with local teams is emphasized. Services for learners who are deaf-blind are provided with resources from teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing and the State Network for Deaf Blind Services.

For further information:

- SMEC website: <http://www.smec-isd6083.com/>

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