

National Statistics on Youth Who are Blind or Have Vision Impairments

A frequent misconception about blindness is that people who are legally blind have no vision. In reality, 80 percent of Americans who are legally blind do have some vision, 10 percent can only see light, and only 10 percent have no vision. Children can have significant visual impairments without being legally blind. According to the American Foundation for the Blind, in 2006 there were 93,600 visually impaired students, ages birth to 21, receiving services through schools and social service networks in the U.S. There were 55,200 legally blind children in the U.S. and 10,800 students who are blind-deaf. The Baylor Health Care System site estimates the rate of blindness in the U.S. is 600 out of every 10 million. Vision problems affect one in 20 preschoolers and one in four school-age children. The Minnesota Deaf-blind Technical Assistance Project estimates that deaf-blindness occurs in three of 100,000 births.

The Prevent Blindness America organization summarized a 2005 report by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) that indicated strabismus (crossed eyes) affects one in 50 children and is one of the most common childhood vision problems. Strabismus can lead to amblyopia (lazy eye), if left untreated. Untreated amblyopia results in blindness in one or both eyes and is harder to treat after the eye is fully developed by age six or seven.

Many eye problems begin at an early age and get worse without treatment, so early identification and treatment is very important. The CDC report indicated that only one in three children in the U.S. have received eye care before the age of six.

The CDC report found Asian and Hispanic children are the least likely to have their vision checked. Another finding was that only 14.6 percent of all children, ages six to 17, wear protective eye gear when playing sports, and girls are less likely to wear protection, than are boys. Forty percent of all sports-related eye injuries involve children 14 years and younger.

Wisconsin Data on Youth Who Are Blind or Have Vision Impairments

DPI data indicates during the 2005-06 school year, 463 students who were considered blind attended Wisconsin public schools. In addition to these students, many with other disabilities also were blind. The 2000 Census indicates there are approximately 300 students in Wisconsin who are deaf-blind, and some have additional disabilities. The department provides supervisory and consultation services to local educational agencies and private schools serving approximately 1,500 children with visual and dual sensory impairments.

Wisconsin School for the Visually Impaired (WSVI)

The Wisconsin School for the Visually Impaired in Janesville was established in 1852. It is administered by the Department of Public Instruction. During the 2005-06 school year, 78 students were enrolled, either full- or part-

For More Information:

American Foundation for the Blind. www.afb.org

Baylor Health Care System. Vision Problems.

www.baylorhealth.com

Prevent Blindness America. "New CDC Study Confirms Significant Number of Children are not Receiving Proper Vision Care." May 10, 2005. www.preventblindness.org/news/releases/CDC_report_2005.html

Minnesota Deaf-blind Technical Assistance Program.

Overview. www.dbproject.mn.org/overview.html

time. In addition to a standard curriculum, the school offers orientation and mobility and independent living skills training, braille instruction, and instruction with various adaptive technologies. Some students take courses through the local school district, if the classes are not offered by the school. There are adapted classes and therapy for students who have multiple handicaps. A variety of extracurricular activities are offered, including track and field, and swimming competition. Students participate in the annual Braille Olympics in which they demonstrate their skills in braille reading and writing.

The school accepts students ages three to 21 who have needs related to vision that can't be met in their local districts. Preschool students attend only as day students. Older students who live within 40 miles of the school attend as day students with transportation provided by the school. Those who live further away stay at the school during the week and are bused or flown home for the weekend and picked up again in time to start school on Monday morning. Some students attend WSVI through high school, some come only for a short time to work on braille skills, learn to use adaptive technologies, or practice orientation and mobility.

WSVI uses state-of-the-art technology and equipment to help students gain access to the world around them. Students learn to use voice activated computers, screen readers, speech-to-text applications, and magnification devices. The school's computer systems have screen reading capabilities, screen magnification programs, scan and read stations, refreshable braille displays, and CCTV (closed circuit) hookups.

The LIFEhouse program is unique to the school. Participating students live in a two-bedroom ranch designed to allow juniors and seniors an opportunity to experience independent living. Staff stay with the students but are there only to assure safety. The students are responsible for purchasing and preparing their own food, and for taking care of the house.

Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired is co-located with the Wisconsin School for the Visually Impaired. The center provides support and resources to the students and their families. The center also coordinates the outreach services offered to students and other Wisconsin residents who are blind or visually impaired. A summer program offers experiences such as a week at a dude ranch, gardening, outdoor education, or employment skills.

Center staff includes:

- birth to six consultant
- multiple impairments consultant
- orientation and mobility consultant
- low vision therapist
- specialist in assistive technology
- parent liaison
- professional development specialist
- transition specialist

The outreach staff do assessments and consultations for individuals, families, classroom teachers, and school districts to help match students with the best technology to meet their needs and help adapt curriculum. They coordinate low vision and refraction clinics and conduct orientation and mobility training opportunities. The parent liaison provides resources and activities for families and caregivers of children with low vision or who are blind and helps with summer camp opportunities. The professional development specialist coordinates continuing education opportunities for teachers of students who have visual impairments, orientation and mobility instructors, and classroom teachers. The consultants help families interpret medical reports, explain the implications of various vision disorders, and train people to use low vision optical devices. Transition services include helping students apply for and access adult service providers, explore educational and employment options, and assist with plans for independent living.

The center offers short course programs during the school year that provide intensive individual instruction or group classes in particular areas. The participants are often students who attend their local school districts but who need specialized training in areas such as orientation and mobility, braille, adaptive technologies, social skills, independent living skills, and career and vocational training.

Number of Wisconsin Students Who Were Blind or Had Vision Impairments 2005-06 by Age

Age	Number of Students
3-5	55
6-11	173
12-17	204
18-21	31
Total	463

From DPI's IDEA Child Count
www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/cc-12-1-05.html

Ongoing training coordinated through the center includes screening workshops for Usher Syndrome in cooperation with the Wisconsin Education Service Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Great Lakes Area Regional Center for Deaf-blind Education, and the Department of Public Instruction. The S.E.E.D.S. program offers educational support and empowerment for everyone on a student's learning team and fosters the partnership with the parents, local school district, and community resources. The center coordinates the Parents as Leaders (for parents of students ages birth to eight), Parents in Partnership (ages six-14), and Parents in Partnership Training (six-21) programs.

