



**Standards of Practice
for
Educators of Children and Youth
who are
Blind or Partially Sighted**

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Standards of Practice for Educators of Children and Youth who are Blind or Partially Sighted is a framework of principles that demonstrate the knowledge, skills and values of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) which intends to guide daily practice. These standards reflect current best practice and are in line with the International Standards in the field of working with children and youth who are blind or partially sighted

This document will:

- Guide professional judgement and actions**
- Foster a common understanding of what it means to be a member of this profession**
- Outline the competencies expected of individuals in each position – to reflect the needs of the students being supported**
- Guide professional development**

These Standards of Practice are based on the rationale that an educator of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted must be trained to understand the competency with specific standards of practice common to all educational settings for this population from birth to 21. All teachers working with these students are required to have a Master of Education in this speciality area.

Standards of Practice for Educators of Children and Youth who are Blind or Partially Sighted	
Standard 1: PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE	The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted demonstrates professional and ethical practice.
Standard 2: FOUNDATIONS	The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands and applies knowledge of the foundations of education for individuals with a visual sensory loss.
Standard 3: DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNERS ARE BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED	The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands the development and characteristics of learners with visual sensory loss from birth to 21.
Standard 4: ASSESSMENT & INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING	The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands the educational assessment process and uses a variety of assessment tools and strategies to support students with visual sensory loss from birth to 21.
Standard 5: INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS	The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands the diversity of students' strengths and challenges, and applies the knowledge of instructional methods when developing a program for learners with visual sensory loss from birth to 21.
Standard 6: SOCIAL INTERACTIONS	The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted supports the creation of a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement in learning, independence and motivation.
Standard 7: CONSULTATION, COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION	The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands the importance of consultation, collaboration and communication with families and all other partners to enhance learning for students with visual sensory loss from birth to 21.
Standard 8: PERSONAL QUALITIES	The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted reflects on his/her personal qualities and evaluates his/her practice, while actively seeking opportunities to improve professional competency.

Standard 1: PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted demonstrates professional and ethical practice	
Knowledge	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the philosophical and political issues inherent to the inclusion and education of students who are blind or partially sighted • Is familiar with the legislation and policies for children who are blind or partially sighted relating to discrimination, privacy, child protection and human rights, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APSEA Act • APSEA Policies and Procedures • Privacy Legislation • Provincial Education Policy • Code of ethics for educators (AER, CEC, NSTU and Departments of Education) • Partially sighted • Organizations and publications relevant to the field of visual impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a member and participates in the activities of professional organizations • Contributes to the professional development of colleagues through activities such as peer mentoring, supervising student teachers, doing research and sharing expertise by giving presentations and workshops • Participates in ongoing professional development opportunities to ensure professional practice reflects current knowledge and expertise • Promotes and maintains a high level of competence and integrity in the practice of the teaching profession • Complies with APSEA evaluation requirements • Demonstrates positive regard for the culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation and personal characteristics of individual students • Complies with local, provincial and federal monitoring and evaluation requirements • Applies guidelines as outlined in the the Canadian Copyright Act Provincial Privacy Acts • Remains current with literature related to students with

	<p>visual loss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly practice self assessment as related to instructional strategies • Maintains confidentiality of student information • Manages student data • Implements referral and reporting procedure
<p>Standard 2: FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands and applies knowledge of the foundations of education of individuals with a visual sensory loss.</p>	
<p>Knowledge</p>	<p>Skills</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical foundations of education of individuals with visual sensory loss. • Educational definitions, identification criteria, labeling issues, and incidence and prevalence figures for individuals with visual impairments • Issues and trends in special education and the field of visual impairment • Recognizes cultural & societal bias, and the impact on families of children with visual loss. • Structure, function, and normal development, of the human visual system. • Manifestations of diseases and disorders of the human visual system. • Educational implications of visual sensory loss on the individual. • Understand all areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate an instructional philosophy that responds to the specific implications of visual impairment within the general curriculum • Articulate a professional philosophy that draws on specialized knowledge of visual impairment within the continuum of instructional options. • Articulate the impact of visual sensory loss on learning and development, conveying the importance of disability-specific instruction. • Ability to foster respectful and beneficial relationships between and among families and professionals for successful inclusion of students who are blind or partially sighted.

