



Conducting Essential Assessments During COVID-19

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School personnel supporting students who are Blind/Visually Impaired can use this tool when conducting essential assessments with students during distance learning, in a hybrid model, or while remaining socially distant. The information provided shows what is possible, what is probable, and what is problematic with regard to conducting several types of assessments. This tool is intended for informational purposes only; information is provided as a suggestion and not as a requirement for conducting assessments.

Initial Questions to Consider

When preparing to conduct an assessment during this time, consider the following questions:

- Who are you evaluating? Is this a new referral or a reevaluation?
- What information is critical for you to gather in order to put a new individualized education program (IEP) in place with proper accommodations?
- What does the current classroom setting look like? Is it brick and mortar, hybrid, or distance learning?
- What materials can be dropped off or shipped to a student's home?
- Are there adults in the home or school you could ask to help present materials and capture responses through video, photos, or data collection?
- How much extra time will be needed to complete the assessment?

General Resources

1. [Guidance for Compliance With the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act and the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://bit.ly/2GVSepY) (bit.ly/2GVSepY): Resource from the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education.
2. [Comprehensive Evaluation of Blind and Low Vision Students During COVID-19: A Guidance Document](https://bit.ly/3iLLitE) (bit.ly/3iLLitE): This document provides resources for teachers of students who are visually impaired (TVIs) and certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS) during a unique time of remote and hybrid instruction. It provides a summary of the legal and ethical guidelines as mandated by California and federal orders, an overview of methods required for evaluations, and considerations for in-person and virtual assessments.

Learning Media Assessment (LMA)

Possible	Probable	Problematic (But Not Necessarily Impossible)
<p>Review of Records: A review of student records is possible in any unique learning scenario. Individuals can access reports from school districts and parents in order to review medical history, student progress notes, and previous reports. Always obtain proper permission to view reports.</p> <p>Observation: Whether remaining socially distant or viewing a student over a virtual meeting, observing a student's behavior is possible across many learning environments. Observational times can remain in short increments across a variety of settings. Continue to observe in familiar and unfamiliar settings for the student. Obtain video documentation from parents or caregivers for additional information.</p> <p>Interview Key Individuals: It is possible to conduct thorough interviews with classroom teachers, support staff, and parents. Information gathered through the interview process can be used to generate student accommodations and potential goals and objectives.</p> <p>Direct Assessment Components: Choose the appropriate LMA tool to use and review the information that you will need to gather. Three tools are suggested to use in the resource section of this document.</p>	<p>All forms in <i>Learning Media Assessment: A Resource for Teachers</i> (2nd ed) by Alan J. Koenig and M. Cay Holbrook could be utilized. Much of the information gathered in these forms relies on record review, interviews, and observation. Select the appropriate form for your student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a formal reading inventory virtually, using the Basic Reading Inventory by Jerry Johns or another comparable source, may be problematic. You may be able to send materials to a student's home and have an adult assist with the reading inventory. However, the person assisting you would need instruction and specific directions. • Assessing for reading fatigue and stamina may also be problematic.

The Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Range

Possible	Probable	Problematic (But Not Necessarily Impossible)
<p>Review of Records: A review of student records is possible in any unique learning scenario. Individuals can access reports from school districts and parents in order to review medical history, student progress notes, and previous reports. Obtain proper permission to view reports.</p> <p>Observation: Whether remaining socially distant or viewing a student over a virtual meeting, observing a student's behavior is possible across many learning environments. Observational times can remain in short increments across a variety of settings. Continue to observe in familiar and unfamiliar settings for the student. Obtain video documentation from parents and caregivers. Document this information in the Rating I form.</p> <p>Interview Key Individuals: It is possible to conduct thorough interviews with classroom teachers, support staff, and parents. Information gathered through the interview process can be used to generate student accommodations as well as potential goals and objectives. It can also be documented in the Rating I form.</p> <p>Direct Assessment Components: Information can be gathered through the parent/caregiver interview and observation. Parents can also share videos of their child in different environments. Through videos, you would be able to observe several of the characteristics.</p>	<p>The CVI Range may be conducted while socially distant if there is an adult present who is able to be closer than 6 feet and is knowledgeable regarding the assessment. Otherwise, you may still conduct the observation and parent/caregiver interview but not complete the direct assessment and obtain a score.</p>	<p>Unless you have a person assisting onsite who is knowledgeable in conducting the CVI Range, obtaining a score for the CVI Range through distance learning is problematic.</p>

