

Expanded Core Curriculum Subjects and Skills

The following are the subjects and skills that students who are visually impaired are taught to enable them to study the basic educational curriculum along with their sighted classmates:

1) Compensatory academics—Compensatory skills involve the adaptations necessary for accessing the core curriculum and critical skills that students need to be successful in school, such as concept development, organizational skills, speaking and listening, and communication skills such as braille or print reading and writing.

2) Orientation and mobility—Skills to orient children who are visually impaired to their surroundings and travel skills to enable them to move independently and safely in the environment, such as:

- human guide techniques (also known as sighted guide)
- using standard and adaptive canes
- recognizing cues and landmarks
- moving through space by walking or using a wheelchair
- requesting assistance

3) Social interaction—Since nearly all social skills are learned by observations of the environment and people, this is an area where students with vision loss need careful, conscious and explicit instruction. Social skills are needed to respond appropriately and participate actively in social situations, such as:

- shaking hands
- turning toward others when speaking or being spoken to
- using language to make a request, decline assistance, or express a need
- expressing emotion and affection appropriately
- participating appropriately in conversations in various situations

4) Independent living—These skills are needed to function as independently as possible in school and at home, including personal grooming, time management, cooking, cleaning, clothing care, and money management.

5) Recreation and leisure—Skills to ensure students' enjoyment of physical and leisure-time activities, including:

- making choices about how to spend leisure time
- actively participating in physical and social recreational activities

- trying new leisure activities
- following rules in games and activities at an appropriate level
- maintaining safety during leisure activities

6) Sensory efficiency—Skills that help students use the senses, including any functional vision, hearing, touch, smell (olfactory) and taste (gustatory). Examples of sensory efficiency skills your child may learn include:

- using optical aids
- using augmentative and alternative communication devices
- using touch and vision to identify personal items
- using sense of smell to know when nearing the school cafeteria

7) Assistive technology—The ability to use devices such as computers or other electronic equipment that make it easier to function effectively in school, at home, and in the workplace and can overcome some traditional barriers to independence and employment.

8) Career education—skills that enable students who are visually impaired to move toward working as an adult, including

- exploring and expressing preferences about work roles
- assuming work responsibilities at home and school
- understanding concepts of reward for work
- participating in job experiences
- learning about jobs and adult work roles at a developmentally appropriate level

9) Self-determination—Skills to enable students to become effective advocates for themselves based on their own needs and goals.