

Florida Outreach Project for Children and Young Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind (FOP)

University of Florida
P.O. Box 100234
Gainesville, FL 32610
(352) 273-7530
(800) 667-4052
Fax: (352) 273-8539
info@deafblind.ufl.edu

The FOP is funded through the U.S. Department of Education for the purpose of providing technical assistance to families and educational teams who support students with deaf-blindness. The project is designed to build the capacity of the local school districts to serve these students. A person-centered teaming approach is used and strengths of staff and students are used in designing strategies. Specific services include the following:

- Technical assistance and support (on-site visits with follow-up)
- Lending library (books, videos, manuals)
- Training for staff and families (locally or at statewide conferences)
- Mentor teacher program
- Identification of eligible students

This document was developed by the Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.



Florida Department of Education
Gerard Robinson, Commissioner
306280



Florida Department of Education

Overview

In Florida, boys and girls with special learning needs who meet specific eligibility criteria are considered to be **students with disabilities**. The special help they are given at school is called **exceptional student education**, also known as **ESE** or **special education**. Students with disabilities who have visual impairments, hearing impairments, or dual-sensory impairments (deaf-blindness) are considered **sensory impaired**.

Families and schools work together to determine the educational needs of these children and plan appropriate special education and related services for them.

When a student is suspected or known to have a sensory impairment, a comprehensive evaluation will be completed. After the evaluation, the school holds a meeting called an eligibility staffing. The parents and the rest of the team at the eligibility staffing discuss the information collected about the child. Then the team determines whether the child is eligible for ESE services. If the child has been determined eligible to receive ESE services, the parent is asked to give written consent for the child to receive such services. The next step is to hold a meeting to write an individual educational plan (IEP). The IEP team determines which special services and supports the child needs to make progress and achieve his or her annual goals.

The IEP team also decides where the child will receive services. Most children with disabilities spend the majority of their school day in general education classrooms. Some children leave the general education classroom for part of the day to receive services in an ESE resource class. A few children spend all day in a special class, a special school, or a residential school.

School districts *must* provide educational programs to each eligible student who has a sensory impairment, beginning on the student's third birthday and continuing until the student's 22nd birthday or until the student graduates with a standard diploma, whichever comes first. At the option of the school district, educational services may be provided to children ages birth to three who have sensory impairments.

For students who have sensory impairments, local school districts may provide instruction and services directly, or they may work in cooperation with other school districts or agencies or through contracts with nonpublic schools.

For students between the ages of 5 and 22 who have sensory impairments and who meet enrollment requirements, the Florida School

Learning Through Listening Project (LTL)

Learning Ally
777 Glades Road
Building 49 – Gladys Davis Pavilion
Boca Raton, FL 33431
(800) 221-4792
<http://www.learningally.org/florida/>

The LTL's fiscal agent is Learning Ally. Learning Ally, formerly Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic, is the nation's largest library of accessible educational materials for students who are blind, visually impaired, dyslexic, or physically disabled. Audiobooks are available in all K–12 curriculum areas from the top U.S. school publishers to help struggling readers achieve their personal best. State funding helps support access for students in Florida's public school programs, and individual memberships are available for at-home use.

Critical Initiatives in Visual Impairment Project (CIVI) Florida Low Vision Initiative (FLVI)

Florida State University
(850) 445-4353
(850) 644-9258
Fax: (813) 856-0559
kmroberts@fsu.edu

The FLVI is a research grant that is a part of the CIVI discretionary project. FLVI provides comprehensive low vision evaluations and prescribed optical aids (glasses, contacts, sunglasses, magnifiers, and/or monocular) free of charge to eligible school-age children with low vision.

Students in kindergarten through age 22 who are receiving direct services from a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) as documented on an IEP are eligible for the program. Qualifying students have an identified low vision need (i.e., the student may have difficulty accessing printed material or may be using large-print materials) or may have difficulty accessing the whiteboard from his or her seat in the classroom.

