

**GUIDELINES FOR A CASELOAD FORMULA  
FOR TEACHERS CERTIFIED IN THE  
AREA OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

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**August 2003**

# RESOURCE ALLOCATION COMMITTEE SUMMARY REPORT

(May 1995 / Revised April 2001 and August 2003)

This is a summary of the work of the Resource Allocation Committee. The purpose of the Resource Allocation Committee has been to determine reasonable guidelines for caseload management. This committee was one of three established as a result of Colorado State legislation (Exceptional Children's Education Act at CRS 22-20-108 (4.5) (c) that was passed in the spring of 1994, which addressed achievement of literacy by children who are visually impaired.

The Resource Allocation Committee members included personnel certified in the area of visual impairment from various parts of the state and representatives of an advocacy organization, the National Federation of the Blind. The document has been updated on two occasions since 1995 with minor modifications. The tool has also been published in a major text in the field of educating learners with visual impairments.

## **Introduction to Caseload Management Guidelines**

The Resource Allocation Committee's intent is to have guidelines for teachers certified in the area of visual impairments that are "user friendly" and are specifically targeted to the needs of each school district or administrative unit. Teachers certified in the area of visual impairments should review the caseload management guidelines annually in order to address changes that occur in programs. By completing the steps listed in the guidelines that follow, districts will be better able to assess and document their staffing needs and plan for anticipated changes.

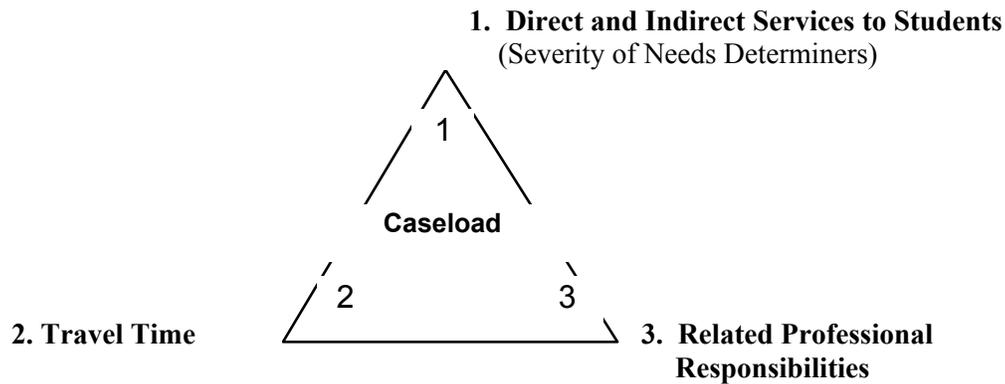
The recommended guidelines to determine caseload management for services to students with visual impairments in Colorado include three components:

- 1) Direct and indirect services to students
- 2) Travel time for itinerant personnel
- 3) Related professional responsibilities

Each student's needs would be evaluated and given a rating. The district or administrative unit's teacher for the visually impaired would total the hours of service that each student requires. Then, s/he would add the minutes of travel time between destinations. Finally, a percentage of the workweek to meet other duties involved in operating a program for visually impaired students would be determined. Read the attached steps listed in determining caseload management for future details.

The Resource Allocation Committee members feel confident that this information will assist the Colorado Department of Education to implement guidelines that are clear, efficient, and useful in maintaining an appropriate level of services to all children with a visual impairment in this state.

## Caseload Management Formula



These three components combined determine caseload management. The following steps will help you:

- a.) Determine your present caseload
- b.) Check whether your caseload matches your designated contract hours

**Step 1:** Begin by determining the individual rating for each child who is identified with a visual impairment based on the severity of needs determiners (Severity Rating Scale).

