TEACHING THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
A guide for Parents and Teachers

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What is Blindness?

- Visual acuity worse than 20/400, with the best possible correction, or a visual field of 10 degrees or less.
  - Legally Blind - central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with the best correction, or a diameter of visual field that does not subtend an angle greater than 20 degrees at its widest point.
Types of Visual Loss

- Totally blind - people who cannot tell light from dark
- Partially blind - some sight that may be useful for certain purposes
- Congenitally blind - people who were born unable to see
- Acquired blindness - people lose their sight because disease or injury
TYPES OF VISUAL LOSS, CONT’D

- Economically blind- cannot see well enough to have a job that requires sight

- Educationally blind- cannot see well enough to be educated without special materials or methods

- Vocationally blind- loss of sight that prevents them from continuing to work at their present job
**History of Educational Services**

- **1784**: Valentin Huay opened the first school for the blind in Paris. He also began designing the first system of communication (raised bumps—beginning of Braille).
  - Louis Braille took over work and designed the embossed six-dot cell system that is used today.

- **1821**: Samuel Gridley Howe opened the first center for Blind students in the United States.
  - New England Asylum for the Blind-known today as, The Perkins School for the Blind
1832: The New York Institute for the Blind, and the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind were founded.
   • These were boarding schools, where children from wealthy families would attend classes.

1872: The first day classes for visual disabilities began in Scotland.
   • The Scottish Education Act required blind students to be educated with their sighted classmates.

1900: Frank Hall developed a mechanical writer.
CHALLENGES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

- Socially Impaired
  - Might have a difficult time relating to other classmates
  - May be unable to imitate social behavior or understand non-verbal cues

- Creates obstacles to a child’s independence

- Freedom of movement
  - Difficulties getting around the classroom
  - Issues with personal space
AIDS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

- Braille
- Books on Tape
- Optacon
  - It forms an enlarged image of each letter
- Optical Scanners
  - It reads printed material aloud
- Hoover Cane
  - Can be partnered with mobility systems
- Trained Seeing Eye Dogs
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI)

- Students ages 6-21 who are blind, deafblind, and including those with additional disabilities are eligible for services on campus
- There are additional services for parents of children with visual impairments
- http://www.tsbvi.edu/
RESOURCES

- http://www.teachblindstudents.org/
  - They have programs that you can take to get certified to teach blind students. Also offers trainings and programs to help refresh skills.


- http://www.uni.edu/walsh/blindresources.html


- http://www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/icp/ivisual.pdf
  - Ways you can develop a curriculum for teaching blind students
WORKS CITED

