



Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



Outreach Services Low Vision Clinic Questions and Answers

Who may attend?

School-age children who:

1. Have a visual impairment.
2. Have remaining, usable vision.
3. Might be able to use their remaining vision more efficiently at school and at home with low vision aids or certain adaptive techniques.

What should I bring to Clinic?

It is necessary that you bring: textbooks and/or reading materials currently being used, any low vision aids, telescopes, glasses, and sunglasses (if used).

What is the purpose of the Low Vision Clinic?

The purpose of the Low Vision Clinic is to explore ways that may help children with vision loss use their remaining vision effectively. Low Vision Clinic staff evaluates a child's useful vision by using examination techniques designed especially for children with visual impairment. Using optical and non-optical low vision aids, staff may explore adaptive techniques that the child might find helpful. Emphasis is placed on what the child can do, not on what he or she cannot do.

*Clinic examinations **are not** a replacement for routine eye care and exams by the child's family eye doctor and are not used for eligibility purposes. Students are expected to have an updated DPI Ocular Report form completed within 3 years prior to the clinic.*

Who are the low vision specialists conducting the Clinic?

- An OPTOMETRIST who has worked extensively with low vision clients.
- A LOW VISION THERAPIST and TEACHER certified in the areas of visual impairment and knowledgeable about the needs of a child with low vision in school.
- A TEACHER certified in the area of visual impairment with expertise in distance devices and sun shades.
- A TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST familiar with equipment for persons with visual impairments.

What is a low vision aid?

A LOW VISION AID is a device designed to do one or more of the following:

- Makes objects appear larger
- Makes objects look clearer
- Reduces glare
- Positions objects or print more conveniently
- Improves contrast
- Enables the child to read longer without fatigue

What low vision aids might the child be evaluated for at the Clinic?

- Hand-held magnifiers
- Head or spectacle-mounted magnifiers or lenses
- Reading lamps
- Small hand-held telescopes
- Prescription lens systems
- Light filters
- Reading guides
- Reading stands

Will low vision aids correct the condition that caused the child's vision loss?

No. Using a low vision aid will not affect the health of the child's eyes, nor will it cause an eye disorder to get better or worse. A child might see better with an aid while he or she is using it. The aid will not cure eye disorders or restore sight to normal. A low vision aid simply supplies a means for the child to see things he or she cannot see without this additional help.

Do clinic evaluators need any information about the child prior to the Clinic?

Yes. Before evaluating a child at the Clinic, they will carefully review the records from the child's own eye doctor. This eye doctor's report is very important. It tells the Low Vision Specialists the cause of the vision loss, the extent of the loss, the prognosis, and what medical and/or prescriptive corrections have been made.

The evaluators will also review school records and teacher reports to learn how the child is using his or her vision in the classroom. Prior to the clinic evaluation, teachers and parents will complete a Functional Vision Evaluation form provided by the clinic staff. It asks simple questions about how the child uses his or her remaining vision in a variety of circumstances. Clinic staff will gladly answer questions about the form and provide assistance to parents and teachers completing it.

How will the Clinic evaluation be conducted?

The child will spend approximately one and one-half hours with a team of Low Vision Specialists who will use low vision charts and various types of lighting and evaluation techniques to examine the child's functional vision. The evaluators will observe how the child uses his or her vision without aids, and also with whatever aids the child may already have. The use of a variety of other available low vision aids will then be explored with the child in an attempt to help improve the child's ability to use his or her remaining vision more efficiently. The child may spend time with a Low Vision Specialist or Teacher trying one or more of the aids or learning more about how to use or care for an aid. Finally, a Technology Specialist will meet with the child and demonstrate vision related technology that may be helpful.

May someone accompany the child to the Clinic?

Yes. Parents and teachers are both strongly encouraged to attend with the child. This will help facilitate a mutual understanding of the child's needs and vision capabilities. Any health care professional involved in the child's eye care is also welcome.

What happens if a low vision aid is recommended?

Some low vision aids are prescription lenses. If a prescription is recommended, the child's parents will be given a written copy to be filled at any optical center of their choice.

Most low vision aids are non-prescription. The child's parents and school personnel will be provided directions and information on an individual basis about where the low vision aid(s) may be purchased.

Will there be any cost for a child to attend the Clinic?

No. There is no cost to the family or to the school system for a child to be evaluated at the Low Vision Clinic. If low vision aids are recommended, the family and/or the school system may choose whether and where to purchase the suggested aids. Low vision aids will neither be given nor sold by those conducting the Clinic. In some cases a trial aid may be loaned to the teacher.

Will there be any follow-up provided?

Yes. If a low vision aid is recommended for a child, staff from the Clinic may return upon request to work with the child, parents and teachers. Clinic staff will also be available for telephone consultation about a child's use of low vision aids.