**Step 2:** Total the number of hours of direct and indirect services to all students.

**Step 3:** Add to this number the total time for travel (minutes **not** miles)

**Step 4:** Then consider the amount of time necessary to meet related professional responsibilities such as those listed below:

- Parent contact
- Training, supervision, and mentoring of support staff
- Consultation with staff & administrators
- Inservice training (preparation and presentations for staff, community, etc.)
- Community partnerships
- Other district-assigned duties
- Planning/management
- Initial or triennial evaluation:
- Functional vision assessment O&M assessment
- Development of Literacy-Modality Plan
- Materials preparation
- Orders/materials inventory management
- Professional development
- Meetings (with general educators/other team, same discipline colleagues at local, regional, and/or state level)

**NOTE:** This component (Step 4) will vary to some extent based on individual programs. An average range for vision service providers is 25%-40% of the week.

- Step 5:**
- a.) Total the hours of the three components. This gives the total hours per week.
  - b.) Compare this with your contracted hours per week. (Contracted hours vary between districts & administrative units.) These two numbers should match.
    - If these two numbers don't match, does a paraprofessional, O&M Specialist and/or other support staff account for the difference?
    - If these two numbers don't match and support personnel does not account for the difference, the caseload should be re-evaluated

**EXAMPLE:**

Component 1	30.5 hrs.	(direct & indirect services)								
Component 2	05.0 hrs.	(related professional responsibilities)								
Component 3	07.5 hrs.	(travel time)								
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43.0 hours is greater than this teacher's 37.5 contracted hours per week. An adjustment is necessary to meet guidelines.

## SEVERITY RATING SCALE FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

### **Medical**

- 0 Normal visual acuity with full visual field, no significant pathology
- 1 Possible progressive disease, but one eye still within normal limits; mild nystagmus, bilateral strabismus which cannot be corrected; pre/post eye surgery; other severe temporary eye treatment, such as patching; significant bilateral field loss.
- 2 A physical condition of the visual system which cannot be medically corrected and as such, affects visual functioning to the extent that specially designed instruction is needed (diagnoses such as, but not limited to, oculomotor apraxia, cortical (cerebral) visual impairment, and/or a progressive visual loss where field and acuity deficits are better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction, or a visual field greater than 20 degrees.
- 3 Visual acuity of 20/70 to 20/200 in the better eye after correction; a visual field of more than 20 degrees
- 4 Visual acuity of 20/200 to object perception in the better eye after correction; a visual field of 20 degrees or less
- 5 Object perception to total blindness; a visual field of 10 degrees or less.

### **Literacy Media**

- 0 Regular print with no modification
- 1 Regular print with magnification in addition to correction (this assumes that the student is proficient in using the magnification); Use of functional communication system is in place.
- 2 Regular print with consistent use of magnification in addition to correction and/or large print; use of tapes
- 3 Development of functional literacy media and functional communication strategies (objects, tactual symbols, augmentative communication systems)
- 4 A new user of technology for braille and/or technology for low vision or is a new student to district where media determination is not yet specified (and assessment over time is needed).
- 5 Braille or emergent braille reader; emergent print reader, dual media user, second language learner

### **Instructional Needs for Compensatory Skills Including Use of Functional Vision**

Our recommendation is to be very specific in IEP goals for the number of compensatory skills and how much time it takes to teach and to learn each skill. Training in even one compensatory skill (abacus, social skills, organizational skills, time awareness, etc.) could mean daily instruction.

- 0 Needs no compensatory skill instruction; student requires no instruction or monitoring in the use of his/her functional vision.
- 1 Needs compensatory skill review in one to three areas such as abacus, daily living skills, social skills, organizational skills, and so on. Student requires periodic monitoring in his/her use of functional vision.
- 2 Needs compensatory skill review in more than three areas.
- 3 Needs compensatory skill instruction in one to two areas.
- 4 Needs compensatory skill instruction in three or more areas. Student requires regular monitoring in the use of functional vision strategies; new visual skills are being introduced and taught.
- 5 Needs compensatory skill instruction throughout school day. Student requires instruction in the use of functional vision strategies.

