

Making a referral to ADS-Bureau of Education, Services for the Blind (BESB) for vision services

A guide for 0-3 and other providers

Who is eligible for services from ADS-BESB Children's Services?

Children aged 0-21 who are Visually Impaired or Legally Blind.

Legal blindness (LB) vs. visual impairment (VI)

(a) A child is legally blind when their central visual acuity is 20/200 or greater in the better eye with correction. Children with a field limitation of less than 20 degrees also qualify under this definition.

(b) A child has impaired vision when their central visual acuity is in the range of 20/70 – 20/200 in the better eye with correction.

Simply stated:

LB (Legal Blindness) = 20/200 or worse or visual field less than 20 degrees
VI (Visually Impaired) = 20/70 – 20/200

**Children who have a documented visual functioning of 20/70 may be considered for BESB services. If the doctor is unable to determine a visual acuity and has documented an observed visual functioning of 20/70 or worse, the child may be considered for BESB services. This applies to both ocular and brain-based visual impairments.

How to refer to BESB: Use the form below or on our website and FAX to (860) 706-5809
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/AgingandDisability/FORMS/besb_eye_report_form.docx

The following link can also be used and provides a more efficient way of submitting your child's eye report

<https://adsapps.ct.gov/EyeReport/Default.aspx>

An ophthalmologist, optometrist, family doctor, pediatrician, neurologist, APRN, or other appropriate medical professional must use the eye report form or link when submitting a referral. Additional information related to vision may also be submitted.

Eye doctors are required by law to refer their patients in Connecticut who are legally blind BUT not those who are visually impaired. You may need to ask for a referral if a child's visual impairment is questionable or not severe. Keep in mind that many minor visual impairments may not be severe enough to qualify for BESB services. Providing the doctor with the BESB Eye Report Form or link will help move the referral process along in a more efficient manner. For those children that are too young to assess or do not respond to traditional testing, there is a space on the eye report form for the doctor to relay that information. For such cases, a BESB education consultant may follow-up with a functional vision assessment to determine eligibility.

When BESB receives a referral, the eye report is “coded” LB (legally blind), VI (visually impaired), NVI (not visually impaired) or FVI (functionally visually impairment).

- If coded LB or VI, an Intake Form is sent to the parent or legal guardian to complete and sign. BESB is unable to begin services until the Intake Form is returned to BESB. Services are not mandatory and can be refused/requested at any time.
- If NVI, the family is notified, and can seek another medical opinion if they wish to pursue eligibility. Families can also request a one-time consultation.
- If coded FVI, the family will be notified and a Teacher for the Visually Impaired will schedule a visit to perform a functional vision assessment. This assessment will determine eligibility for BESB services.
- If there is not enough information to make an eligibility determination, the referral is sent back to the doctor with a request for more information.