

Criteria for the Identification of Students with Deaf-Blindness

Recognizing the many factors involved in appropriately identifying students with Deaf Blindness, Middlesex County Public Schools' Office of Special Education, has established criteria to be used by eligibility committees for the purpose of decision-making.

Regulations Governing Special Education Programs For Children With Disabilities in Virginia (2009), defines “**deaf-blindness**” as, “hearing and visual impairments occurring at the same time, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.”

Assessments:

If the student is suspected of having a disability under the category of deaf-blindness, then assessments should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Classroom Educational Documentation – Written report from classroom teacher(s) describing the child’s level of academic, developmental, social, or adaptive functioning including strengths, weaknesses, and other factors which affect educational performance.
- Psychological – Written report from a qualified school psychologist or other qualified professional based on the use of a battery of appropriate instruments which may assess cognition, emotionality, processing performance, adaptive skills, and social skills.
- Educational – Written report describing current educational performance/achievement and identifying instructional strengths and weaknesses in academic skills and processing performance.
- Developmental (ages 2-5) – (when appropriate) Written report of an assessment of how the child functions in the major areas of physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and/or adaptive development.
- Sociocultural – Written report from a qualified visiting teacher or school social worker based on the use of information collected through social appraisal instruments which will include background and social/adaptive behavior in the home, school, and community.
- Audiological – Written report by a qualified audiologist licensed by the Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology to assess the child’s hearing.

- Functional Vision Evaluation - Written report from a certified teacher of the visually impaired, which includes a review of medical information, formal and/or informal tests of visual functioning and the determination of the implications of the visual impairment on the educational and curricular needs of the child.
- Visual Examination – Written report from a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist describing the visual impairment.
- Observation – Written report of the child’s academic performance and behavior in the child’s learning environment (including the general education classroom setting) to document the child’s academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty. NOTE: This observation should take place in a class where perceived weaknesses are indicated. *In case of a child less than school age or out of school, a group member shall observe the child in an environment appropriate for a child of that age.

Eligibility Criteria:

The following criteria must be met when determining a student eligible for services for students with deaf-blindness:

1. The child’s age falls within 2-21 years of age, inclusive.
2. Appropriate documentation provided by an audiologist indicating that a hearing deficit is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, with proper documentation provided by an audiologist indicating such.
3. A written report from an ophthalmologist that documents blindness in one or both eyes.
4. The functional vision evaluation indicates that there is an adverse affect on the student’s academic performance in school. If the child is preschool aged, there must be an adverse affect on the child’s development in comparison with his/her peers.
5. The student requires instruction to address identified deficit areas that cannot reasonably be provided solely through regular education.