



## **ILLINOIS VISION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

### **POSITION ON VISION THERAPY IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING**

The Illinois Vision Leadership Council (IVLC) consists of representatives from educational, rehabilitative and related medical systems which serve persons with visual impairments. IVLC is a forum for discussion of significant issues concerning persons with visual impairments and offers recommendations for the provision of services throughout Illinois. The IVLC is firmly committed to: equality of opportunity for persons with visual impairments; advocacy for persons with visual impairments; and support systems that enable persons with visual impairments to realize their potential.

#### **Visual Impairments Educationally Defined**

Students with visual impairments are those who have disorders in BOTH the structure within the ocular pathway AND function of both eyes, that with the best refractive correction and medical/surgical treatment, interfere with learning, as determined by a functional vision assessment. The functional vision assessment is administered by a certified teacher for students with visual impairments. These students would exhibit one or more of the following:

- **Bilateral reduced visual acuity after best refractive correction, usually 20/70 or less in the better eye, and/or restricted field of vision to the degree that they affect the student's ability to function educationally**
- **Progressive and/or permanent eye conditions as noted by an eye specialist on an ocular report**
- **Eye conditions that result in a temporary reduction in vision that affects the student's ability to function educationally**
- **Medically diagnosed cortical vision impairment**

**Students with visual impairments have unique challenges which impact on their educational needs and may require expanded curricular areas and learning approaches for development of compensatory skills. These are addressed in the academic setting by a teacher of visual impairments and/or an orientation and mobility instructor, and may include:**

- **Acquiring accurate and functional concepts**
- **Learning through an alternate sense(s) and/or media (Braille, large print, recordings)**
- **Developing skills necessary for independence and self-advocacy**
- **Learning with specialized equipment and technology, including low vision devices**
- **Learning through the use of unique curricular strategies or adaptations**

### **Vision Therapy Defined**

**Vision Therapy is treatment aimed at improving visual performance (enhancing the eyes' ability to move, align, fixate, and focus as a team) through the use of lenses, various optometric exercises, patching, and gross and fine motor activities. This therapy is done under the direction of a developmental or behavioral optometrist, generally in a clinical setting.**

### **IVLC Position**

**In view of the disparity between these definitions, the Illinois Vision Leadership Council deems it is not appropriate for teachers of students with visual impairments to provide vision therapy in the academic setting.**