

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI)
Assessment, Services, and Personnel Preparation to Support Students with CVI and their Families

Resolution Number 2018-001

Authors' Explanatory Notes

Purpose of the Resolution:

- Ensure that all children with visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities, have equitable opportunities for education.
- Identify areas for professional development for teachers of children with visual impairment including those with additional disabilities.
- Identify resources to update education practices
- Promote assessment and intervention practices for children with neurologically-based visual impairments including cerebral and cortical visual impairment that align to both the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* and multiple *Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)* Policy Guidance documents issued to clarify assessment, eligibility, and education for children who are blind or have visual impairments (2000, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017).
- Advocate for comprehensive and holistic assessment processes that include the use of formal and informal assessments, without requiring practitioners to use of any one assessment tool.
- Advocate that assessments be carried out by professionals trained in assessment and educational practices for children with all visual impairments, including those with neurological visual impairments and additional disabilities.

We hope this Resolution helps parents and school teams advocate for comprehensive evaluations that are carried out by professionals trained in assessment and educational practices for children with visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities.

How to Read the Resolution Statements:

There are two parts to this resolution, the *whereas* statements and the *be it resolved* statements.

The “Whereas” statements: Call out issues of concern.

The “Be it resolved” statements: List the commitments required to remediate the concerns listed in the *Whereas* section of a resolution

“Whereas” statements explained:

The “whereas” statements identify the authors’ concerns. These concerns prompted the Resolution.

#	Resolution Statement	Rationale
1	Whereas, to receive a truly free and appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all children and youth with visual impairment, including those who may have additional disabilities, should be properly evaluated by teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) who are equipped with and use multiple assessment tools to determine such students' individual sensory channels, functional vision, and learning media needs;	<p>Students should be assessed by personnel who are qualified to carry out assessments in that area of concern, as required by IDEA and further clarified in the OSERS Policy Guidance Letters (2000, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2000: OSERS Policy Guidance Letter on Educating Blind and Visually Impaired Students ● 2012: Secretary Duncan’s response to Senator Patty Murray (July 13, 2012) ● 2013: OSEP’s Dear Colleague Letter on Braille (June 19, 2013) ● 2014: Policy Letter: Michelle Kotler regarding the criteria used by some states to identify children with “visual impairments or blindness,” as that term is defined under Part B of IDEA (November 12, 2014) ● 2017: Policy Memo: Eligibility Determinations for Children Suspected of Having a Visual Impairment under IDEA (May 22, 2017)
2	Whereas, these types of evaluations are especially critical for the large and growing population of students who experience neurological visual impairment	Without proper assessment, the complex needs of students with CVI cannot be identified.

	(frequently otherwise known as cortical or cerebral visual impairment; hereinafter, children with CVI)	
3	Whereas, TVIs must also have access to resources and participate in professional development opportunities in order to keep up with the changes in the diagnosis and assessment of CVI and appropriate interventions to minimize its effect	We promote ongoing professional development and training of TVIs to stay current and be knowledgeable about CVI.
4	Whereas, whenever possible, assessments conducted by TVIs should include (as called for in IDEA) a variety of research-based, data-driven, and validated tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information	Per IDEA (Federal Law <i>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</i>), and further clarified in multiple federal policy documents, educational teams "must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child."
5	Whereas, there are currently no assessments available to TVIs that adequately address all the possible effects of CVI and/or meet the exacting scientific standards for research-based, and validated evidence	<p>The claim that an assessment or intervention is "research-based" is a term defined by the Institute of Educational Sciences' (IES) What Work's Clearinghouse (WWC). As of August 2018, the field of visual impairment and blindness does not have any assessments that meet the WWC criteria used to determine "research-based" assessment or intervention.</p> <p>While Newcomb (2010) did conduct a reliability study of the 1st edition of the CVI Range, the 2nd edition has updated scoring without new validity or reliability studies. There are no published validity or reliability studies on the current version of the CVI Range (2nd edition) or on the significance of scoring differences.</p>

6	Whereas, frameworks for functional vision and learning media assessments commonly used by TVIs today are nevertheless based upon recommended practices in the field	<p>TVIs use a variety of formal and informal methods for assessment as part of an evaluation process.</p> <p>The functional vision assessment (FVA) and learning media assessment (LMA) are frameworks of areas for evaluation by trained teachers of children with visual impairments (see OSERS Policy Guidance documents). There are many FVA and LMA “assessments” and resources available commercially. These materials provide recommendations for assessment areas, tools and strategies, and report templates.</p>
7	Whereas, there are multiple assessment tools, frameworks and strategies available for use by TVIs when conducting a comprehensive assessment of the visual functioning and sensory channels of children with CVI, the use of which serve to support of IDEA’s mandate for the use of multiple assessment tools	<p>No single assessment tool captures all the information needed to develop a comprehensive intervention program. In addition to the CVI Range, the following assessments are examples of tools that can inform the work of TVIs:</p> <p>Cavézian C., Vilayphonh M., De Agostini, M., Vasseur, V., Watier, L., Kazandjian S., Laloum, & L., Chokron, S. (2010), Assessment of visuo-attentional abilities in young children with or without visual disorder: Toward a systematic screening in the general population. <i>Research In Developmental Disabilities</i>, 31, 1102–1108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2010.03.006</p> <p>Garcia-Ormaechea, I., Gonzalez, I., Dupla, M., Andres, W., Pueyo, V. (2014). Validation of the Preverbal Visual Assessment (PreViAs) Questionnaire. <i>Early Human Development</i>, 90, 635- 638.</p>

