

DEAF-BLINDNESS

1. Definition

Deaf-Blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs by addressing any one of the impairments. A child with deaf-blindness shall have at least one of the following:

- (1) a child who meets criteria for Deafness/Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment;
- (2) a child who is diagnosed with a degenerative condition or syndrome which will lead to Deaf-Blindness, and whose present level of functioning is adversely affected by both hearing and vision deficits; or
- (3) a child with severe multiple disabilities due to generalized central nervous system dysfunction, and who exhibits auditory and visual impairments or deficits which are not perceptual in nature.

2. Evaluation

The characteristics identified in the Deaf-Blindness Definition are present.

Evaluation Procedures

- a. Evaluation of Deaf-Blindness shall include the required Evaluation Procedures for Hearing Impairment/Deafness and Visual Impairment and include the following:
 - (1) Deafness/Hearing Impairment Procedures
 - (a) audiological evaluation;
 - (b) evaluation of speech and language performance;
 - (c) school history and levels of learning or educational performance;
 - (d) observation of the child's auditory functioning and classroom performance; and
 - (e) documentation, including observation and or assessment, of how Deafness/Hearing Impairment adversely impacts the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment.
 - (2) Visual Impairment Procedures
 - (a) Eye exam and evaluation completed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist that documents the eye condition with the best possible correction and includes a description of etiology, diagnosis, and prognosis of the Visual Impairment evaluation;
 - (b) a written functional vision and media assessment, completed or compiled by a licensed teacher of students with visual impairments that includes:

- i. observation of visual behaviors at school, home, or other environments;
 - ii. educational implications of eye condition based upon information received from eye report;
 - iii. assessment and/or screening of expanded core curriculum skills (orientation and mobility, social interaction, visual efficiency, independent living, recreation and leisure, career education, assistive technology, and compensatory skills) as well as an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs, appropriate reading and writing media, and current and future needs for Braille; and
 - iv. school history and levels of educational performance.
- (c) documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Visual Impairment adversely affects educational performance in the classroom or learning environment.
- b. Evaluation of a child with a suspected degenerative condition or syndrome which will lead to Deaf-Blindness shall include a medical statement confirming the existence of such a condition or syndrome and its prognosis.
- c. Additional evaluation of Deaf-Blindness shall include the following:
 - (1) expanded core curriculum skills assessment that includes Deafness/Hearing Impairment;
 - (2) assessment of speech and language functioning including the child's mode of communication;
 - (3) assessment of developmental and academic functioning; and
 - (4) documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Deaf-Blindness adversely impacts the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment.

Evaluation Participants

Information shall be gathered from the following persons in the evaluation of Deaf-Blindness:

- (1) the parent;
- (2) the child's general education classroom teacher;
- (3) a licensed special education teacher;
- (4) a licensed physician or audiologist;
- (5) a licensed speech/language teacher or specialist;
- (6) an ophthalmologist or optometrist;
- (7) a licensed teacher of students with Visual Impairments; and
- (8) other professional personnel, as indicated (e.g., low vision specialist, orientation and mobility instructor, school psychologist).