The Wisconsin National Agenda committee is a subcommittee of the National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youth with Vision Impairment and is coordinated by the center. Another program coordinated by the center is the Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative. This involves parents, school districts, Cooperative Educational Services Agencies (CESAs), and community agencies, and helps them provide a broader range of support for students with vision disabilities.

Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (WRLBPH)

The Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is part of the Talking Book Program of the Library of Congress. WRLBPH is located at the Milwaukee Public Library central headquarters. It provides braille and recorded books and playback equipment for Wisconsin residents who for any physical reason cannot read normal print. In addition, WRLBPH circulates audio-described videos, and taped and brailled materials specifically about Wisconsin or by Wisconsin authors, which it produces in alternate formats. Public libraries should keep WRLBPH informational brochures and applications on hand to give to patrons.

In 2006 WRLBPH served 385 juveniles both directly and through 582 schools, public libraries, and other institutions. There are 53 registered braille users who are children or teens. Children who have physical limitations such as cerebral palsy, arthritis, missing limbs, or any other disorder or disability that makes it difficult to hold a book or read are eligible to register for WRLBPH services. WRLBPH collaborates with local public libraries in making the summer reading programs available to its patrons and creates a bibliography of titles related to the theme. WRLBPH encourages young readers to register for the program at their local public library and use WRLBPH's materials in combination with recorded books at the library to complete their reading. Brailled activity or game sheets from the annual manual are available upon request from DLTCL.

WRLBPH Will Convert to a New Format by 2010

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) is converting from cassette to digital format beginning in 2007. The first digital books and new players will be distributed beginning in 2008, starting with approximately 650 titles. All regional libraries will be using Digital Talking Book players (DTB), devices that play "DAISY" format books on proprietary flash memory cartridges. DTB players provides instant access to specific page numbers and chapters in the DAISY structure and include a full numeric keypad with book marking feature. The mass production of new digital format books and players will gradually rise as the production of books in cassette format decreases. No books on cassette will be made after 2010.

By 2010, only about 3,500 digital talking book titles will be distributed in multiple copies to the regional libraries in each state. By then two-thirds of the current WRLBPH patrons will have digital players. The regional libraries in each state also will be able to access the 20,000 retrospective titles NLS will have ready. They will be available only as single copy downloads from NLS in cartridge format, which the patrons will have to download

Number of Registered WRLBPH Braille Users Who Are Children by Community in 2005

Abbotsford	1	Fort Atkinson	1	Mosinee	1
Baraboo	1	Green Bay	1	Niagra	1
Barron	1	Kenosha	3	Oconomowoc	1
Brookfield	2	LaCrosse	1	Port Washington	1
Brown Deer	1	Madison	5	River Falls	2
Burlington	2	Manitowoc	1	Sayner	1
Butler	1	Marinette	1	Sheboygan	1
Cashton	1	Menasha	1	St. Francis	1
Chilton	1	Mequon	1	Tomah	2
Dresser	1	Milwaukee	5	Watertown	1
Elkhart Lake	1	Monona	1	Waukesha	2
Fond du Lac	2	Monroe	1	Wauwatosa	2

A total of 53 children and teens are registered braille users of WLBPH. They range in age from four to 16 years. In addition, there are 475 registered youth patrons under the age of 21, who do not read braille. Some of these patrons are eligible for services because of disabilities unrelated to vision, but which prevent them from accessing printed materials. One hundred ninety-three of the youth patrons who don't read braille have significant reading disabilities.

themselves. The only way the WRLBPH can make these additional 20,000 titles readily and efficiently available to all patrons, is to duplicate multiple copies of them locally. To do that the WRLBPH needs to upgrade its servers and computers, and it needs a large supply of blank writeable digital talking book cartridges. If WRLBPH does not duplicate the retrospective titles, patrons with access to a computer and broadband, and who have the skills to use both, will have immediate access to 25,000 digital talking books. However, 97 percent of the library's patrons do not have such amenities and will have access to only 3,500 titles. The fundamental issue involved is equitable provision of library services to all patrons.

If the price of flash memory continues to fall and NLS can produce digital books in the same quantities as cassette books, it is unlikely the distribution centers, once considered, will be needed. In that case, the state libraries would still be responsible for duplicating and distributing the 20,000 DTBs, of which NLS plans to provide only one cartridge copy per library.

Impact of Vision Loss on the Learning Process

The impact of low vision or blindness on the development of knowledge and skills was studied by Amanda Hall Lueck at San Francisco State University. She estimated 90-95 percent of what people know is learned through vision. As a result, students with low vision are at risk of poor performance in school. Lueck found that the information students with visual impairments absorb in learning situations is more limited than that of children who can see, because incidental learning in natural environments, as well in structured educational settings, depends largely on vision. The *Foundations of Braille Literacy* publication indicates even with accommodations, students who are blind or visually impaired have significant problems with test taking. Raised-line figures or tactile lines on charts and graphs are especially problematic. Authors Carol Allman and Sandra Lewis found that concept development, or the ability to understand relationships between functions of objects and abstract ideas, is particularly affected by vision loss.

For More Information:

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- Lewis, S. and C.B. Allman. 2000. "Educational Programming." In *Foundations of Education*. M.C. Holbrook and A.J. Koenig, eds. Vol 1 (Second ed: 218-259). New York: AFB Press.
- Lueck, A.H. "Incorporating Unique Learning Requirements into the Design of Instructional Strategies for Students with Visual and Multiple Impairments: The Basis for an Expanded Core Curriculum." In *RE:view* 30, 1998.

Causes of Blindness and Vision Loss for Children

The patterns of childhood blindness and visual impairment are changing over time. Factors that affect eye disease incidences are the environment, cultural patterns, and socioeconomic status.

