

## Standards of Practice for Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired

The Standards of Practice for Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired provide an overarching framework of principals to guide professional practice. These standards guide professional judgment and actions, foster a common understanding of what it means to be a member of the profession, outline expected competencies, and guide professional growth plans. Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired are required to have a Master's Degree in this specialty area or equivalent.

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| <p><b>Standard 1: Foundations</b></p> <p>The teacher of the blind and visually impaired understands and applies the foundations of education for learners with visual loss.</p>   |
| <p><b>Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners With Visual Loss</b></p> <p>The teacher of the blind and visually impaired understands the development and characteristics of learners with visual loss.</p>  |
| <p><b>Standard 3: Assessment and Program Planning</b></p> <p>The teacher of the blind and visually impaired understands the assessment process and its importance in the program planning process to support learners with visual loss.</p>   |
| <p><b>Standard 4: Instructional Methods</b></p> <p>The teacher of the blind and visually impaired utilizes assessment information to identify appropriate instructional methods for learners with visual loss.</p>  |
| <p><b>Standard 5: Learning Environment</b></p> <p>The teacher of the blind and visually impaired supports the creation of a learning environment that encourages active engagement in learning, positive social interactions and independence for learners with visual loss.</p>  |
| <p><b>Standard 6: Collaborative Partnerships</b></p> <p>The teacher of the blind and visually impaired understands the importance of building collaborative partnerships, including the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) and the CNIB, to enhance the education of learners with visual loss.</p> |
| <p><b>Standard 7: Reflective Practice</b></p> <p>The teacher of the blind and visually impaired evaluates their practice to enhance student learning and actively seeks opportunities for professional growth.</p>  |
| <p><b>Standard 8: Professional and Ethical Practice</b></p> <p>The teacher of the blind and visually impaired demonstrates ethical practice.</p>  |

**Standard 1 Foundations**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired understands and applies the foundations of education for learners with visual loss.

**Knowledge:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired knows and understands:

- 1.1 the historical perspective and philosophies of education for learners with a visual loss.
- 1.2 the causes, types and effects of visual loss.
- 1.3 the various intervention and educational options for learners with visual loss.
- 1.4 the Expanded Core Curriculum for learners with visual loss.
- 1.5 the current Service Delivery Model as outlined by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- 1.6 the department, district and school policies, guidelines and practices that support the learning and development of learners with visual loss.

**Application:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired:

- 1.1 articulates the philosophies of education for learners with a visual loss.
- 1.2 demonstrates and articulates their knowledge of causes, types and effects of visual loss.
- 1.3 implements interventions and educational options for learners with visual loss.
- 1.4 considers the continuum of placement and services for learners with visual loss.
- 1.5 applies knowledge of the current Service Delivery Model in everyday practice.

**Standard 2 Development and Characteristics of Learners With Visual Loss**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired understands the development and characteristics of learners with visual loss.

**Knowledge:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired knows and understands:

- 2.1 similarities and differences between the needs of learners with and without visual loss.
- 2.2 the developmental patterns of learners with visual loss across all developmental domains.
- 2.3 the psychosocial implications of visual loss for the learner and the family.
- 2.4 the impact of visual loss on development and learning and the associated educational implications.
- 2.5 the prevalence and impact of comorbid exceptionalities, such as hearing loss.

**Application:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired:

- 2.1 uses knowledge of vision loss and its impact to plan for programming.
- 2.2 adapts and uses instructional strategies, materials, and technology appropriate to the needs of the learner.
- 2.3 supports families in addressing their child's needs.
- 2.4 models appropriate interaction and instructional strategies to teachers and peers of learners with visual loss.
- 2.5 applies knowledge of comorbid exceptionalities to plan for programming.

### **Standard 3 Assessment and Program Planning**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired understands the assessment process and its importance in the program planning process to support learners with visual loss.

#### **Knowledge:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired knows and understands:

- 3.1 specific assessment, screening and recording instruments for learners with visual loss.
- 3.2 appropriate methods of adapting assessment techniques for learners with visual loss.
- 3.3 the relationship between assessment and program planning.

#### **Application:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired:

- 3.1 adheres to the Guidelines for Comprehensive Assessment established by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- 3.2 adapts assessment procedures when evaluating learners with visual loss, if necessary.
- 3.3 conducts, interprets and applies the results of formal and informal assessments of functional vision and learning modalities.
- 3.4 develops learning outcomes based on standards-based education and the Expanded Core Curriculum.
- 3.5 provides assessment information to the Program Planning Team.