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2014.08.002>

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<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8749.2008.03175.x>

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<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dmcn.13320/epdf>

Salavati, M., Krijnen, W.P., Rameckers, E.A.A., Looijestijn, P.L., Maathuis, C.G.B., van der Schans, C.P., Steenbergen, B. (2015) Reliability of the modified Gross Motor Function Measure-88 (GMFM-88) for children with both Spastic Cerebral Palsy and Cerebral Visual Impairment: A preliminary Study. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 45-46, 32-48

Salavati, M., Waning, A., Rameckers, E.A.A., van der Steen, J., Krijnen, W.P., van der Schans, C.P., & Steenbergen, B. (2016). Development and face validity of a cerebral visual impairment motor

		questionnaire for children with cerebral palsy. Child: care health and development 43, 1, 37-47. doi:10.1111/cch.12377
8	Whereas, the CVI Range by Christine Roman-Lantzy is but one assessment designed to provide information on the visual and sensory functioning of children with CVI	We recognize and agree that the CVI Range is a useful assessment tool that should be included in a TVIs toolkit. It should be one of the possible tools used in a comprehensive and holistic assessment process.
9	Whereas, the Perkins-Roman CVI Range Endorsement and other continuing education opportunities on the Perkins eLearning website are valuable resources to teachers and others who wish to hone and test their skills in the administration of the CVI Range	The CVI Range Endorsement and other continuing education opportunities offered by Perkins eLearning are valuable. Teachers and other therapists who need more training to effectively serve children with CVI should have the option to use these resources.
10	Whereas, some proponents of the CVI Range and the related endorsement are seeking to have policymakers and state and local education agencies require the use of the CVI Range and to require TVIs to obtain the endorsement as a condition on such TVIs' provision of special education to children with CVI	While IDEA and OSERS Policy documents are clear that children with visual impairments must receive both a functional vision assessment and a learning media assessment, the specific assessment tools should be selected based on the needs of each individual student.
11	Whereas, a TVI's failure to obtain specifically branded continuing education opportunities, even if such opportunities are marketed as an endorsement, and completion of professional training in an assessment tool alone is no indicator of a provider's preparedness to conduct appropriate comprehensive assessment or provide appropriate special education programming to children with CVI or any other students with visual impairment	Completion of training with one tool to assess a student with CVI does not mean that the practitioner can conduct a comprehensive assessment of a child with CVI, nor does it mean that the practitioner knows how to recommend and provide appropriate accommodations or educational services to that child.

12	Whereas, university teacher preparation programs are addressing the needs of children with CVI and their graduates have beginning-level competencies and skills, which can be honed through experience, mentoring, and additional professional development	<p>Personnel preparation programs prepare their graduates to assess and provide services to students with both ocular and neurological visual impairment. Accredited programs meet national and state teaching standards similar to those published by the <i>Council of Exceptional Teaching</i> (CEC Standards, 2018)</p> <p>New graduates of teacher preparation programs are <i>beginning teachers</i> and need experience, mentoring, and continuing professional development for their skills to be considered truly proficient.</p>
13	Whereas, some states allow for individuals to circumvent university preparation teacher training and permit licensure of TVIs via (a) minimal coursework or a (b) test-only credential and functionally allowing individuals without adequate training in assessment of children with ocular and/or neurological-based visual impairment, or program development to assess, plan, and deliver services to children with visual impairments including those with CVI	We stand <i>against</i> pathways that allow people to gain TVI licensure without training in a comprehensive university program.
14	Whereas, individuals gaining TVI licensure via a test-only modality are not prepared to assess, plan, and deliver services to students with visual impairment, including those youngsters with complex disorders, such as CVI	People who gain TVI licensure without completing a full university training program are not fully qualified or prepared to serve students with CVI.
15	Whereas, it is imperative that parents and guardians of such students with CVI have accurate, complete, and unbiased information about the professional training and qualifications possessed by TVIs today who are	We support the need for parents to know about the qualifications of the TVIs who work with their children.

	evaluating and developing individualized education programs (IEPs) to meet such students' unique needs	
16	Whereas, knowledge about neurological visual impairment and children with CVI is evolving rapidly, and a rich body of research and related developments from around the world promises to further enlighten and change educational practice over time	The knowledge base about CVI is growing rapidly; there is more information available to expand our understanding and expand our toolkits for assessment and instruction.
17	Whereas, requiring the use of a single specific assessment today, or the express or implied imposition of brand-specific endorsement requirements on TVIs beyond state licensure and adherence to nationally recognized TVI standards puts students at risk of being denied the most up-to-date assessments and services and needlessly locks state and local educational agencies into practices and purported credentials with a limited shelf life that do not align with federal and state law and policy	Educators must not be satisfied that they have THE answer; they must always keep an open mind to review new evidence that guide changing practices, especially in a field where information from research and development activities is expanding rapidly. Particular assessment tools and instructional strategies are not typically defined in law for this reason.

