



## **Assistive Technology for Students with Visual Impairments: Ten Important Things You Should Know**

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1. Not all vision loss is the same. You need to consider acuity, field cuts, light sensitivity, depth perception, eye movements and peripheral vision. Medical Assessment is provided by an ophthalmologist and a Functional Vision Evaluation is most often provided by a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment (TVI).
2. Eligible students with visual impairment are followed by TVIs beginning with Early Intervention programs and continuing through school programs according to IDEA Federal and State Regulations.
3. No tech and low tech accommodations include things such as preferential seating, reading stands, light boxes, felt tip markers, bold or raised line paper, hand held magnifiers, large print books, calculators with large keys and/or speech output, color-coding strategies, etc.
4. In order to determine if a student could benefit from additional technology, an Assistive Technology Assessment (in the natural environment, if possible) should be provided in collaboration with the TVI and educational team. It is helpful if the student has had a Low Vision Evaluation, a Functional Vision Evaluation and a Learning Media Assessment prior to an Assistive Technology Evaluation.

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5. Assistive Technology Evaluations should be provided by professionals who have knowledge and experience with vision technologies and applications.
6. Once appropriate accommodations and technologies are identified, they should be included in the student's IEP with a plan for short term and long-term implementation, linked to appropriate goals.
7. Most visually impaired students use a combination of accommodations for class participation and learning needs, including e-text, or voice synthesizing computers, optical scanners, readers, and Braille.
8. Device training is critical for the student to insure operational and functional competency, and to the family and the educational team to insure support.
9. The successful use of assistive technology by a student with visual impairment can help in obtaining greater independence and in achieving personal and professional goals throughout their lives.
10. In Rhode Island, the RI Materials Access Center, located at TechACCESS, is available to provide students and districts with access to Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) this includes large print, braille and accessible digital materials. Visit <http://www.techaccess-ri.org/rimac/> for additional information.

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