Signs of Possible Eye Problems

Children who have eye problems may:

- rub their eyes frequently
- close or cover one eye when they are looking at something
- tilt or thrust their head forward
- hold objects close to their eyes
- squint their eyes or frown
- have eyelids that are red-rimmed, crusted, or swollen
- have eyes that are red or watery

Problems that Often Cause Vision Loss for Children

According to the National Eye Institute, the two most common causes of vision loss for children in the U.S. are strabismus and amblyopia. Strabismus, or "crossed eyes," affects one in 50 children and involves a lack of coordination between the eyes resulting in each eye looking in a different direction instead of focusing at the same time. If not treated, strabismus can cause amblyopia. Amblyopia, commonly called "lazy eye," involves the loss of visual acuity in one eye because that eye is not used in early childhood. When the brain receives two different images from eyes that are not aligned with each other, it selects the dominant eye and ignores the other, which prevents the eye's visual pathways from developing.

Other causes of childhood vision loss include cortical visual impairment (CVI), astigmatism, hyperopia, and myopia. CVI is one of the leading cause of visual impairments for all children and causes disturbances of the visual pathways in the back of the brain. Astigmatism is a condition that makes vertical lines more clear than

horizontal ones. Hyperopia or “far sightedness” involves an eyeball that is too short for normal focusing. Myopia or “near sightedness” is a common condition that blurs objects in the distance and affects about 2 percent of children entering first grade and 15 percent of teens.

Problems that Often Lead to Blindness for Children:

According to the American Printing House for the Blind, one of the leading causes of childhood blindness is optic nerve atrophy. Other causes include retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), optic nerve hypoplasia, and prenatal conditions of which albinism is the single most common, followed by retinal congenital cataract. Accidents resulting in eye injuries are responsible for about 3 percent of children’s blindness.

Optic nerve atrophy, a malfunction of the optic nerve, accounts for 12 percent of all childhood blindness according to the National Society to Prevent Blindness. ROP is the second leading cause of blindness for children, affecting about 10 percent of children who are blind or have vision impairments. About 14,000 to 16,000 premature babies are affected by ROP annually. Optic nerve hypoplasia is the over development of the optic nerve before a baby is born. The most common causes of eye injuries are the misuse of toys and everyday tools such as silverware, pens, pencils, and garden tools; falls from beds or other furniture or down stairs; contact with harmful household products; and automobile accidents.

For More Information:

Baylor Health Care System.

www.baylorhealth.com/aboutus/press/2006/022706.htm

“Causes of Childhood Blindness Changing.” *Ophthalmology Times*, October 16, 2005.

www.opthalmologytimes.com/ophthalmologytimes/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=187364

Federation of the Blind. “Swift Treatment Prevents Childhood Blindness.” In *Distinctions* (February 2004), online newsletter of National

www.uthouston.edu/distinctions/archive/2004/February/blindness.html

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National Eye Institute. “Older Children Can Benefit From Treatment For Childhood’s Most Common Eye Disorder.” April 11, 2005.

www.nei.nih.gov/news/pressreleases/041105.asp

National Federation of the Blind. National Organization of Parents of Blind People. www.nfb.org/nopbc>About_Us.asp?SnID=950464

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What Causes Blindness? 2006. Human Diseases and Conditions. Thomas Gale. www.humanillnesses.com/original/At-Ca/Blindness.html

Deaf-blindness

The Minnesota Deaf-blind Technical Assistance Project estimates that 80 to 90 percent of information is accessed through vision and hearing. A child who is deaf learns primarily through vision; a child who is blind learns primarily through hearing. A child who is deaf-blind learns through a multi-sensory approach that makes the most use of any residual hearing or vision they have.

According to the DB-Link web site, the specific cause of deaf-blindness is not known in most situations. Heredity and pre-natal complications are responsible in some situations. Known post-natal causes include:

- Ushers syndrome, which affects 3-6 percent of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Children with Ushers are born with a hearing loss and lose their sight later. Ushers also affects balance because the semicircular cells in the retina are not functioning at birth.
- microcephaly or hydrocephaly
- asphyxia
- encephalitis, meningitis, rubella
- down syndrome
- head injury or trauma to the eyes or ears
- maternal drug use
- tumors
- stroke
- infection

For More Information:

“Causes of Childhood Blindness Changing.” In *Ophthalmology Times*, Oct. 16, 2005.

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DB-Link. Usher Syndrome.

www.dbproject.mn.org/ushersyndrome.html

Healthy Vision 2010. Impairment in Children and Adolescents (age 17 and under) www.healthyvision2010.org/exams/children.asp

Minnesota Deaf-blind Technical Assistance Project.

www.dbproject.mn.org/rp.html

—Retinitis Pigmentosa. 2004. www.dbproject.mn.org/rp.html

www.uthouston.edu/distinctions/archive/2004/February/blindness.html

Barriers to Service

Often children who are blind do not travel independently. Orientation and mobility skills take a long time to develop to a level where a child is able to safely navigate on his own in public space. As a result, librarians are

much more likely to see a child who is blind only when accompanied by someone else. Parents may assume that, since most public libraries do not have braille materials, there is not much point in taking their child to the library. However, the library can serve as an excellent place to help the child learn to interact with a group of children who do not know the child. It is helpful for the child and the other children in the program to get to know each other during the preschool years because young children tend to be much more accepting of children with differences than older children.

Strategies for Success

Collaboration

Typically parents, Birth to 3 programs, and public schools are the most likely partners when a public library is interested in collaboration for serving children who are blind. Public library systems interested in working on a regional level should contact the CESA district that covers the particular service area to see what can be worked out for a collaboration that goes beyond an individual community. The Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, the Center for the Blind, and the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped are all potential partnering agencies.

Planning

Parents of young children who are blind, Birth to 3 programs staff, older children and teens who are blind or have vision impairments, and their teachers are all likely to be able to contribute to the planning process to assist public libraries in meeting the needs of youth with visual disabilities.

Staff Training

Two important areas of staff training include appropriate interaction with someone who is blind and knowledge of adaptive equipment. There are particular etiquette and service guidelines involved in assisting someone who is blind to move from one area to another. Staff should know the basic techniques. The WLBPH and the Council of the Blind can provide this training.

Children who are blind grow up using a great deal of technology at school. It is very helpful if a public library can provide some of the same basic technologies to make it easier for students to use the library to complete homework. Some basic suggestions for computer workstations are included in this chapter, but it would be most effective for public librarians to visit with the school librarian, staff who work with students who are blind or CESA staff to find out what specific technology individual children find most helpful and purchase whatever has the most universal use for the public library.

