

Orientation & Mobility (O&M)

The TDSB Vision Program provides Orientation & Mobility instruction to students with blindness or low vision. Orientation & Mobility Instructors provide mobility training (with or without a white cane or dog guide) to help students learn how to travel safely, confidently, and as independently as possible within the school and local community. All training and recommendations for travel are based on assessed need (O&M Assessment) and is within the student's level of ability.



All students with visual impairment are educated in the regular classroom unless a specialized placement is needed for some other special education need.

Levels of Support

There are 3 levels or “tiers” of support for students with blindness or low vision. The level of support is based on the results of the FVA/FTA conducted by the TDSB Vision Program. Levels of support may change over the years as students develop greater independence and adaptive skills.

Tier 1 (Monitor Support):

Primarily consultative support to school personnel and the student. Tier 1 support involves 2 - 3 visits per year by an Itinerant Vision Teacher.

Tier 2 (Program Support):

A combination of consultative support to school personnel and some direct instruction to the student. Tier 2 support involves 1 visit per month by an Itinerant Vision Teacher.

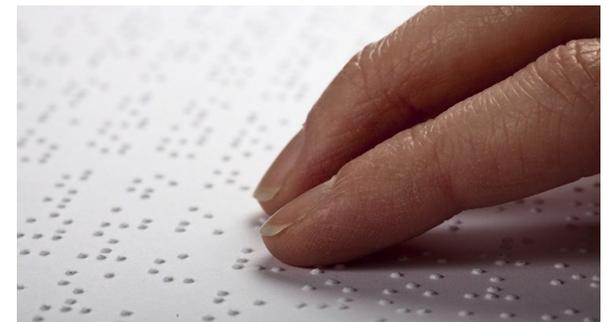
Tier 3 (Direct Instruction):

Direct teaching of alternative curricula that are disability-specific (e.g., braille, visual efficiency). Tier 3 support involves weekly support by an Itinerant Vision Teacher.

Special Education



Blind/Low Vision (BLV) Program



The Blind/Low Vision Program is an educational itinerant support service provided to TDSB and TCDSB schools through the TDSB Special Education & Support Services Department. Itinerant Vision Teachers and Orientation & Mobility Instructors teach students (JK - grade 12) with blindness and low vision disability-specific skills (e.g., braille, visual efficiency) and support school personnel by recommending visual, tactile, and/or auditory accommodations and teaching strategies.

Admission Criteria

1. **Medical Report** signed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist that includes the eye condition/ visual diagnosis and visual acuity of 20/70 or worse after best correction in the better eye, or a visual field of less than 20°.
2. **Functional Vision/Tactile Assessment** conducted by the TDSB Vision Program.

Referral Process

Referral of students who meet the medical criteria above (#1) may be initiated by a parent/guardian, teacher, principal, family doctor, ophthalmologist or optometrist.

Contact the Vision Program office (416) 395-2145 to request a referral package. Within the TDSB, an Access to Regional Special Education Supports form should be submitted: <https://secure.tdsb.on.ca/survey/survey.asp?id=1448> A referral package will be sent to the student's home school principal (or parent, if the child is in preschool).

Referral Package

The referral package contains the following items:

1. Letter to the student's home school principal that outlines the referral procedure.
2. Consent to the Release of Confidential Information form and instructions.
3. Functional Vision/Tactile Assessment Consent Form
4. Referral Information Form (Parent)
5. Referral Information Form (Teacher/Counsellor)
6. Eye Examination Report (blank). Note: A copy of an existing medical report can be submitted in lieu of this form.

Return all completed/signed forms to:

TDSB Vision Program
38 Orfus Rd., Room 158
Toronto, Ontario M6A 1L6
Phone: (416) 395-2145
FAX: (416) 395-3711

Attention: Vision Program Coordinator

Functional Vision/Tactile Assessment

Once the referral forms have been received by the Vision Program, a team of Itinerant Vision Teachers will schedule a Functional Vision Assessment (FVA) or Functional Tactile Assessment (FTA) at the child's school. Preschool children are typically assessed in their preschools or childcare centres.

The assessment examines how a student uses his or her vision, hearing and/or sense of touch to access the curriculum. Questions such as these may be addressed in the FVA or FTA report:

- Can the student see the chalkboard from the back of the classroom?
- Does the student need enlarged print materials?
- Is braille the best reading medium for the student?
- Is the student a good candidate for assistive technology?