FLVI may be contacted to request a referral packet. The TVI initiates the referral and the student is typically accepted in the spring to allow the FLVI time to plan for services for the next school year.

The IEP team, including the student, TVI, and parents, work together to support the use of the low vision devices, support the reduction of large print, and support instruction to enable the student to become proficient with the tool(s).

The Educational Interpreter Project (EIP)

University of North Florida

1 UNF Drive

Building 57, Suite 3500

Jacksonville, FL 32224

(904) 620-1386

(866) 697-7150

<http://www.interpreterproject.org>

Shannon.simon@unf.edu

The EIP is a discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. The goal of the EIP is to increase the number of qualified, screened, evaluated, or nationally certified sign language interpreters and oral transliterators, or other service providers working with students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in Florida's school or who may become part of this specialized service provider workforce in the state's K–20 education system.

The EIP provides a variety of professional development opportunities to interpreters/service providers working with students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing such as:

- Face-to-face weekend workshops and seminars
- Intensive educational and skill development during the Summer Institute (3½ days)
- Online knowledge and skill modules
- All activities provided by the EIP have been approved for continuing education units for nationally certified interpreters, thus providing opportunities to maintain their certification.

The EIP proctors national interpreter evaluations and financially assists educational interpreters with the fees for these performance assessments. The EIP is a supersite for the national Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf testing program, as well as the testing site for the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment, a tool specifically developed to assess the skills of interpreters in K–12 educational settings.

The EIP responds to district requests for specific “in-district” professional development or technical assistance regarding service providers working with students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

The EIP also financially assist interpreters who are working toward college degrees.

for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) provides educational and co-curricular programs, support services, day school, and residential programs. Day-school services include toddler and preschool programs.

The eligibility staffing may take place in the local school district or, upon request by the school district or parent, may be done at the FSDB. Parents may also request FSDB participation in an evaluation done by the local school district. Following the eligibility staffing, the district may recommend that the student be assigned to a school in the local district or to FSDB.

Who Is Eligible?

Definitions

The following definitions are used to describe the various sensory impairments for the purpose of determining eligibility.

Visually Impaired

Students who are visually impaired have disorders of the eye that, even with the best possible ocular correction, interfere with learning. A student's medical information from an ophthalmologist or optometrist is used to determine the medical eligibility. A functional vision and learning media assessment determines how a student uses any remaining vision. The information from these assessments helps to determine the suitable forms of presentation, such as braille or large print, for the curriculum materials.

Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

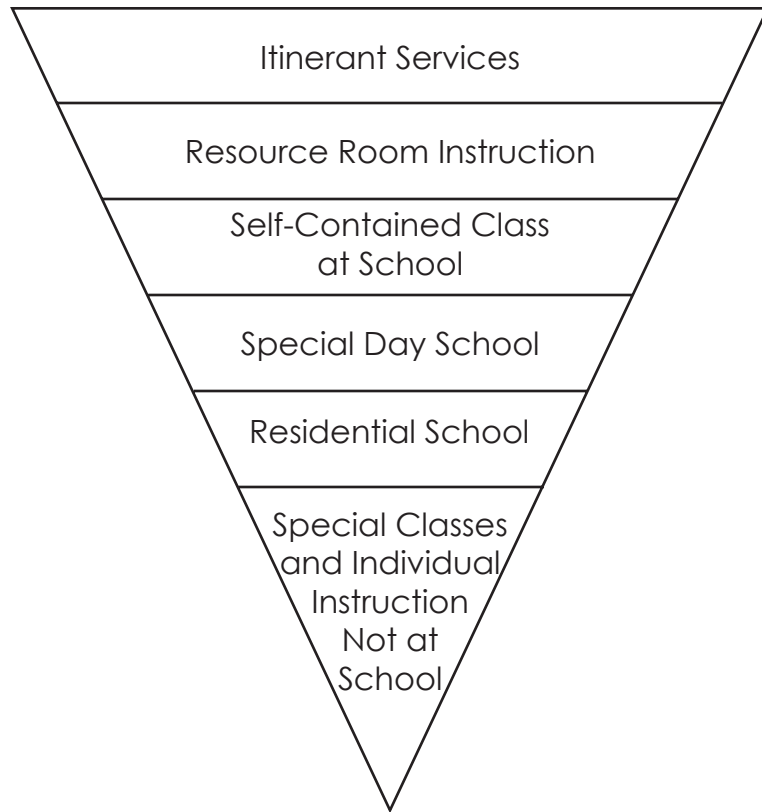
A student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing has a hearing impairment, aided or unaided, that interferes in processing linguistic information and that adversely affects communication, developmental skills, academic achievement, vocational-career skills, or social-emotional adjustment. The degree of loss may range from mild to profound.

