



Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Visual Impairment Updates

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Eligibility Guidelines- Reminder

In the Letter to Kotler (November 12, 2014), OSEP stated the following

- States are permitted to establish standards of eligibility however they must not narrow the definitions under IDEA
- Definitions and criteria for visual impairment, including blindness, must include **any** impairment in vision, regardless of significance or severity, that even with correction, impacts a child's educational performance.
- Functional assessments should be conducted to determine how a child's vision impairment impacts their educational performance.

- Under IDEA's definition of Visual Impairment/Blindness, any impairment in vision, regardless of severity, is covered, provided that such impairment, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.
- The evaluation of vision status and the need for special education and related services should be thorough and rigorous, include a data-based media assessment, be based on a range of learning modalities, including auditory, tactile, and visual, and include a functional visual assessment.
- [OSEP Letter VI Eligibility 5-22-17](#)

Definitions IDEA

Visual Impairment: Visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.



GaDOE Definitions

Vision: A child with a visual impairment is one whose vision, even with correction, adversely impacts a child's educational performance. [34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(13)] Examples are children whose visual impairments may result from congenital defects, eye diseases, or injuries to the eye. The term includes both visual impairment and blindness as follows:

1. Blind refers to a child whose visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction or who has a limitation in the field of vision that subtends an angle of 20 degrees. Some children who are legally blind have useful vision and may read print.

GaDOE Definitions

2. Visually impaired refers to a child whose visual acuity falls within the range of 20/70 to 20/200 in the better eye after correction or who have a limitation in the field of vision that adversely impacts educational progress. a. Progressive visual disorders: Children, whose current visual acuity is greater than 20/70, but who have a medically indicated expectation of visual deterioration may be considered for vision impaired eligibility based on documentation of the visual deterioration from the child's optometrist or ophthalmologist

Definitions IDEA

Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(3)

Hearing impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section. 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(5)



GaDOE Definitions

Deaf/Hard of Hearing: A child who is deaf or hard of hearing is one who exhibits a hearing loss that, whether permanent or fluctuating, interferes with the acquisition or maintenance of auditory skills necessary for the normal development of speech, language, and academic achievement and, therefore, adversely affects a child's educational performance. [See 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(3) & (5)]

1. A child who is deaf can be characterized by the absence of enough measurable hearing (usually a pure tone average of 66-90+ decibels American National Standards Institute without amplification) such that the primary sensory input for communication may be other than the auditory channel.

GaDOE Definitions

2. A child who is hard of hearing can be characterized by the absence of enough measurable hearing (usually a pure tone average range of 30-65 decibels American National Standards Institute without amplification) that the ability to communicate is adversely affected; however, the child who is hard of hearing typically relies upon the auditory channel as the primary sensory input for communication.

Evaluation Guidelines

- A single criterion may not be used for determining a disability (e.g., an audiogram alone cannot be used to determine if an individual is in need of special education services).
- A comprehensive assessment includes all areas appropriately related to all areas of concern or potential need and not just those areas commonly linked to hearing loss.



34 C.F.R. § 300.301, 304; 20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(2)(B)

Evaluation Guidelines

- Assessment results must be technically sound (valid and reliable).
- Relevant functional and developmental assessment about the learner must include information from the parent.



34 C.F.R. § 300.301, 304; 20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(2)(B)

Importance of Appropriate Evaluations

In *S.P. v. East Whittier City School District* (2018), the federal court found that the by not properly labeling a student with the accurate disability category of “hearing impairment, the school violated IDEA, writing “[W]ithout evaluative information” regarding [the student’s] hearing impairment, “it was not possible for the IEP team to develop a plan reasonably calculated to provide [her] with a meaningful educational benefit.”

S.P. v. East Whittier School District, June 1, 2018. Retrieved from <https://cases.justia.com/federal/appellate-courts/ca9/16-56549/16-56549-2018-06-01.pdf?ts=1527883285>



Importance of Appropriate Evaluations

In this case, the school district focused on the student speech and language impairment (SLI) and did not evaluate areas related to her hearing impairment. Although she received an IEP under the eligibility of SLI, the district did not consider all required areas under the hearing impairment category (34 C.F.R. § 300.8(5)).

