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# MANAGEMENT OF LOW VISION IN CHILDREN

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Education of the Visually Handicapped



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
PROGRAMME FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

*A person with low vision is one who has impairment of visual functioning even after treatment and/or standard refractive correction, and has a visual acuity of less than 6/18 to light perception, or a visual field of less than 10° from the point of fixation, but who uses, or is potentially able to use, vision for the planning and/or execution of a task.*

### **Explanatory notes**

- (1) This working definition is solely designed for reporting purposes, and **SHOULD NOT** be used for eligibility for services.
- (2) The visual criteria included in the definition coincide with the International Classification of Diseases. Note that these refer to acuity in the better eye with correction.
- (3) In addition to the criteria included in the working definition, other impairments of visual functioning, such as low contrast sensitivity and loss of dark adaptation, should be included when they are equally disabling.
- (4) Individuals with an abnormality of the visual system, who are unable to respond on tests using symbols to measure visual acuity but who respond to visual stimuli, should be included in the classification. Where there is doubt about the presence of an abnormality of the visual system, as may occur with those who have multiple impairments, it is preferable to include the individual in the classification.

## **2. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF LOW VISION**

Visual impairment in general affects four main functional areas:

- orientation/mobility
- communication
- activities of daily life (ADL) and
- sustained near vision tasks.

The effect on these four main areas varies depending on the type of impairment and its degree and whether there are additional impairments. The development of skills in these areas is also affected by the social environment and culture in which the child lives. In children there is a particularly important aspect, the development of functions and relations, where visual impairment may play a major role. Since early intervention and special education can balance the negative effects of visual impairment in many cases, it is worth while to consider this in planning the habilitation programmes and educational support.