Dual-Sensory Impaired

A student who is dual-sensory impaired has impairments affecting both vision and hearing, the combination of which causes a serious impairment in the abilities to acquire information, communicate, or function within the environment, or has a degenerative condition that will lead to such an impairment.

Services Available

Because students with sensory impairments have different needs, there are many kinds of programs that provide instruction in one or more of the following ways:



Itinerant Services are provided in two ways. The first is through consultation. This may include one or more of the following services, such as participating in IEP team meetings; requesting annual medical evaluations; checking equipment to make sure it is working properly; orienting, advising, and coaching parents, classroom teachers, and other professional staff; advocating for the student's needs; observing the student in educational environments; and providing comprehensive assessment of skills known to be impacted by the sensory impairment. Direct instruction is the second type of delivery provided through itinerant services. The IEP team determines the need and amount provided and this could be daily, weekly, or even monthly, depending on the student's needs. Direct instruction may include one or more of the following: compensatory academic skills, social interaction skills, use and care of assistive technology, independent living skills, career education, and specific sensory deficit instruction, such as auditory training and visual efficiency skills.

a discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. The center provides videos, technology, and other support materials and training to Florida's teachers, interpreters, students, support personnel, and parents working with children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing across Florida.

The Center also provides on-site observation and support to districts, including assistance with curriculum integration, correlation with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, and support for state and national initiatives. The center also coordinates a number of statewide initiatives, including statewide Ushers training for districts, Working With the Experts–DHH (WWE-DHH), and the Language Reading Connections: Deaf and Hard of Hearing (LRC:DHH). Both WWE-DHH and LRC:DHH can be accessed online at <http://www.rmtc.wikispaces.com>.

Outreach Services for the Blind/Visually Impaired and Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (OSBD)

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
 207 N. San Marco Avenue
 St. Augustine, FL 32084
 (800) 356-6731
 (904) 827-2660
<http://outreach.fldb.k12.fl.us>
keithm@fsdb.k12.fl.us

OSBD's focus is to provide support to small and rural districts. It provides a number of services to school districts, parents, and other professionals on issues related to deafness and blindness. OSBD has an extensive list of available in-service trainings available upon request for districts, parent organizations, and other related organizations throughout Florida. The program also provides information and referral services to districts and parents in Florida, including a database of national, state, and local agencies, as well as a Directory of Services. Personnel preparation programs, recruitment strategies, and information on curriculum and specialized instructional materials are also available.

OSBD also provides expert advice and onsite support. Team members from OSBD can conduct observations and file reviews to provide recommendations for classroom modifications, accommodations, and teaching strategies. The team can also provide functional vision evaluations, learning media assessments, and orientation and mobility assessments.

Services are available by request and at no charge. The project is a discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.

in the Federal Quota Program, FIMC-VI also provides instructional materials/products that allow students to access the Common Core Curriculum and the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). Materials/products that support the teaching of the ECC include communication modes/literacy, visual efficiency/low vision, orientation and mobility, assistive technology/electronics, career education/transition, self-determination, social skills, and recreation/leisure. In addition, assessment instruments and early childhood materials are also supplied to districts in accessible formats.

