



# Helping Students with Visual Disabilities



## Definition

Individuals with visual disabilities may have total blindness or partial sight. Students with partial sight may have very different conditions. These conditions are evaluated in various areas such as field of vision and acuity. For field of vision, some students may have good peripheral vision, but little or no central vision, or vice-versa. Other individuals may have sight in one eye only, which affects depth perception. Yet other people may have good field of vision, (peripheral and central) but their ability to focus on objects or text (acuity) is impaired. Visual disabilities often worsen over time.



## Learning

To learn effectively, a student must be able to

- 1) Receive information accurately
- 2) Organize information by selecting what is important
- 3) Understand information by relating it to past experience and knowledge
- 4) Demonstrate and apply acquired knowledge

Modifying teaching strategies and using assistive technology devices can compensate for learning difficulties.

## Potential Difficulties for Students with Visual Disabilities

- Receiving information through printed text
- Completing assignments where a TV or computer monitor is viewed
- Receiving information through visual presentations
- Producing printed material to demonstrate knowledge
- Taking notes



## Possible Teacher Modifications

- Provide class materials in large print, Braille, or on computer disk
- Use magnification devices (projection systems or individual devices)
- Emphasize audio presentation in lectures (verbal description)
- Provide additional audio description
- Place student in specialized seating
- Order textbooks early to facilitate adaptation of printed material
- Modify course

## Possible Modifications by the Learner

- Tape lectures rather than take notes
- Use reading services and volunteer note takers
- Translate printed material into an alternative format such as Braille, large print, or audiotope
- Demonstrate knowledge through verbal, rather than graphic means



## Assistive Technology

Assistive technology devices are pieces of equipment or product systems that are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of students with disabilities. Children and adults can accomplish tasks with assistive technology that would otherwise be difficult or impossible. Assistive devices and services improve a student's ability to learn, study, compete, work, and interact with family and friends.

Federal rules and regulations require each public agency/school district to provide assistive technology devices and services for students with disabilities if required as part of their special education program. Assistive technology must be considered as an option for every IEP. Assistive technology may be included in the IEP annual goals and short term objectives, supplementary aids and services, or related services. For more information, call the Utah Assistive Technology Program, Utah Parent Center, or the Disability Law Center and ask for a copy of the Family Guide to Assistive Technology. The following assistive technology devices can help students with visual impairments:

- Tape recorder
- Writing guide
- Large print software
- Large print books
- Voice recognition system
- Braille computer input and output devices
- Screen reader synthesized voice system
- Screen magnifier (mounted over computer screen)
- Magnifying devices
- Braille note taker
- Talking calculator
- Talking books (audiotaped text)
- Typoscope
- Lighting and environmental solutions



## For more information on assistive technology, contact:

Utah Center for Assistive Technology  
1595 West 500 South  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104  
888/866-5550  
E-mail: [tjackson@usor.state.ut.us](mailto:tjackson@usor.state.ut.us)  
Web: [www.usor.state.ut.us/ucatl/index.htm](http://www.usor.state.ut.us/ucatl/index.htm)

Access Utah Network  
155 South 300 West #100  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84102  
801/533-4636 (V/TTY)  
E-mail: [accessut@state.ut.us](mailto:accessut@state.ut.us)  
Web: [www.accessut.state.ut.us](http://www.accessut.state.ut.us)

Active ReEntry Independent Living Center  
451 South Carbon Avenue  
Price, Utah 84501  
435/637-4950 (V/TTY)  
E-mail: [active@arecil.org](mailto:active@arecil.org)  
Web: [www.arecil.org](http://www.arecil.org)

Options for Independence  
1095 North Main  
Logan, Utah 84321  
435/753-5353 (V/TTY)  
E-mail: [jbiggs@optionsind.org](mailto:jbiggs@optionsind.org)  
Web: [www.optionsind.org](http://www.optionsind.org)

Utah State Library for the Blind  
250 North 1950 West, Suite A  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116-7901  
800/662-5540  
E-mail: [blind@utah.gov](mailto:blind@utah.gov)  
Web: [www.state.lib.ut.us/blind.htm](http://www.state.lib.ut.us/blind.htm)

Utah Independent Living Center  
3445 South Main St.  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115  
801/466-5565 (V/TTY), 800/355-2195  
E-mail: [uilc@xmission.com](mailto:uilc@xmission.com)  
Web: [www.xmission.com/~uilc](http://www.xmission.com/~uilc)

Red Rock Center for Independence  
515 West 300 North, Suite A  
St. George, UT 84770  
435/673-7501 (V/TTY)  
E-mail: [rrci@rrci.org](mailto:rrci@rrci.org)  
Web: [www.rrci.org](http://www.rrci.org)

## For more information on your rights and assistive technology, contact:

Utah Parent Center  
2290 East 4500 South, Suite 110  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117  
800/468-1160 (V/TTY)  
E-mail: [katie@utahparentcenter.org](mailto:katie@utahparentcenter.org)  
Web: [www.utahparentcenter.org](http://www.utahparentcenter.org)

Disability Law Center  
205 North 400 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103  
800/662-9080 (V/TTY)  
E-mail: [info@disabilitylawcenter.org](mailto:info@disabilitylawcenter.org)  
Web: [www.disabilitylawcenter.org](http://www.disabilitylawcenter.org)



**Utah State**  
UNIVERSITY & The Utah Assistive  
Technology Program

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## National Programs, Products, and Services

Library of Congress  
National Library Service for the Blind  
1291 Taylor Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20542  
800/424-8567  
Web: [www.loc.gov/nls](http://www.loc.gov/nls)  
E-mail: [nls@loc.gov](mailto:nls@loc.gov)

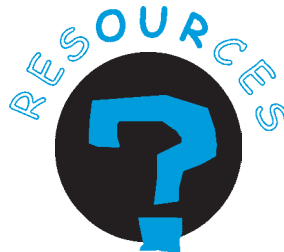
American Printing House for the Blind  
1839 Frankfort Avenue  
P.O. Box 6085  
Louisville, KY 40206-0085  
800/223-1839 or 502/895-2405  
Web: [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)  
E-mail: [cs@aph.org](mailto:cs@aph.org)

American Foundation for the Blind  
11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300  
New York, NY 10001  
800/232-5463 or 212/502-7661  
Web: [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)  
E-mail: [afbinfo@afb.net](mailto:afbinfo@afb.net)

National Federation of the Blind  
1800 Johnson Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
410/659-9314  
Web: [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)  
E-mail: [epc@roudley.com](mailto:epc@roudley.com)

American Council of the Blind  
1155 15th Street, NW, Suite 1004  
Washington, DC 20005  
800/424-8666 or 202/476-5085  
Web: [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)  
E-mail: [info@acb.org](mailto:info@acb.org)

National Association for Parents  
of Visually Impaired Children  
P.O. Box 317  
Watertown, MA 02272-0317  
800/562-6265 or 617/972-7441  
Web: [www.spedex.com/napvi](http://www.spedex.com/napvi)



**Also available in Braille, large print, audiotape, and disk formats.**

Produced by the  
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Web: [www.uatpat.org](http://www.uatpat.org)

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