

# KNOW BEFORE YOU KNOCK

Every child and family has unique aspects of their situation, experience, and diagnosis. This page is intended to provide a general overview, but is not attempting to represent every situation or child you encounter. Every family deserves your expertise to assess and adapt your prior knowledge. This resource is best viewed electronically.

## DEFINITION

"Visual impairment means, even after correction, a child's ability to use their vision adversely affects their development, education, and/or independence" (1)

## PREVALENCE

1 in 17 young children, or a total of  
Total: 706,400 (0.8%) of children  
in the US. (3) (4)

There is a higher risk of vision loss  
among Hispanic/Latino and Black  
individuals than among White  
individuals (5)

## CONSIDERATIONS

### THAT MAY IMPACT SERVICES

- Individuals who are deafblind generally have some usable vision and some usable hearing. It is not possible to know by looking at the person what their needs are. (Jill Underly ppt 2024)
- 30% of children with visual impairments under the age of 3 have brain-based visual impairments. Approximately 80% of children with visual impairments under the age of 3 have additional disabilities, especially neurological (Cerebral Palsy, Seizures/Infantile Spasms, etc.) (8)

## LANGUAGE

### TO USE/AVOID

Ok to use: Deafblind, Blind, Visually Impaired, Low Vision. Follow each family's lead in how they refer to their child.

Avoid: Vision loss, many children have congenital visual impairments and are born with the sight they will have (they don't actually lose anything)

## LANGUAGE

### TO KNOW

#### Eye Care and Vision Professionals:

Optometrist (OD), Ophthalmologist (MD),  
Optician, Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI),  
Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS or O&M),  
Vision Therapist

[Difference between an Ophthalmologist,  
Optometrist and Optician](#)

## NATIONAL/STATE ORGS

[Resources – Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#)

"works in partnership with local education agencies and other service providers, to serve as a statewide network of professionals, resources, materials and equipment to promote quality professional practices directed toward ensuring excellence in educational programming and expanded opportunities for students who are blind or visually impaired." (2)

## TOP RESOURCES

- [Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project](#)
- [Eye Terms and Conditions: American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus \(AAPOS\).](#)
- [American Printing House for the Blind ConnectCenter](#)
- [What is CVI?](#)- Perkins School Resources
- [National Federation of the Blind](#): Parents of Blind Children

## DIFFERENCES

### THAT MAY BE PRESENT

- Vision is developmental. Delays in vision development and/or visual impairment can impact all other areas of development
- "Decreased sensitivity to bright lights
- Absent or delayed blink reflex to threat or light
- Slowed development of intentional social smile (consider attachment implications)
- Nystagmus (rhythmic beating of eyes)
- Delayed or absent eye contact
- Failure to fixate on objects or familiar faces
- Lack of awareness of own hands
- Absence of goal-directed hand and/or arm movements
- Clumsiness with crawling
- Holding objects close to the face
- Problems navigating curbs or steps" (6)
- Strabismus (eyes turn inward or outward after 7 months of age) (7)

## SUPPLEMENTARY TESTS

### THAT COULD BE USED OR SEEN IN MEDICAL RECORDS

- [Functional Vision Screening Tool: Children 0 to 3 Years of Age - Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- Ocular Coherence Tomography (OCT)
- [Electroretinogram \(ERG\).](#)
- [Visual Evoked Potential \(VEP\).](#)
- [Neonatal Assessment Vision European Grid \(NAVEG\).](#)
- Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) tests
- Low Vision Evaluation
- Functional Vision Assessment

## REFERENCE LIST

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