Search the FIMC-VI website for additional information. Users can discover the following:

- The section describing “The Braille Challenge,” which includes pictures of students participating in the braille reading, writing, spelling, transcribing, and interpreting tactile graphics competition held annually throughout Florida.
- An extensive array of professional learning opportunities for teachers, paraprofessionals, state and private agency staff, and families. Click the icon for “Training” to view upcoming training announcements.
- Handouts and materials from past trainings, resources for parents and teachers, and FIMC-VI brochures in the “Resources” section.
- Information on the eligibility requirements for FIMC-VI services is outlined under the “Eligibility” icon.
- Links to other organizations, technology information, conferences, and resources for parents and families are under the “Resource Links” icon.

Established in 1972 by the Florida Legislature, FIMC-VI is a discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, through a grant agreement with Hillsborough County Public Schools.

Resource Materials Technology Center for the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (RMTC-DHH)

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
207 N. San Marco Avenue
St. Augustine, FL 32084
Voice/TDD: (904) 827-2666
(800) 356-6731
<http://rmtc.fsdb.k12.fl.us>
hollingswoc@fsdb.k12.fl.us

The RMTC-DHH is a statewide specialized center that is part of FDLRS,

Resource Room Instruction is extra help in a different room for students with disabilities who receive most of their education in other general education, vocational, or ESE classes.

Self-Contained Class at School is the provision of instruction for students with disabilities in a traditional public school, within an ESE classroom.

Special Day School is a separate school that serves only students with disabilities.

Residential School is a school where students with disabilities live and receive their education during the school year.

Special Classes and Individual Instruction Not at School is the provision of instruction for students with disabilities in a hospital, home, or other facility that is not a school.

Related Services

Some of the related services that may be available to students who are sensory impaired include, but are not limited to, transportation, speech or language therapy, parent counseling, guidance, interpreters and braillists, and specialized instructional materials and equipment. These services are identified at the IEP meeting.

Specially Designed Instruction for Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

In addition to regular classes available to all students, students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing receive specially designed instruction to meet their needs. This instruction emphasizes learning language, communication skills, speech, and the use of amplification based on the student’s need. Teaching aids include auditory assistive listening devices, captioned media, telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD), and videophones. Support services may include oral and sign language interpreters, notetakers, and real-time captioning.

Specially Designed Instruction for Visually Impaired

In addition to regular classes available to all students, students who are visually impaired receive specially designed instruction to meet their needs. Teaching aids include accessible textbooks in braille, large print, and/or digital format; braille writers and electronic notetakers; tactile graphics and manipulatives; specialized curriculums for math, reading, and assistive technology; as well as emergent literacy books in braille and large print. Support services may include instruction in orientation and mobility, use of low vision devices, independent living skills, recreation and leisure activities, and career/technical education skills.

Dual-Sensory Impaired

Students who are dual-sensory impaired (deaf-blind) have impairments of both their vision and hearing. Their instruction can be delivered in settings ranging from regular classrooms to residential schools and are based on early establishment of communication. Support services may include communication interpreters, interveners, classroom aids, orientation and mobility and/or vision instruction, vocational training, and job coaches. Educational aids are determined by the needs of each student and may be similar to those provided for students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing or have a visual impairment.

Resources:

Florida Department of Education

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)

325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 614
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 245-0475
<http://www.fldoe.org/ese>

The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services provides leadership for the development, communication, and effective implementation of state policies and procedures related to exceptional student education for students with disabilities. In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Bureau implements a comprehensive system of general supervision, including targeted technical assistance and professional development, integrated monitoring activities, fiscal management, data collection, analysis and interpretation, parent involvement, and effective dispute resolution.