“Be it resolved” statements explained:

The “be it resolved” statements list the commitments required to address the aforementioned concerns and meet the assessment and educational needs of children with visual impairments as well as provide support to their families.

#	...Now therefore be it resolved that this organization (Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired):	Rationale
1	Encourage personnel preparation programs training new and pre-service TVIs and O&M specialists to include coursework in assessment tools, learning needs, and	AER members who voted to accept this resolution agree that TVIs and O&M specialists must be knowledgeable about the unique assessment and

	<p>instructional methodologies to support the diverse needs inherent in the heterogeneous population of students with visual impairment, including those students with neurological-based vision impairment and those with additional disabilities</p>	<p>learning needs of children with CVI who may or may not have additional disabilities. To prepare highly qualified personnel, university programs must include coursework, assignments, learning opportunities, and competency assessments related to the unique needs of all persons with neurological-based vision impairments. National teaching standards have been updated to reflect this content (CEC, 2018).</p>
2	<p>Encourage parents and teachers in all states to educate lawmakers and call for the abolition of “test-only” pathways to TVI licensure and require rigorous university preparation as the only option to gain licensure as a TVI</p>	<p>We call upon parents and other professionals working with children with visual impairments to help us advocate for comprehensive training and full credentialing of TVIs through accredited, rigorous university programs.</p>
3	<p>Encourage current and new TVIs to pursue continuing education and/or professional development opportunities and training to keep abreast of the ever-changing practices related to students with neurological visual impairment in order to effectively meet the unique needs of children with CVI</p>	<p>Current and new TVIs must maintain professional development to keep up with new practices. We encourage all practitioners to actively engage in professional development opportunities such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● eLearning resources such as webinars, webcasts, training modules and courses ● Workshops, seminars, and trainings available through professional or special-interest conferences ● Resources, materials, and mentoring opportunities available from professional agencies and special-interest organizations that offer vision-impairment specific professional development

4	<p>Encourage state chapters and divisions of AER to advocate for and promote the appropriate use of multiple comprehensive assessments, as mandated by IDEA, thereby honoring all students' unique needs for appropriate and reasonable accommodations that recognize the diversity of functional vision, learning media, and literacy characteristics inherent in the heterogeneous population of students with visual impairment, including those students with neurological-based vision impairment and those with additional disabilities</p>	<p>Collaboration with colleagues is important to ensure children with visual impairments receive fair and comprehensive assessments to determine appropriate interventions.</p>
5	<p>Urge the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, and state and local educational agencies to protect the integrity of comprehensive assessments conducted by TVIs both by rejecting calls that expressly or implicitly require the use of any single specific assessment tool or technique with specific populations of students with visual impairment and by refusing to impose specifically-branded in-service training requirements on state-licensed TVIs (prepared in accordance with nationally recognized TVI standards; Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI) as a precondition for providing special education to children with CVI or any other students with visual impairment</p>	<p>Every child has unique needs, despite sharing the same diagnosis with another child. Different experiences impact growth and learning. It is critical that teachers have access to a variety of assessment tools and the opportunity to select those tools according to the strengths and needs of each unique child.</p> <p>We commit to upholding IDEA and the multiple OSERS Policy documents that have supported the need for comprehensive assessment of children with visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities.</p>
6	<p>Call upon the U.S. Congress to promptly enact the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act, which, among other critical policy objectives, would significantly increase investment in quantitative and qualitative research, allowing our field to identify evidence-based practices in assessment and instruction for children with CVI and all</p>	<p>Professionals in the field of blindness and visual impairment recognize the urgent need for teachers, families, and children to have access to evidence-based assessments and interventions, including those that meet the criteria to be called <i>research-based</i>. One barrier to this goal is availability</p>

	<p>other students who are blind, have low vision, are deafblind, or may have these conditions and additional disabilities</p>	<p>of funds to conduct the much-needed research.</p> <p>The Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act calls upon the U.S. Congress to provide funding for the types of validity and reliability studies that we need to conduct on the assessment tools and intervention practices used in our field.</p>
7	<p>Shall disseminate this resolution online and using any other appropriate means to make it widely available to parents, TVIs, and all other stakeholders to ensure national, state and local communication of these matters</p>	<p>Draft and final Resolution versions are posted online and shared with the intention of supporting parents' and stakeholders' advocacy efforts.</p> <p>The final version of <i>Assessment, Services, and Personnel Preparation to Support Students with CVI and their Families</i> and this guidance document should be disseminated to families, teachers, administrators, and stakeholders to ensure a clear understanding of facts and related issues.</p> <p>If helpful, please share this guidance document that was prepared to ensure that readers understand the rationale underlying this resolution.</p>