Diversified Collections and Services

Most public libraries do not have a collection of books in braille, however, if a child in the community reads braille or a parent of a young child uses it, investment in at least some picture books with text and braille would be very helpful. This allows a child who is blind to feel the braille as sighted parents read the story, or parents who are blind can read to their children who see. Some books designed in this way and available commercially and are called "Twin Vision."

A picture book can be modified to include braille in one of two ways. One way is to take the spine off the book and have a sheet of braille inserted for each page of text and then rebind the book. This often is done with paperbacks rather than hard cover books. The other way is to have the text printed in braille on a strip of clear adhesive. The strip is then placed right on the page with the text, as if it were a piece of clear adhesive tape. There are several volunteer agencies that create brailled inserts or adhesive strips at very little cost. One such agency is the Madison Volunteer Brailists and Tapists Association, which has a number of picture books already transcribed and can make them up for libraries if the library sends them the copy of the picture book.

One consideration librarians should remember is that, if they use adhesive braille strips, it is important to ask the assistance of someone who reads braille to position the strips correctly to assure they are applied right-side up on the surface. Preschoolers who are blind want to take home books for themselves when they visit the library just as other children do. Having the duo text books available meets this need.

Public librarians should not assume that public schools tell parents of children who are blind about the services of the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (WRLBPH). Many teachers and parents first learn about WRLBPH when they come to the library looking for a source of braille books for a child. Some adults who know about the library do not realize that it carries books for children as well as adults. Every public library should have brochures for the WRLBPH, place some by the large print collection, and have

others available at the service desk. It also is helpful if the library keeps equipment to demonstrate the new players the library will be using beginning in 2008. Information on WRLBPH is included in this chapter.

Most public libraries have large print books for adults who need them, but few libraries have large print for children and teens. When young patrons visit the library who have significant vision impairments, take the time to talk to them or their parents and find out their reading interests. Purchase at least some large print titles that might be of interest to them.

Accessible Buildings, Equipment, and Outreach

Minor adjustments to the physical environment of the library can make life much easier for children and teens who are blind or who have vision impairments. Universal design can make public spaces comfortable and functional for people with vision impairments as well as the general public. Elements of universal design are explained in the *Adults with Special Needs* publication published by DLTCL. Some features that apply particularly to young children are:

- Have portable lighting available.
- Make sure all floor coverings are secure and all walking surfaces are level.
- Select upholstery with texture because it then gives the children tactile clues.
- Avoid protruding fixtures—phones, drinking fountains, and fire extinguishers. They should be inset and flush with the wall.
- Chair railings in halls help guide people.
- Keep clutter off the floors to prevent tripping.

Other things that might be especially helpful to young children who are blind or have significant visual impairments are:

- If there are toys in the youth department, make sure some have a great deal of texture.
- Place art objects that can be touched in places low enough for children to feel them.
- Include scratch and sniff picture books; refresh the stickers in them as they wear out.
- Include books with tactile elements or parts that make a noise when touched.
- Supply oversized, colored keyboards, with brailled letters on the keys.
- Include software for young children that reads the text and touch screen games that make interesting noises.
- If the library circulates educational toys, include some that have high texture and others that include sound.
- Purchase some children's videos in described format and be sure the spine is labeled in braille to make them easy to find so that, once they are taken home, the parent or child can read the title.

Adapting Story Time for Children Who Are Blind or Have Significant Vision Loss

Most children who have a loss of vision can be helped by wearing glasses to correct their vision. At library programs, the only accommodation these children need is for the librarian to model acceptance and encourage other children to be friends with the child. Other children in programs attended by a child who is blind may be curious about vision or mobility aids, and the librarian can help explain these tools, limitations and things the child can do for herself, and appropriate ways to interact with her.

The American Federation of the Blind stresses the need for visually impaired children to learn by touching, listening, smelling, tasting, moving, and using whatever vision they have. In infant and toddler programs encourage parents of children who are blind or who have significant visual impairments to describe to their

Services to Children and Adults Who Have Low Vision in Janesville

The Hedberg Public Library in Janesville received Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding in 2006 for a project intended to serve both children and adults who have low vision. They purchased adaptive software, JAWS, which reads out loud the text on a computer screen. The software will be added to computers in both the adult and children's areas. They also purchased a Simon scanner that works with JAWS to enlarge the text on items that are scanned. This might include the pages of a book, a letter, bill, or magazine article. Another purchase was a closed caption color TV (CCCTV), which is a stand alone unit that magnifies the same types of items but is useful to people who are not familiar with computers. The library collaborated with the School for the Blind, the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Janesville School District, and Blackhawk Technical College, and held focus groups to determine which products were most needed and had the best application in a public library setting. The partnering agencies worked with the library to assure their clients and students attended a training session to learn how to use the equipment and assisted in training library staff on their use.

babies what other babies are seeing, and to let them touch and play with objects used during the programs.

In story time for preschool children:

- Try to add tactile objects to the program so the child has something to hold that helps the child understand parts of the story. Vary objects with texture, sound, smell, and color, if the child has some vision.
- Use big books if the child has some vision and/or give the child a second copy of the book being used during the program, if the child needs to hold it close to his eyes to see the illustration. If that is not possible, hold each page out to the child and let the child bring it into the right position to see it. Allow time for him to scan the illustration to pick up on the detail. Talk to the other children about things related to the page to fill the time while the child looks at the illustration.
- If the child wears glasses, include glass frames without lenses, sunglasses, and protective gear such as a scuba mask or swim goggles, and a safety mirror for children to try on and look at themselves before and after the program.
- Put out a doll or stuffed animal with toy glasses and a stuffed guide dog.
- If the child uses a white cane for mobility, ask the child and parent to explain how it is used. Paint a wooden dowel and put red tape around the bottom, to let children try walking with a “white cane.” Children internalize their understanding of the world around them by playing or acting out their understanding. Playing with the cane or a model of one helps them understand and relate to a child who uses a cane for mobility.
- It is unlikely a child who is blind would have a guide dog, but if there is someone in the community who uses one, invite the adult to the story time and ask them to demonstrate and describe the work the dog does. Explain to the children that they should not touch or talk to a service dog when it is working, or any dog without first asking the owner’s permission.

