

Your student has CVI

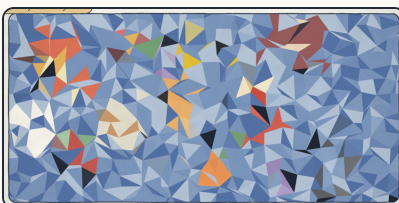
A one-page guide for classroom teachers, aides and therapists

CVI (cortical, or cerebral, visual impairment) is a visual impairment that starts in the brain, not the eyes. The eyes can be healthy. The brain has trouble making sense of what they send.

In the United States it is a leading cause of vision loss in children. Glasses alone do not fix it. It is different for every child, and it can change from hour to hour.



What you see: the red cup is easy to find.



A sense of what a child with CVI may see.



Clear the space, and there it is.

What you may notice

- Cannot find things on a busy desk, page or wall.
- Takes in one thing at a time.
- Trips on steps and curbs, or misses things low down.
- Needs extra time to respond to what is shown.
- Looks away or shuts down when the room is loud.
- Does not know who you are until you speak.
- Sees better in the morning than the afternoon.
- Sees something one day and not the next.

This is vision. It is not behavior, laziness or clumsiness.

What helps, starting Monday

- **Clear the clutter.** A plain desk, and a plain wall behind you.
- **One thing at a time.** Look, or listen, or write.
- **Say your name** when you walk up.
- **Wait.** Stop talking while the student looks.
- **Keep it quiet** when the student needs to see.
- **Mark steps and edges** with bright tape or color.
- **Plan for tiredness.** Put hard looking early in the day.

When the student says "I can't see it," believe them.

What helps this student most

For the family to fill in. They know what works.

Who to ask: the family first. Then your school's teacher of the visually impaired and orientation and mobility specialist, and the student's education plan (IEP).

This page gives general information for school staff. It is not medical advice and it cannot tell you whether a child has CVI. Sources: National Eye Institute, "Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI)", nei.nih.gov; Perkins School for the Blind, CVI Now, perkins.org/what-is-cvi. Pictures are from the short film "What is CVI?" and are approximations, built from how people with CVI describe their own vision.