BEESS Resource and Information Center (BRIC)

325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 628
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 245-0475
<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/clerhome.asp>

The BEESS Resource and Information Center provides students, parents, and educators with materials relevant to exceptional student education. Florida-specific information regarding specific exceptionalities, individual educational plans, accommodations, transition planning, and many other related topics is available. The website contains a complete listing of publications and items are formatted for easy download. Free print copies of many materials are available upon request.

discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

The purpose of the FDLRS Associate Centers is to provide the following programs and services for individuals working with students with disabilities, their families, and support agencies. The FDLRS Associate Centers do this by:

- Assisting in the location, identification, and evaluation of all children and youth, birth through 21 years of age, who have or are at-risk of developing special or unique needs and are not enrolled in public school.
- Planning collaboratively with school districts, exceptional student education departments, staff development offices, and other professional development entities to provide information, professional development, and technical assistance and follow-up about effective instructional strategies and service delivery models for the education of children and youth who are exceptional or have unique needs.
- Assisting districts and families who have children who are exceptional or have special or unique needs to develop effective partnerships allowing shared responsibility to improve the education of all children and youth.
- Assisting and supporting district professional staff and families of students who are exceptional or have special or unique needs in the appropriate use of assistive technology, assistive technology related services, universal design principles, and technology that enhances learning and communication.

Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired (FIMC-VI)

4210 W. Bay Villa Avenue
Tampa, FL 33611-1206
(813) 837-7826 or Toll Free: (800) 282-9193
Fax: (813) 837-7979
<http://www.fimcvi.org>

FIMC-VI is a statewide resource center that provides instructional materials to students with visual impairments and/or print disabilities enrolled in Florida's local school districts and private schools. Provided in a timely manner, these academic materials allow eligible students to participate in the curriculum offered throughout their district.

FIMC-VI offers textbooks and support ancillaries in braille, large-print, digital audio, and/or electronic formats. Through Florida's participation

Voice: (800) 237-6213
TDD: (800) 237-6819

The Described and Captioned Media Project houses the national library of accessible educational materials. These materials are available to teachers, parents, and guardians of K–12 students who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, visually impaired, or deaf-blind.

The DCMP can be accessed from <http://www.dcmp.org>. Once there, a person can register to borrow from the library. The materials are loaned free of charge.

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program (EHDI)

Florida Newborn Screening Program

Department of Health

Children's Medical Services

Mailing Address: 4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-06

Overnight Address: 4025 Esplanade Way, Room 235-N

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1707

(850) 245-4673

Fax: (850) 245-4049

<http://www.infanthearing.org/states/florida/index.html>

Florida's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program is a statewide program designed to ensure that the hearing of all newborns is tested at the time of birth. This process allows families to identify the status of their newborn's hearing before leaving the hospital to go home. This is important because it allows the family and the doctor to know if any conditions exist related to hearing that may need to be followed. Early detection will allow the family to begin taking steps to prevent or minimize the impact that hearing loss can have on their child's language development, future academic performance, and cognitive development as soon as possible and help ensure that the family and child will have access to early intervention services.

There are two kinds of screenings the child may receive at the hospital. Both screenings are painless. If hearing is normal, no follow up is needed. If the child does not pass the screenings, then the hospital will make recommendations to the family for follow up. It is important that the families follow those recommendations.

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)

Local, regional, and statewide contact information for FDLRS may be found at <http://www.fdlrs.org/>. Contact your local FDLRS Associate Center for more information on services in your area. FDLRS is a

The BRIC also maintains a large collection of loan materials, including books, DVDs, multi-media kits, assessment tools, and other materials produced by commercial printers and national, state, and local programs. Return labels and postage are provided.

Division of Blind Services (DBS)

325 W. Gaines Street, Room 1114

Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

(850) 245-0300

(800) 342-1828

<http://dbs.myflorida.com/>

DBS provides services to individuals of all ages whose primary disability is visual impairment to help them maximize their physical, vocational, social, and economic well-being. Services include vocational rehabilitation, counseling, guidance, parent training, and assistance in locating school and other community-based programs.