Adapting Story Time for Children Who Are Deaf-blind

The Minnesota Deaf-blind Technical Assistance Project suggests heeding Eric Kloos’s advice, “Don’t be off the student’s radar!” If the child cannot see or hear a librarian, the librarian may as well not be there. The project also discusses advice from Susan Smith, a parent of several children who are deaf-blind. She coined the term “communication bubble” to represent the space within which a person must be in order to communicate effectively with a child who is deaf-blind. The size of the bubble may be different depending on the amount of vision and or hearing a child may have and on the type of communication going on.

It is important to try to make the most of whatever residual hearing or vision a child has in the communication process. If a child can only see out of the upper part of one eye, anything presented on the one side or below the level of the pupil will be “off the radar.” The child will not see it or participate in the discussion about the object or image. A child with tunnel vision may be able to see perfectly in the center but not at all to the sides. Children may need to bring objects very close to their eyes to see them. If a child only hears out of one ear, only information presented on the correct side will be heard. If hearing is reduced on both sides, the child will have difficulty hearing in a noisy environment. Techniques to help children who are deaf-blind must be individualized based on the child’s needs. It is important for the librarian to ask the adult bringing the child to the program to help identify techniques that will work best. The techniques used depend on how much residual hearing and vision the child has, and if the child has additional disabilities.

- Help the parent or caregiver introduce the child to the other children, explain what the child can do and likes, what the child finds difficult, and explain to the other children how to interact with the child.
- Follow the techniques suggested by the adult accompanying the child to lead her to where the librarian will be sitting.
- If the child has little or no vision, it may help to place the child’s hand on the librarian’s lap or knee so the child knows where the librarian is all of the time. Take the child’s hand to change activities. This may not be necessary if the child has enough vision or hearing to understand what is happening.
- Ask the adult accompanying the child if it would be helpful to manipulate his hands, fingers, or body to help him participate in finger plays and songs.
- Use as many tactile objects as possible and have the child hold or touch each one. Allow all the children to touch and handle the objects so that tactile learning is a routine part of the program. Use objects with color or sound that make the most use of residual vision and hearing.
- Use scratch-and-sniff books and allow all the children to sniff the pages. Try matching an object with a scratch-and-sniff sticker or marker that has the same scent as the objects, particularly food items.

Adaptive Technologies

Staff at the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped assisted DLTCL staff in identifying core features that help make a workstation accessible. To accommodate patrons who are blind or have vision impairments, software that enlarges the text on the screen is recommended. One example is ZoomText. Also recommended is software that reads the text on the screen out loud, such as JAWS and WindowEyes.

The Wisconsin Center for the Blind provides the following descriptions of adaptive technologies commonly used by children and teens who are blind or who have a vision impairment.

Screen readers read aloud text displayed on a computer screen. They can describe graphics and allow students who are visually impaired to use almost any computer program, such as CD players, spreadsheets, and word processing software. In addition, screen readers re-format web pages so that frames and tables can be read coherently. There are a variety of screen readers available. A refreshable braille display allows a computer user to translate the text displayed on the computer screen into braille. There have been increased requests in the past two or three years by patrons for screen readers on public library workstations.

Screen magnification software applications allow the user to adjust text size, contrast, and text and background colors on a computer. These applications also permit the user to enlarge a selected portion of the screen.

Scanners, scanning software, and OCR (optical character recognition) are software programs used in combination to scan text. These applications have a built-in screen reader so that they can be used by persons who require speech output. With editing, printed matter scanned using these applications can be produced in large print or braille.

Braille embossers and translation software allow a computer user to produce material in braille. Embossers are available that can produce one or two sided (Interpoint) braille text and embossed graphics.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) devices are used to magnify printed matter with or without the use of a computer or scanner. A book, letter, or photograph is placed on a platform that slides on tracks. As the user moves the track, the image is displayed in large print or is magnified on a screen. The size of the display can be increased or decreased depending on the needs of the user. Also, the contrast, background color and font color may be adjusted to meet the unique requirements of the person using the CCTV. A portable CCTV can be placed on top of the text and moved over the text to read it in the same way a full-sized CCTV works.

Note taking devices are used by students who are blind in the same way sighted users might use a notepad to take notes. These devices are small, lightweight, and portable with keyboards identical to the keyboard on a traditional braille writer. The devices read back the text orally. The devices interface with printers, computers, and braille embossers to provide hard copy in print or in braille. They also can be used with a computer to download and transfer data files. Portable disk drives and modems are available for all the note takers so that they can function as stand-alone computers. Software is available to assist with the management of checking accounts, keeping personal calendars and playing games. Typically note taking devices are more likely to be owned by the user rather than a public library.

For more information:

Wisconsin Center for Blind. Technology.
www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/technology/index.html

Digital Talking Book Players (DTB) are devices that play "Daisy" formatted books on a CD-ROM. These players provide access to specific page numbers and chapters, and a full numeric keypad with book marking feature.

Marketing

One good way to reach children and teens who are blind is to work with the local schools. Send brochures to the school and ask staff who work with youth who are blind or who have vision impairments to help promote programs that may be of special interest to these children. Parents may give the library their home email address to allow the library to send electronic versions of program fliers to them directly.

If parents who are blind bring their sighted children to story times, enlarge informational or program brochures or have them transcribed into braille for the parents. Routinely print some library service brochures, bookmarks, bibliographies, and program fliers in large print, and have them transcribed into braille if regular patrons use braille or as requested. Check to see if there are parent support groups in the area for parents of children who are blind and ask to be put on their mailing list. Send library information to be included in the group's newsletter.

Libraries should make sure their web page design complies with the web content accessibility guidelines of the W3C.

Getting Started with Little Money or Time: Serving Children Who Are Blind or Have Visual Impairments

Collaboration

- Ask parents of young children who have visual disabilities for suggestions on meeting their needs.
- Involve older children and teens who have visual impairments in planning services and selecting materials of interest to them.
- Ask local teachers who work with children who are blind or who have visual impairments, or CESA staff, to help promote public library services and materials, especially during the summer library program.
- Work with the WRLBPH to raise awareness about the upcoming format change and to help familiarize the public with its services.