**Standard 4 Instructional Methods**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired utilizes assessment information to identify appropriate instructional methods for learners with visual loss.

**Knowledge:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired knows and understands:

- 4.1 the importance of concept development and orientation and mobility.
- 4.2 instructional methods to address:
  - basic concepts and general knowledge
  - sensory efficiency
  - use of print adaptations
  - compensatory skills
  - organization and study skills
  - adapted physical and recreational skills
  - social and functional life skills
  - career-vocational skills
  - assistive technology skills
- 4.3 human sexuality education as it pertains to learners with visual loss.
- 4.4 the challenges posed by visual loss in consideration of work and career options.

**Application:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired:

- 4.1 supports concept development and provides orientation and mobility instruction in collaboration with the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- 4.2 selects, adapts and utilizes instructional strategies and materials appropriate to the learner with visual loss.
- 4.3 facilitates and monitors the provision of appropriate alternate format materials.
- 4.4 facilitates and monitors the provision of human sexuality education.
- 4.5 facilitates career awareness and exploration of post-secondary options.

## **Standard 5 Learning Environment and Social Interactions**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired supports the creation of a learning environment that encourages active engagement in learning, positive social interactions and independence for learners with vision loss.

### **Knowledge:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired knows and understands:

- 5.1 techniques for classroom organization, instructional methods, equipment, technology and materials for learners with visual loss.
- 5.2 the importance of preparing learners with visual loss to respond constructively to societal attitudes and actions.
- 5.3 the effect of blindness & visual loss on social development and social skills.

### **Application:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired:

- 5.1 fosters a learning environment that enhances instruction, encourages self-advocacy, independence, and active participation in group and individual activities.
- 5.2 fosters positive and inclusive behaviour & interactions.
- 5.3 implements social skills training and has realistic expectations for the learner with visual loss.

## **Standard 6 Collaborative Partnerships**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired understands the importance of building collaborative partnerships, including the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) and the CNIB, to enhance the education of learners with visual loss.

### **Knowledge:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired knows and understands:

- 6.1 typical concerns of parents of learners with visual loss.
- 6.2 factors which promote effective communication and collaboration with learners, parents, school and community partners including vision specialists.
- 6.3 the role of learners, parents, teachers, and other professionals in the program planning and transition process.
- 6.4 sources of unique services, networks, organizations and appropriate role models with visual loss.

### **Application:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired:

- 6.1 encourages and assists families in becoming active participants in their child's education.
- 6.2 facilitates the understanding of others regarding the impact of a visual loss on learning and experience.
- 6.3 identifies, implements and models strategies for parents, school and community personnel.
- 6.4 collaborates with learners, parents, teachers, and other professionals to enhance active participation and meaningful inclusion of learners with visual loss.

**Standard 7 Reflective Practice**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired evaluates their practice to enhance student learning and actively seeks opportunities for professional growth.

**Knowledge:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired knows and understands:

- 7.1 the value of meeting the needs of the learner.
- 7.2 the importance of self-evaluation and ongoing professional learning specific to the field.
- 7.3 the importance of remaining current in evidence-based practice and research in the field of vision loss.
- 7.4 the benefits of participating in professional learning communities and organizations related to the field of vision loss.
- 7.5 the importance of sharing knowledge of vision loss and its impact on learning with others.

**Application:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired:

- 7.1 reflects on practice to improve instruction and guide professional growth.
- 7.2 actively seeks opportunities for networking and professional growth.
- 7.3 develops a professional growth plan which includes activities to remain current with evidence-based practices and the latest research in the field of vision loss.
- 7.4 participates in professional learning communities and organizations related to the field.
- 7.5 provides knowledge of vision loss and its impact on learning with others.



**Standard 8 Ethical Practice**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired demonstrates ethical practice.

**Knowledge:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired knows and understands:

- 8.1 the need for confidentiality and protection of student rights.
- 8.2 professional and ethical practice.

**Application:**

The teacher of the blind and visually impaired:

- 8.1 maintains confidentiality and protects student rights.
- 8.2 applies the NLTA code of ethics in daily practice.