S.P. v. East Whittier School District, June 1, 2018. Retrieved from <https://cases.justia.com/federal/appellate-courts/ca9/16-56549/16-56549-2018-06-01.pdf?ts=1527883285>



Necessary Documents for Eligibility: Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Audiological Reports
 - Annually
- Otological Evaluation
 - Can be obtained within 90 days of eligibility
- Psychological evaluation is recommended
 - Use appropriate instruments for children who are D/HH
- Comprehensive educational assessment
 - Academic/achievement
 - Receptive and expressive language
 - Receptive and expressive communication
 - Social and emotional
 - Observations related for classroom functioning

Additional Requirements: DHH

An evaluation of the communication needs of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing shall be considered in the program and class placement decisions. An evaluation of a child's communication needs shall include, but is not limited to: language and communication needs and abilities, opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child's preferred language and communication mode, severity of loss, educational abilities, academic level and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode.

Necessary Documents for Eligibility: Visual Impairments

- Eye Reports within one year
 - Can be a neurological report
- Clinical Low Vision Evaluation
- Psychological evaluation is recommended
 - Use appropriate instruments for children who are visually impaired
- Comprehensive educational assessment
 - Academic/achievement
 - Functional Vision Evaluation and Learning Media Assessment
 - Must be completed by a certified Teacher of the Visually Impaired
 - Braille assessment

Expanded Core Curriculum

- The purpose of the ECC is to assist IEP team members in developing a plan specifically for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- In addition to the standard curriculum that all students must learn, students who are D/HH have specialized needs that are not covered in the general education curriculum.
- Most teachers without specialized training related to hearing loss do not have the expertise to address the unique needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is important the IEP team collaborate with teachers of the Deaf/Hard of hearing to address academic and social instruction and the assessment of these areas (Denzin & Luckner, 1998).

Denzin, P., & Luckner, J. (1998) In the mainstream: Adaptations for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. *Perspectives in Education and Deafness Practical Ideas for the Classroom and Community*, 17, 1

Areas of the ECC

DHH

- Audiology
- Career Education
- Communication
- Family Education
- Functional Skills for Education Success
- Self-Determination and Advocacy
- Social-emotional skills
- Technology

[ECC-DHH Resources](#)

VI

- Assistive Technology
- Career Education
- Compensatory Skills
- Independent Living Skills
- Orientation and Mobility
- Recreation and Leisure
- Self-Determination
- Sensory Efficiency
- Social Interaction Skills

[ECC-VI Resources](#)

Hearing and Vision Screeners

- Functional Hearing and Vision Screeners are not recommended
- Should be completed by trained professional
- For students who are too young or have significant disabilities, it is recommended that you use an Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) screener for hearing and a Vision Spot Checker for Vision.
- Always keep the purpose of the screener in mind... it is not just a box to check

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Core Components Workshop

The Georgia Department of Education, Special Education Services and Supports Division will be hosting a workshop that will provide a deep dive into the core components of education for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Training will include eligibility and assessment, writing effective IEP goals, expanded core curriculum, and team collaboration to support students. Participants will explore foundational information as well as apply what they have learned to individual case studies. Please select the location and date that best suits your needs.

Training will be led by Dr. Emily Adams

March 14, 2024 – Chatt-Flint RESA

[Chatt-Flint Registration](#)

Smokey Powell Center Zel Murray-Program Coordinator



The Georgia Academy for the Blind is pleased to offer outreach services through the Smokey Powell Center. The center is housed on the Academy's campus and provides services to any student throughout the state of Georgia who is blind or visually impaired. Services are provided at no cost to the student.

SPC Staff

Zel Murray
Heather Francis
Tara Bowie
Sharon Lyttle
Gloria Vinson



Smokey Powell Center Services

- **Low Vision Clinics/Evaluations**
- **Assistive Technology Needs Assessments/Consults**
- **Equipment Loans**
- **Outreach Services**
 - Professional learning classes are offered virtually and on-site, for TVI's & COMS to address the unique educational needs of students who are visually impaired.
 - GAB Instructional Support for TVI's