Planning

- Discuss the needs of a child who is blind with her parent or caregiver and ask for suggestions on purchases of books on tape, descriptive videos, large print, Twin Vision picture books, toys, and games that meet the child's needs.
- Adjust resources as the child matures to assure there are always materials of interest to him at the library.
- Talk with teachers or other professionals who work with children who are blind or have vision impairments to explore ways to make the library easier for them to use.
- Offer the parents of a child who is blind a brochure from the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and explain what services are available for children and teens.

Staff Training

- All staff should know how to interact appropriately when assisting someone who is blind and how to guide them when needed to walk from one location to another. Be as descriptive as possible about what is being done or the materials offered.
- All staff need to know that guide dogs and other assistive animals are permitted by law to accompany their owners in public buildings. Librarians may not request proof that the animal has special training, but it is acceptable to ask what kind of tasks the animal is trained to do. That will help staff determine if the animal is a working animal or a pet. Service dogs usually wear a special harness, vest, or leash identifying them as working animals. Staff should know not to touch or talk to an assistive animal.

Diversified Collections and Services

- Adjust resources as the child matures to assure there are always materials of interest to him at the library.
- Purchase at least some picture and chapter books in large print for children who have low vision.
- If the library circulates educational toys, purchase some recommended as being especially helpful for children who are blind and that stimulate the senses in terms of textures, sound, color, and varying weights.
- Purchase at least some picture books in braille, Twin Vision, or raised graphics, so that the child will have at least one or two to check out from the library when they visit. Just as children who are sighted need books with text before they can read, so do children who will someday be reading braille need to experience brailled books before for they can read them.

Accessible Buildings, Equipment, and Outreach

- Greet every child as they come into the library, but especially those who have vision disabilities.
- Assure an accessible path is maintained throughout the library to allow both parents and children who are blind to navigate the library as independently as possible. Make a sweep of the youth department when a child who is blind comes to the library to assure that objects that might trip the child have not been left out on the floor by other children and push in all chairs around tables.
- All permanent signage should be brailled, such as room signs, especially the bathrooms, section indicators on the end of stacks, and other commonly used informational signage.
- Include software on at least one computer used by parents who are blind in the adult department and one in the youth department that enlarges text or reads text out loud.

- Have at least one workstation in the adult department with a keyboard that has large print letters and numbers and at least one oversized, colored keyboard in the youth department.
- If the keyboards are not brailled, purchase a set that can be adhered to the keyboards the library owns. Request assistance from someone who uses braille to help to assure the text is placed upright on the keys.
- Provide floor and table lamps that can be moved around as needed. It is helpful if they are full-spectrum lights.
- Have low tech adaptive equipment available for in-house use, hand or table magnifiers, some with lights, bar or strip magnifier, and perhaps a pen-like device that scans a line of text such as a phone number and either displays it in large print or reads it out loud. Purchase a large child-safe table top magnifier and safety hand magnifying glasses for the youth department.
- Ask parents and teachers of children who are blind what types of equipment would be most helpful to the child.
- Request assistance from DLTCCL in getting activity sheets converted to tactile graphic format, especially during the summer library program.
- If stickers are given to children, have some that are fuzzy or are in some way tactile to give to children who can't see the regular ones. If images are stamped on children's hands, use a scented stamp pad so the child can smell the stamped image.
- Use scented and textured art materials like markers and textured papers whenever possible.

Marketing

- Offer the parents of a child who is blind a brochure from the WRLBPH and explain the services available to youth.
- Display signage and brochures for the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped near the large print collection in both the adult and in the children's department.
- Make large print versions of the library's service brochures available. If a child can read large print, make at least one copy of all youth activity fliers, bookmarks, and bibliographies in large print.
- If events are of special interest to or are especially appropriate for children who have vision problems, ask the local teachers who work with the children to tell them about the programs and to send fliers home to promote the program.
- Review the library's web page and assure that universal design standards are met and assure that screen readers are able to access the page. All graphics should be described.

Observe These Awareness Events

There are many vision and blindness awareness events sponsored throughout the year. Check the web sites of the sponsors listed below for the exact dates of events each year.

January

Glaucoma Awareness sponsored by Glaucoma Research Foundation www.glaucoma.org/learn/glaucoma_aware.html

February

Kids E.N.T. (Ears, Nose, Throat) Month sponsored by American Academy of Otolaryngology
www.mcw.edu/display/router.asp?docid=3894

March

Low Vision/AMD Awareness sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology www.aao.org/patients/eyemd/amd.cfm

April

Sports Eye Safety Month sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology
www.aao.org/aao/patients/eyemd/sports.cfm

May

Healthy Vision month sponsored by the National Eye Institute www.nei.nih.gov

June/July

Fireworks Eye Safety Months sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology
www.aao.org/aao/patients/eyemd/fireworks.cfm

Deaf-blind Awareness Week sponsored by Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-blind Youths and Adults

www.hknc.org

August

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month sponsored by Prevent Blindness America www.preventblindness.org

Cataract Awareness Month sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology

www.aao.org/aao/patients/eyemd/cataract.cfm

September

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month sponsored by Prevent Blindness America www.preventblindness.org

October

Eye Injury Prevention Month sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology

www.aao.org/aao/patients/eyemd/injury.cfm

World Blindness Awareness Month sponsored by the American Association of Ophthalmologists www.aao.org

Sight Night for the Lions' Club. (Used eye glasses are collected while children trick or treat.)

www.lionsclubs.org/EN/content/vision_sight_snight.shtml (always October 31)

November

Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness sponsored by the American Association of Ophthalmologists

www.aao.org/aao/patients/eyemd/diabetic_eye_disease.cfm

December

Safe Toys and Celebrations sponsored by the American Association of Ophthalmologists

www.aao.org/aao/patients/eyemd/toys_celebrations.cfm

Resources

Periodicals

Braille Monitor

The monthly publication of the National Federation of the Blind is available in braille, print, on record and cassette.
www.nfb.org/nfb/braille_monitor.asp

Future Reflections

Also published by the NFB, *Future Reflections* is a quarterly magazine for parents and educators of children who are blind. www.nfb.org/nfb/Future_Reflections.asp

Matilda Ziegler Magazine

This is a general interest monthly publication available in grade two braille and half-speed cassettes..
www.zieglermag.org

News line for the Blind, a WRLBPH service

This is a 24-hour toll-free telephone newspaper reading service accessible by touch tone phone. The *Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Wisconsin State Journal*, *The Capital Times* and *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* are available. 800-242-8822. www.blind.net/bons0004.htm

National Resources

A to Z Deaf-blindness www.deaf-blind.com

The site has links to many other sites and includes such interesting sections as poetry page and videos for training.

