

ABOUT VISION IMPAIRMENT



Vision impairment is a permanent loss of vision in both eyes that affects daily functioning and cannot be corrected with glasses, medication or surgery. It's estimated that vision makes up 80% of all information received by learners, therefore learning will be more challenging for children and students with vision loss.

Each learner with vision impairment is a unique individual and adjustments to their educational program and learning environment should be tailored to their needs. When you understand the impact of vision impairment on the individual learner, you'll be better able to adjust to their needs.

Signs of a vision problem

The most common signs of a vision problem may include:

- getting very close, tilting the head, or closing one eye when looking at TVs, computer screens or books
- blinking or squinting more than usual, especially when looking at the board, or outside in the sun
- complaining about headaches, blurred or double vision
- bumping into objects or struggling with hand-eye coordination
- having trouble learning to read or concentrating, or falling behind at school
- having red or watery eyes or frequently rubbing eyes.

Educational implications

Learners with vision impairment have different strengths and capabilities and the level of support required depends on the type, extent and onset of their vision loss. All learners require:

- achievable expectations of their learning
- a safe, supportive and inclusive environment that promotes and encourages independence
- encouragement to advocate for the ways they learn best
- support to develop social inclusion through positive friendships and a sense of belonging
- explicit verbal instructions to be aware of what's happening and when
- examples that are modelled and scaffolded
- equal access to learning experiences.

Strengths of learners with vision impairment

The strengths of learners with vision impairment can be:

- verbal memory
- verbal communication skills
- auditory discrimination skills.



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for Education

VISION IMPAIRMENT ADJUSTMENTS



EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS



Functional vision assessment

A functional vision assessment (FVA) looks at the impact of the learner's vision and visual field in the learning environment, and can provide you with information on:

- room illumination and lighting requirements
- recommended print size or the use of electronic documents
- the use of colour and contrast
- extra time requirement due to reduced reading speeds.

Arrange an FVA through South Australian School and Services for Vision Impaired (SASSVI) or Kilparrin Teaching and Advisory School and Services.



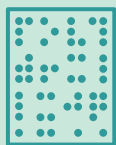
Independence and self-determination

Learners with vision impairment need to identify their own interests, strengths, motivations, challenges and needs. Provide support to learners in asking for help when required and allow them to politely decline an offer of help when not needed.



Orientation and Mobility

Orientation and Mobility training helps a learner with vision impairment understand their body's position in space and how to move safely and efficiently. Plan experiences that help learners interact with their environment and learn about daily routines and structures.



Alternative learning materials

- Provide learning materials in the recommended media format such as large print, Braille, audio, electronic texts.
- Let the learner know if you plan on using videos, slides or PowerPoints, and discuss ways the learner can access them using the learners own assistive technologies.
- Use real objects where available.
- Provide dark lined paper, dark pencils or black pens or other assistive technologies where recommended.



Communication

- Verbalise information that is written on the board.
- Give verbal rather than written feedback and check for understanding.
- Refer to all learners and visitors by name when you speak to them.