

Low Vision Education

Definitions of words you will hear while looking for information on vision loss and blindness, and dealing with agencies for the blind.

Legal Blindness

The definition of Legal Blindness is used to determine who can get government services for the Blind. Only 1 in 10 people who are legally blind see nothing at all. A person with normal eyesight has 20/20 vision, right? Legal Blindness, in the USA, is defined as vision of 20/200 or less in the better eye with best correction or a visual field of 20 degrees or less. We have the Snellen Chart, the eye chart, to blame for these fractions. The line on the eye chart a person with 20/200 vision sees at 20 feet a person with normal vision sees at 200 feet. The 20 degrees or less refers to tunnel vision. If you look through a toilet tissue tube your vision is restricted to less than 20 degrees. You can have 20/20 vision with a visual field of less than 20 degrees and be considered legally blind.

Mainstreaming

Teaching (Legally Blind) children in public schools instead of schools for the blind. It is also used to describe disabled adults who are living in the community instead of in institutions.

Orientation and Mobility Instructor

Teaches people how to use a white cane or guide dog so they can travel safely with their remaining vision or no vision.

Low Vision

Vision that cannot be corrected with standard lenses. The person can't read the news paper at a normal distance even with glasses or contacts. They can't see well enough to drive a car safely or may only have a day time drivers license. About one in every 20 Americans has low vision.

Low Vision Doctor

An eye doctor who is trained to fit Visual Aids. Things like: strong magnifying glasses, telescopic glasses, hand held telescopes, etc. These devices are called Visual Aids they will not correct a person's vision, back to normal, but will make daily tasks that require vision easier.

Rehabilitation

A term used by professionals that covers all aspects of learning to live with vision loss and become independent again.

Rehabilitation Teacher

Teaches personal and Household Management skills like: cooking, cleaning, money management, personal care, etc.

Sheltered Work Shop

Programs run by state or non profit agencies to give disabled people, that are not ready for gainful employment, training in a work type setting.

Vending Stand Program

A federal program (USA) run through state agencies. It gives (Legally Blind) people small business experience by having them run vending stands in public buildings. These stands can be anything from a newspaper stand to a full cafeteria.

VI Teacher

Special teachers who work with vision impaired and blind students in public schools. Teaching Braille, use of adaptive devices, and help in vision intensive subjects like math, science, etc.

Visual Aids

Special eye glasses, scopes, and magnification devices that help a person see better with there remaining vision. A white cane or talking clock could also be considered a visual aid.

Visually Impaired

Usually means the same thing as Low Vision, but can sometimes include people that are (Legally Blind) that have some remaining vision.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The goal of (VR) is to get blind people employed. Each person, along with his (VR) Counselor, writes up a plan for getting back to work Most newly blinded people have no idea of what a blind person can do. One of the (VR) Counselors jobs is to inform and guide him. This plan may call for college, technical or, trade school to prepare the person for the kind of work they want to do. The (VR) agency will pay for all or most of this training if the plan seems realistic and attainable. In other words, they will not pay to send a blind person to flight training school, etc.

Vocational Rehabilitation Councilor

If you are looking to keep your current job and need adaptive equipment or training this is the person you will be working with. They can arrange for: testing, counseling and training, if you need to change jobs because of your disability.