Division of Blind Services

Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library Services (BBTBL)

420 Platt Street

Daytona Beach, FL 32114

(800) 226-6075

<http://dbs.myflorida.com/library/>

The Bureau of Braille and Talking Books Library is a free service for individuals who cannot use standard print reading materials as the result of a visual, physical, or reading disability. It is the largest library of its kind in the U.S., with a collection of more than 2.4 million items in braille and audio format, including cassette and digital recordings. In addition, the library also provides adaptive equipment, accessories, and other types of players on loan. Overall annual loans exceed 1.99 million items.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Department of Education

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2002-A Old St. Augustine Road

Tallahassee, FL 32301-4862

(850) 245-3399 or (800) 451-4327

<http://www.rehabworks.org>

<http://www.FLJobConnections.com>

VR is a federal-state program that works with people who have physical or mental disabilities to prepare for, gain or retain employment. VR

is committed to helping people with disabilities, including those with sensory disabilities (hearing loss, visual loss), find meaningful careers.

When does VR get involved with students with disabilities attending school?

VR representatives are available to participate in the transition IEP meetings when the student turns 16 and needs assistance with community-based work experience while in high school to reach an adult employment goal. Generally, students are encouraged to apply two years before leaving high school so VR can determine eligibility and assist in developing an individualized plan for employment. The purpose of this early communication is to ensure that the student and their family are aware of VR eligibility requirements and possible services.

What type of assistance may be available from VR?

Medical and Psychological Assessment
Vocational Evaluation and Planning
Career Counseling and Guidance
Work Experience while in High School
Training and Education after High School
Job-Site Assessment and Accommodations
Job Placement
Job Coaching
On-the-Job Training
Supported Employment
Self-Employment and Supported Self-Employment
Assistive Technology and Devices
Time-Limited Medical and/or
Psychological Treatment

Are all students with disabilities eligible for VR services?

Any student with a disability may be eligible for VR services, including those who are not eligible for ESE. Contact the local VR office to apply. To locate the VR office nearest to you, go to <http://www.rehabworks.org> and click on the VR Office Directory near the bottom of the page. There is a VR counselor assigned to every high school in Florida.

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

207 N. San Marco Avenue
St. Augustine, FL 32084
Voice/TDD: (904) 827-2200
<http://www.fsdb.k12.fl.us/>

The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind in St. Augustine is the

state's public school for eligible deaf/hard-of-hearing, blind/low vision, and deaf-blind preschool through 12th grade students. FSDB also offers a continuing education program. There is no tuition cost to families for eligible Florida residents.

FSDB offers comprehensive academic educational, career educational, and extra-curricular programs for prekindergarten through 12th grade. The School has an Early Learning Center that includes a toddler and preschool program. The K–12 program complies with all state curriculum and assessment requirements and students work toward achieving state and national standards. Additional continuing education services include programs to prepare students for independent living and to pursue employment or postsecondary options.

The campus is approximately 80 acres including 45 major buildings. Facilities include a swimming pool, two auditoriums, student activity centers, and a state-of-the-art music center. The outdoor athletic complex consists of a football field, baseball diamond, track, fitness course, and tennis courts. FSDB students may participate in varsity and junior varsity teams in a variety of sports: football, basketball, swimming, wrestling, volleyball, goalball, cross country, track and field, tennis, soccer, and cheerleading.

Interested parents may contact the School's Parent Services Office for information regarding admission Voice/TDD at (800) 344-3732.

Deaf Service Centers

There are a number of independently operated Deaf Service Centers across Florida. These centers provide a variety of services that include interpreting services, informational resources, and assisting individuals in making appointments with agencies and individuals who do not have telecommunication devices for the deaf. Centers will often provide advocacy services, employment assistance, sign language classes, reading programs, and community education programs.

These centers are known both as deaf service centers and independent living centers. To find one in your area, simply look in the local phone book, or search on the Internet.

Described and Captioned Media Project (DCMP)

General Interest Videos
National Association of the Deaf
1477 E. Main Street
Spartanburg, SC 29307
<http://www.dcmp.org>