American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults (AAF) www.actionfund.org

This is a free lending library of books in braille and Twin Vision format through the mail, located in Baltimore, Maryland.

American Association of the Deaf-blind (AADB) www.aadb.org

AADB is a consumer advocacy organization for people who have combined hearing and vision impairments.

American Council of the Blind (ACB) www.acb.org

ACB is a major source of information about blindness.

The Braille Forum www.acb.org/magazine

This monthly magazine is on education, technology, recreation, and advocacy.

American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) www.afb.org

AFB provides information on aids, appliances, employment, dog guides, and library services.

Braille Bug www.afb.org/braillebug/

This site offers children their names in braille, games, and codes.

DOTS for Braille Literacy newsletter www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=6&TopicID=19

DOTS is a quarterly newsletter on teaching and using braille

Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness (JVIB) www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=54

Let's Play 2006: A Guide to Toys for Children with Special Needs www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=62

Guide to Toys www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=60

American Library Association www.ala.org

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) www.ala.org/ala/ascla/ascla.htm

Library Serving Special Populations Section www.ala.org/ala/ascla/asclaourassoc/asclasections/lssps/lssps.htm

Library Service to People with Visual or Physical Disabilities Forum

www.ala.org/ala/ascla/asclaourassoc/lssps/lspvpdf/lspvpdf/forum.htm

Revised Standards of Service for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

<http://atyourlibrary.org/ala/ascla/asclapubs/asclapublications.htm>

Francis Joseph Campbell Award given annually to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of library services for people who are blind or physically handicapped.

www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=awards

The ASCLA/KLAS/National Organization on Disability Award is a \$1,000 award and certificate for a library organization that has provided services for people with disabilities. www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=asclaawards

American Macular Degeneration Foundation www.macular.org

The foundation conducts research and provides educational information on Macular Degeneration.

American Printing House for the Blind www.aph.org

This is a source for adapted educational and daily living products.

What is CVI? Why your child/students may have impaired vision. www.aph.org/cvi/define.html

Baylor Health Care System www.baylorhealth.com

Braille Bookstore www.braillebookstore.com

The Braille Bookstore is a source for books, gifts, toys, games, and housewares in braille.

Center for Deaf-blind Persons, Inc. www.deaf-blind.org

The center helps people who are deaf-blind achieve as much independence as possible.

Closing the Gap www.closingthegap.com

This organization is a leader in adaptive technologies and sponsors an annual conference in Minneapolis.

Council for Exceptional Children www.cec.sped.org

The council is dedicated to improving educational outcomes for children with disabilities.

Division on Visual Impairments www.ed.arizona.edu/dvi/welcome.htm

DB-LINK — The National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-blind www.tr.wou.edu/dblink/
Deaf-blind Info www.deaf-blindinfo.org

The Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division has an extensive web site of deaf-blind resources.

Deaf-blindness Web Resource www.deaf-blind.co.uk/

This web site has an extensive listing of internet resources related to deaf-blindness.

DVS Home Video <http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/pages/mag/resources/dvs-home-video-catalogue.html>

This is a source for videos that describe the action in a film when there is no dialog.

EnableMart www.enablemart.com/

This is a source for the Reading Pen that scans a line of text or words and enlarges them.

The Foundation Fighting Blindness www.blindness.org

The foundation researches the cause and prevention of retinitis pigmentosa, macular degeneration, and Usher's syndrome.

The Hadley School for the Blind www.hadley-school.org

Located in Winnetka, Illinois, this school offers distance learning courses for blind individuals age 14 and up.

Helen Keller National Center For Deaf-blind Youth and Adults (HKNC) www.hknc.org

The center provides short-term comprehensive vocational rehabilitation training and work experience training to deaf-blind clients.

Helen Keller Services for the Blind www.helenkeller.org

This is a rehabilitation training center that provides training in vocational skills, computer technology, and orientation.

Hilton/Perkins Program - Perkins School for the Blind www.perkins.org

Emphasis of the program is on multi-handicapped blind and deaf-blind infants, toddlers, and children.

Lekotek National Center www.lekotek.org

Lekotek National Center is a national resource on toys and play for children with special needs.

Able Play Toy Guide www.ableplay.org

Toys R Us Toy Guide for Differently Abled Kids www.lekotek.org/services/toyind/toysrus.html

Lighthouse International www.lighthouse.org

Lighthouse International provides vision rehabilitation services, education, research, prevention and advocacy.

Causes of Blindness. www.lighthouse.org/educ_stats4.htm

Minnesota Deaf-blind Technical Assistance Project www.dbproject.mn.org

National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired (NAPCVI) www.spedex.com/napvi/

The association offers free loan of large print books for children.

National Braille Pres www.nbp.org

This is a source for braille, large print, and Twin Vision books.

ReadBooks! Program www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/readbooks/index.html?id=Nn98yu6x

Braille book bags are sent to families of children who are blind or visually impaired, birth to age seven.

National Center for the Blind and the International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind.

AAF provides a free book each month from popular reading series for youth.

National Eye Institute (NEI) www.nei.nih.gov

As one of the National Institutes of Health, NEI conducts and supports research on eye diseases and disorders.

National Federation of the Blind (NFB) www.nfb.org

NFB provides advocacy services and information about blindness, scholarships, aids, and adaptive technologies.

Braille Monitor www.nfb.org/nfb/braille_monitor.asp

This is a monthly publication in various formats including email, featuring issues and concerns of the blind, advocacy, civil rights, education, rehabilitation, technology, and assistive devices.

Newsline for the Blind www.blind.net/bons0004.htm

A 24 hour toll-free telephone newspaper reading service accessible by touch tone phone.