<p>compensatory or access skills, career education, functional living skills, Orientation and Mobility skills and concepts, recreational and leisure skills, self-determination skills, social interaction skills, assistive technology, and sensory efficiency skills.</p>	
<p>Standard 3: DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNERS WHO ARE BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED</p> <p>The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands the development and characteristics of learners with visual sensory loss from birth to 21</p>	
<p>Knowledge</p>	<p>Skills</p>
<p>Understanding the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities • Development of sensory efficiency when vision is impaired • Impact of visual impairment on formal and incidental learning and experiences • Effects of visual impairment(s) on early development, child and adolescent development • Social-emotional development • Similarities and differences between the needs of students with and without visual sensory loss (cognitive, physical, cultural, social, emotional, sensory, self-help, communication and literacy) • Attitudes and actions of teachers that affect the behaviors of individuals with visual impairment • Impact of additional exceptionalities on individuals with visual impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and/or select instructional content, materials, resources, and strategies that respond to cultural, linguistic, and gender differences as well as the learning environment in any given classroom. • Select, adapt, and use instructional strategies and materials according to characteristics of the learner. • Incorporate evaluation, planning, and management procedures that match learner needs with the instructional environment. • Model appropriate interaction and instructional strategies for a student who is blind or partially sighted to classroom teachers and peers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different learning styles of individuals • Demands of various learning environments such as individualized instruction in the regular classroom and the promotion of social inclusion of all students. • Curricula and instruction for the development of motor, cognitive, academic, social, language, affective and functional life skills, and school to community implementation for children and youth, including those with exceptional learning needs. • Cultural perspectives influencing the relationship among families, schools, and communities as related to effective instruction of students. • Scheduling and organizational procedures for schools at various levels (e.g., elementary, middle, junior, and senior high school). • Basic classroom management theories, methods, and techniques for both students with and without disabilities. • Research-based best practices for effective management of teaching and learning 	
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Standard 4: ASSESSMENT & INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING

The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands the educational assessment process and uses a variety of assessment tools and strategies to support students with visual sensory loss from birth to 21.

Knowledge	Skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands relationships between assessment (educational, ECC vision and learning media) and program planning (APSEA and Individual Education/Program Plan) • Understands the need for and is familiar with methods of adapting assessment techniques for individuals with visual impairments • Is familiar with specific assessment, screening and recording instruments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning media assessment ○ Assessment for Basic Learning (ABLS) and other Braille assessment instruments ○ Functional vision assessment ○ Evaluating Partially sighted Students (EVALS) ○ Preschool Assessment ○ Teaching Age Appropriate Skills (TAPS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain disability-related records for students with visual impairments • Interpret eye reports, and other information related to the visual impairments(s) including, but not limited to low vision evaluation reports, to students with visual impairments, their families and to other educational and related service providers • Conduct, interpret and apply the results of formal and informal assessments of functional vision and learning modalities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Functional Vision Assessment(FVA) ● Evaluating Partially sighted Students (EVALS) ● Preschool Developmental checklists ● Learning Media Assessment ● Assessment for Basic Learning(ABLS) • Gather and apply information from assessment of students' Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) skill level to develop instructional programming by writing the student's APSEA Direct Service Plan or contributing outcomes to the Individual Education Plan • Use the SET3 Model to choose and use appropriate technology devices to support student learning. • Utilize assessment information to develop literacy modality plans for students with visual impairments • Adapt and implement a variety of assessment procedures, in evaluating students with visual sensory loss
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relay information gathered by assessment, and instructional program plan to a variety of audiences • Sequence, develop, implement, and evaluate learning outcomes based on the expanded core curriculum. • Choose appropriate instructional strategies and materials to address the outcomes developed based on the assessment results • Prepare appropriate lesson plans • Monitor and report student progress
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Standard 5: INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands the diversity of students strengths and challenges and applies this knowledge when developing a program and applying instructional methods for learners with visual sensory loss from birth to 21

Knowledge	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of concept development and orientation and mobility. • Understand the challenges posed by visual sensory loss to an awareness of work and career options. • Strategies for teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory efficiency skills (including visual efficiency: near and distance and tactile perception) • use of print adaptations, Low Vision aids and Assistive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the provision of appropriate alternate format materials • Teach the use of braillewriter, slate and stylus, and computer technology to produce braille materials • Teach the use of the abacus, talking calculator, tactile graphics, and adapted science equipment • Teach sighted guide and pre-cane orientation and mobility instruction, in collaboration with the Orientation