LVE Clinic Dates

August 29, 2023, Macon @ SPC	January 9, 2024, Macon @ SPC
September 11, 2023, Gilmer Co.	February 12, 2024, Glynn Co.
September 12, 2023, Gilmer Co.	February 13, 2024, Glynn Co.
September 26, 2023, Macon @ SPC	February 26, 2024, Dougherty Co.
October 24, 2023, Macon @ SPC	February 27, 2024, Dougherty Co.
November 7, 2023, Macon @ SPC	March 12, 2024, Clarke Co.
November 28, 2023, Macon @SPC	March 13, 2024, Clarke Co.
December 11, 2023, Lowndes Co.	March 26, 2024, McDuffie Co.
December 12, 2023, Lowndes Co.	April 16, 2024, Forsyth Co.
	April 17, 2024, Forsyth Co.
	April 30, 2024, Macon @ SPC
	May 6, 2024, Coweta Co.
	May 7, 2024, Coweta Co.



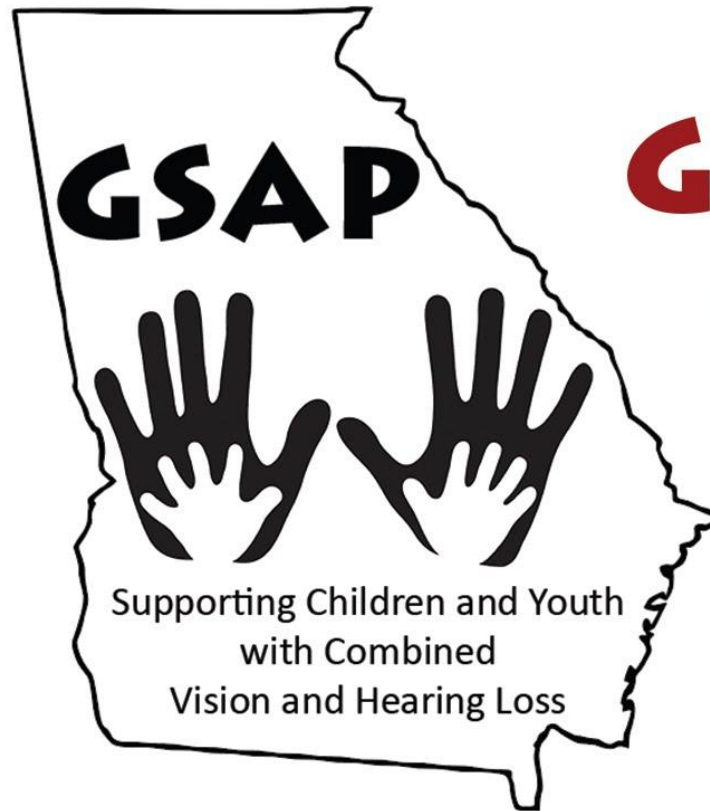
GAB Website/Outreach Services

<https://www.gabmacon.org/gab>



Georgia Sensory Assistance Project

Carol Darrah



GEOORGIA
SENSORY
ASSISTANCE
PROJECT

Georgia Sensory Assistance Project

- Funded through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs
- Housed at the University of Georgia
- Provides technical assistance to families, teachers, and service providers of children and youth with deaf-blindness (birth-21 yrs)
- Part of a network of state projects connected by the National Center on Deaf-Blindness.



Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA
College of Education



NATIONAL CENTER
ON DEAF-BLINDNESS

Deaf-Blindness Defined



- “Deaf-blind” describes any combined hearing and vision loss that significantly limits children’s ability to get information from people and objects around them.
- Deaf-blindness is diverse...many different causes and most of our students have additional disabilities
- Deaf-blindness is rare!

GSAP Supports for Educators



- Trainings, Workshops, Conferences
- Four Communities of Practice (Tactile Communication, Strategies for Complex Learners, Transition, and ParaEducators)
- Individual support for teams that includes consultation, sharing information and expertise, and instruction
- Training/Events calendar on our website
- All provided at no cost

GSAP Family support

- Workshops
- Networking / conference calls
- Individual Support
- Working with your school team
- Family Sign Language classes
- Transition support (EI to school, new classroom, school to adulthood)



Diane Foster

GSAP
Family Engagement
Coordinator

Find More Information & Connect

Website

<https://tinyurl.com/gsapweb>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/Georgia-Sensory-Assistance-Project-151810591532627>

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Offering a holistic education to
each and every child
in our state.

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 youtube.com/user/GaDOEmedia