Good Toys for Blind Kids: Suggestions from Parents www.nfb.org (See Resources section)

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHY) www.nichcy.org

This is a clearinghouse on disabilities and related issues involving children birth to age 22.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) www.nih.gov/

NIH is the national medical research agency.

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) www.loc.gov/nls/

NLS administers a free library program of braille and audio materials circulated free mail.

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC) www.nfb.org (See [Information About Vision Loss section](#))

NOPBC is a national organization of parents and friends of blind children.

Future Reflections www.nfb.org/Future_Reflections.asp

This quarterly publication focuses on issues involving children who are blind from birth through college age.

Prevent Blindness America www.preventblindness.org

Prevent Blindness America provides research, education and service program as well as distribution of informational pamphlets.

The Eye Patch Club www.preventblindness.org/children/eye_patch_club_intro.html

This is a supportive program for families during a child's amblyopia patching treatment.

Seedlings Braille Books for Children www.seedlings.org

Anna's Book Angel Project www.seedlings.org/bkangel.php

Drawings are made of registered users to get a free book from the child's wish list.

Keep Kids in Touch www.seedlings.org/touch.php

This is a free summer braille reading program which includes Wisconsin.

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired www.tsbvi.edu

The school is a resource to parents of children who are deaf-blind and professionals who serve them.

Utah State University www.usu.edu

Center for Persons with Disabilities

Web Accessibility in Mind (Webaim) www.webaim.org/articles/

Webaim covers web page accessibility issues for people with limited vision or who are blind.

Wisconsin Resources

Badger Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired www.badgerassoc.org

This is a Milwaukee-based organization that operates a housing unit for adults who are blind, sells low-vision aids and appliances and has an activity center for social and recreational activities.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr/bep.htm

As part of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the program assists blind people who want to establish a business.

Center for Blind and Visually Impaired Children, Inc. www.cbvic.org

The center offers parents of children who are blind (ages birth to five) orientation, mobility, and various therapies.

Center for Deaf-blind Persons, Inc. <http://my.execpc.com/~dbcenter/>

The center provides rehabilitation services and training for adults who are both blind and deaf.

National Federation of the Blind-Wisconsin www.nfbwis.org

This is the state chapter of the National Federation of the Blind.

Prevent Blindness-Wisconsin www.preventblindness.org

State chapter of Prevent Blindness America. www.preventblindness.org/wi/

Silver Lake College www.sl.edu

Wisconsin Deaf-blind Education www.tr.wou.edu/dblink/people/statefact/showstate.cfm?state=WI&display=Wisconsin

This is a federally-funded program at Silver Lake College that serves people who are deaf-blind and their families.

Volunteer Services for the Visually Handicapped, Inc. www.vsvh.org

This is a volunteer-based agency dedicated to transcribing text into braille.

Volunteer Brailleists and Tapers, Inc.-Madison WI www.vbti.org

Volunteers transcribe print materials to braille or audiocassette. They have a small lending library of brailled children's trade books, large print and Twin Vision books, and brailled-text books (usually for college students). They offer services to public libraries as well as individuals.

Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI) www.wati.org

Assistive Technology Fact Sheet #3: Assistive Technology for Children with Vision Impairments and Blindness. www.wati.org/AT_Services/factsheet3.html

Wisconsin Center for the Blind www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us

Technologies www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/technology/index.html

Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCB&VI) www.wcblind.org

The council offers programs in low vision assessment, orientation, mobility instruction, scholarships for technical school and college students, free white canes, eye research grants, and low-interest home loans for people who are blind.

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services www.dhfs.state.wi.us

DHFS coordinates social services for people who are blind or who have vision problems.

Division of Disability and Elder Services (DDES) www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/aboutDHFS/DDES/

Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired www.dhfs.state.wi.us/blind/

This office coordinates social services for people who are blind through 14 regional offices in Appleton, Eau Claire, Green Bay, LaCrosse, several in Madison and Milwaukee, Rhinelander, Sheboygan, Superior, Waukesha and Wausau.

Visually Impaired Support Groups www.dhfs.state.wi.us/blind/VisuallyImpdSupport.htm

Dog guides www.dhfs.state.wi.us/blind/DogGuides.htm

List of Wisconsin assistive technology dealers <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/disabilities/wistech/index.htm>

List of companies that provide adaptive equipment www.dhfs.state.wi.us/blind/AdaptiveEquipmt.htm.

Wisconsin Independent Living Centers www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/disabilities/Physical/ILCs.htm

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction <http://dpi.wi.gov>

DPI manages vision-related programs in local educational agencies and CESA.

Department of Special Education <http://dpi.wi.gov/spedhtml>

IDEA Child Count <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/cc-12-1-05.html>

IDEA provides child count for state special education by category.

Programs for Students who are Deaf-blind <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/deafblind.html>
Programs for the Visually Impaired <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/vision.html>
Special Education Reports www2.dpi.state.wi.us/leareports
This report provides district counts of children in special education categories.

Outreach Services www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/outreach/index.html
Children's Summer School www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/outreach/ou05childss.html
Consultation, Assessment, and Evaluation www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/outreach/ouconsul.html
LIFEhouse www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/lifehouse/index.html
Materials and Production Loan Inventory www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/outreach/ouinvent.html
Ongoing Training and Learning www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/outreach/outraini.html
Professional Collection www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/outreach/ouprofes.html
Technology www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/technology/index.html

Wisconsin Educational Services Programs for Students who are Deaf-blind <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/deafblind.htm>
Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (WCBVI) www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/wsvh/index.html
The school provides a residential program for students who have severe visual impairments.

Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us
Located at the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped in Janesville, the center provides services to CESAs, classroom teachers who have blind children in their classrooms, parents and other individuals and organizations interested in services for people who have severe visual impairments. There are regional sites in West Allis, Portage, Oshkosh and Turtle Lake.

Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and the School for the Visually Impaired (WRLBPH)
<http://dpi.wi.gov/rll/wrlbph>
WRLBPH sends braille materials, recorded books players, and descriptive videos as well as adaptive tools and special equipment by mail to people registered to receive its services.

Wisconsin Educational Outreach Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WESP-DHH Outreach).
www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov

Wisconsin Lions Club www.wilions.org
Lions Eye Bank of Wisconsin <http://lebw.org>