<p>Technology, listening and compensatory auditory skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compensatory skills: braille reading and writing, manual production of print (cursive or printing) to individuals with low vision, signature writing to individuals who are blind, use of the abacus, talking calculator, tactile graphics, and adapted science equipment • organization and study skills • adapted physical and recreational skills • social and functional life skills • career-vocational skills and providing vocational counseling • assistive technology skills: typing and keyboarding skills, technology skills to individuals with visual impairments • basic concepts and general knowledge • Human Sexuality Education – and how it pertains to individuals with visual sensory loss 	<p>and Mobility Specialist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach individuals to access information and services from the community • Select, adapt and utilize instructional strategies, and materials appropriate to the learning needs of the student. • Identify techniques for the adaptation of instructional methods and materials • Use strategies to help students learn, maintain and, generalize new skills across other learning environments • Sequence, implement, and evaluate learning outcomes based on standards-based education and the Expanded Core Curriculum. • Support the activities of the classroom teacher and other professionals to address the individual’s needs as impacted by visual sensory loss. • Model specific teaching strategies • Develop career awareness by facilitating post secondary options and providing the skills related to work • monitor and facilitate the provision of human sexuality education. • Design multisensory learning environments that encourage active participation by individuals with visual impairments in group and individual activities
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Standard 6: SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted supports the creation of a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement in learning, independence and motivation.

Knowledge	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire techniques for classroom organization, instructional methods, equipment, technology and materials for individuals with visual sensory loss. • Understands the importance of self-advocacy • Understand the effects of visual impairment on the family and reciprocal impact in the individuals' self-esteem • Ability to prepare individuals with visual impairments to respond constructively to societal attitudes and actions • Understands the effect of blindness & visual impairment on social development and behavior • Ability to identify realistic expectations for personal and social behaviour of students who are blind or partially sighted in various settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create learning environments to enhance instruction and encourage self-advocacy and independence for individuals with visual impairments • Foster positive and inclusive, behavior & interactions. • Convey to parents & professionals an understanding of the impact of visual sensory loss on social development and behavior. • Identify and plan to address non-verbal mannerism & behavior that may lead to poor interpersonal interactions • Understand the value of role models, identify and teach strategies to successfully form and maintain relationships. • Support students to adapt to progressive eye conditions, • Plan and provide instruction regarding strategies for promoting self-advocacy & appropriate utilization of support personnel. • Demonstrate procedures to increase the self-awareness, independence, and self-esteem of students who are blind or partially sighted • Implement the least intrusive intervention consistent with the needs of the student who is blind or partially sighted. • Integrate social skills training into the regular classroom curriculum

Standard 7: CONSULTATION, COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted understands the importance of consultation, collaboration and communication with partners to enhance learning for students with visual sensory loss from birth to 21	
Knowledge	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors which promote effective communication and collaboration with individuals, parents, and school and community personnel. • Typical concerns of parents of children who are blind or partially sighted and appropriate strategies to address these concerns. • Effective strategies to assist in the development, implementation and evaluation of individual student programs working in collaboration with school team members (e.g., parents, classroom teachers, resource teachers, speech and language pathologists). • Roles and responsibilities of the teacher of students who are blind or partially sighted. • Role of parents, teachers, student, and other school and community professionals in the program planning process • Strategies for assisting parents and other professionals in planning appropriate transitions for students who are blind or partially sighted. • Sources of unique services, networks, and organizations for students who are blind or partially sighted (e.g., CNIB, web 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the understanding of the impact of a visual impairment on learning and experience • Identify, implement and model strategies, for working with students, parents, school and community personnel in a wide variety of learning environments. • Encourage and assist families in becoming active participants in their children’s education • Collaborate with regular classroom teachers and other school and community personnel (i.e day care, Early Intervention, preschool, other departments in government) in enhancing active participation and meaningful inclusion of individuals who are blind or partially sighted into various learning environments. • Design and manage daily routines, effectively including time for assessment and planning, report writing and instruction, of students, consultation with team members, including parents, instructional planning, administrative tasks and travel

<p>sites on the Internet, library and research services).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of role models who are blind or partially sighted and who have become successful, competent and independent adults • Ethical practices for confidential communication to others about students 	
<p>Standard 8: PERSONAL QUALITIES</p> <p>The teacher of children and youth who are blind or partially sighted continually reflects on his/her personal qualities and evaluates his/her practice while actively seeking opportunities to obtain more professional competency.</p>	
<p>Knowledge</p>	<p>Skills</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the importance of team work and being an effective participant in the successful planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs for students who are blind or partially sighted. • Understands the importance of the role and contribution of the teacher of students who are blind or partially sighted to the team members • Effective interpersonal communication skills, both oral and written. • Seeks to understand the perspective of children, parents and other team members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate well to a formal audience • Act in a professional and informative manner when conducting conferences or meetings with school personnel, parents, and students • Accepts positive criticism constructively. • React calmly to crises in work-related situations. • Perform effectively under pressure and opposition. • Adapt when unpredicted events or inconveniences occur. • Gather information before reacting or making decisions. • Use creative problem-solving techniques. • Listen to and value other points of view. • Respond to educators, parents and students in a friendly and approachable manner. • Reflect on her/his performance and adjust as necessary.