### **Environmental and Educational Adjustments**

- 0 Needs no adaptations of instructional materials or presentations
- 1 Consultation with teachers regarding minimal adaptations that are needed (i.e. special seating, dark copies, communication symbols, materials storage area and/or work area for special equipment, low vision devices, and extra lighting)
- 2 Needs some adapted written materials, needs occasional use of tapes or occasional production of tactual materials
- 3 Some adaptation of maps/graphs; frequent magnification and/or extra lighting; requires some production of tactual materials.
- 4 Needs individually developed multisensory materials and adaptation; augmentative equipment such as switches, communication boards (tactual, symbol and/or object)
- 5 Adaptation of all instructional materials.

## **Affective and Independence**

*Note:* Meeting severe/emotional/social/behavioral needs rely on partnerships with other professionals in conjunction with the vision service provider. The following reflects the areas that need to be considered.

- 0 Needs no assistance in completing all assignments; involved in age appropriate activities and adult/peer interactions; understands and positively accepts visual impairment; accesses own resources (role models, organizations, etc.); is a self-advocate.
- 1 Needs minimal assistance with completing assignments and ordering materials (other than CIMC); requires encouragement for self advocacy; support for developing friendships; needs help understanding and explaining vision
- 2 Needs frequent monitoring for completing tasks and ordering materials; needs monitoring for positive social interactions and self advocacy skills
- 3 Needs direct instruction for completing assignments and ordering materials, communicating visual needs; needs direct instruction in social skills
- 4 Recent visual loss or change in visual functioning

## **Orientation and Mobility**

*(This section was based on information from the Severity Rating Scales handbook, March 1991, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit 23, Pennsylvania).*

- 0 Needs no O&M services
- 1 Consultative service for visual travelers who do not require regular instruction throughout the school year
- 2 Supportive service for visual travelers who have adequate skills for his/her current needs; direct service is provided to maintain, reinforce and to refine skills
- 3 Intensive service for travelers who are severely visually impaired and who may carry a cane for identification purposes/limited use, or for a traveler with emerging O&M skills; nonvisual travelers who are applying and maintaining new skills in various settings
- 4 Comprehensive service for travelers who require an inclusive program in all areas of instruction related to becoming a safe and independent traveler.

### **Rating Scale Guidelines \***

<b>0 – 4</b>	No services
<b>5 – 9</b>	Consultation only (1/2 hour per month to ½ hour per week)
<b>10-15</b>	Light service (1/2 hour per week to 5 hours per week)
<b>16-21</b>	Moderate service (5 hours per week to 15 hours per week)
<b>22-28</b>	Heavy Service (More than 15 hours per week)

\* **Teacher professional judgment** may influence how a student is rated. Examples of factors that influence the amount of instructional time deemed necessary for a student may include:

- Age of the student
- The classroom teacher's need for support
- Student cooperation
- Parent involvement
- Attendance
- Educational placement
- Second Language Learner
- Recently identified vision condition
- Transition between grade levels, school buildings, teachers, change of environment

### **References**

Michigan Severity Rating Scales for Students with Visual Impairments, 1996-97

Severity Rating Scales Handbook, March 1991, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, Pennsylvania

### CASELOAD RATINGS

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Medical:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Literacy:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Compensatory Skills:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Educational Adaptations:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Affective:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>O&amp;M:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	

**RATINGS TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Service Guidelines**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **0-4 No Service**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **5-9 Consult Service (1/2 hour per month-1/2 hour per week)**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **10-15 Light Service (1/2 hour per week-5 hours per week)**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **16-21 Moderate Service (5 hours per week-20 hours per week)**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **22-28 Heavy Service (more than 20 hours per week)**

**Special Considerations (check all that apply):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Age**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Classroom Teacher**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Student Cooperation**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Parent Involvement**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Attendance**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Educational Placement**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Second Language Learner**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **VI Recently Identified**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Time of Transition**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Other** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current IEP Related Service Hours:

**Vision Services:** Consult \_\_\_\_\_ hours/week      Direct \_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

**O&M Services:** Consult \_\_\_\_\_ hours/week      Direct \_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

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