Functional Vision Assessment

Possible	Probable	Problematic (But Not Necessarily Impossible)
<p>Review of Records: A review of student records is possible in any unique learning scenario. Individuals can access reports from school districts and parents in order to review medical history, student progress notes, and previous reports. Obtain proper permission to view reports.</p> <p>Observation: Whether remaining socially distant or viewing a student over a virtual meeting, observing a student's behavior is possible across many learning environments. Observational times can remain in short increments across a variety of settings. Continue to observe in familiar and unfamiliar settings for the student.</p> <p>Interview Key Individuals: It is possible to conduct thorough interviews with classroom teachers, support staff, and parents. Information gathered through the interview process can be used to generate student accommodations and potential goals and objectives.</p> <p>Direct Assessment Components: The following information can be obtained through reports, virtual meetings, or while socially distant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical history • Appearance of eyes • Eye movement, teaming, and eye preference (as obtained from reports) • Sensitivity to light and glare (as obtained from reports) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye movement, teaming, and eye preference (Virtual (V), Hybrid (H), Socially Distant (SD)) • Visual field (V/H/SD) • Color vision (V/H/SD) • Sensitivity to light and glare (V/H/SD) • Depth perception (V/H/SD) • Near visual acuity (H/SD) • Distance visual acuity (V/H/SD) • Print size and reading speed (H/SD) • Handwriting (V/H/SD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some near tasks to test depth perception • Some near tasks to test acuity and print size • Classroom demonstrations of functional vision • The use of Teller Acuity Cards®

Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

Possible	Probable	Problematic (But Not Necessarily Impossible)
<p>Review of Records: A review of student records is possible in any unique learning scenario. Individuals can access reports from school districts and parents in order to review medical history, student progress notes, and previous reports. Obtain proper permission to view reports.</p> <p>Observation: Whether remaining socially distant or viewing a student over a virtual meeting, observing a student's behavior is possible across many learning environments. Observational times can remain in short increments across a variety of settings. Continue to observe in familiar and unfamiliar settings for the student.</p> <p>Interview Key Individuals: It is possible to conduct thorough interviews with classroom teachers, support staff, and parents. Information gathered through the interview process can be used to generate student accommodations and potential goals and objectives.</p> <p>Direct Assessment Components: The following information can be obtained through interviews, records, virtual meetings, or while socially distant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present level of current student (non-initial) • Comparison to age-related peers • Body concepts: Body image, positional concepts, laterality, parallel/perpendicular 	<p>The following pieces of the O&M assessment are probable with some assistance for monitoring safety, but may not pose significant risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement: Walking/balance, alignment/gait, turns • Indoor O&M: Hand trailing, line of travel/open space, doors • Self-protective techniques: Upper, lower • Guided travel: Human guide, walking with another person (no contact) • Cane skills: Basic, grips, constant contact, diagonal, two-point touch, touch and drag, three-point touch • Street crossings: Anticipate upcoming street, analyze intersections, pedestrian signals (identify, locate, activate) • Atypical O&M: Fences, fields, playgrounds (locate equipment), inclement weather (rain/snow can impact sound) 	<p>The following assessment components may be problematic as they will likely need a skilled O&M specialist to monitor the student's safety at close range or will be needed to assist with demonstration of more complex devices or software at close range:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some indoor tasks, such as stair travel (dependent on skill, age, and experience) • Some outdoor tasks, such as terrain changes (safe monitoring) • Cane skills (demonstration and monitoring for safety) • Hand trailing (monitoring for safety/open doors, hazards on floor) • Sidewalk travel (level of skill, safe monitoring for hazards, veers) • Planning travel routes electronically and with tactile manipulatives (demonstration of how device works) • Playground assessment (safe monitoring, hazards) • Monocular assessment (demonstration of device) • Indoor travel: Unfamiliar environments/ community (safe monitoring)

Possible	Probable	Problematic (But Not Necessarily Impossible)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single room O&M: Familiar, unfamiliar, point of reference (POR), seating, rows and tables, locating dropped object • Self-protective techniques: Protective clothing • Guided travel: Getting rides (can do conceptual) • Street crossings: Identify driver's perspective • Orientation skills: Cardinal directions, landmarks, clues, indoor numbering systems, describe outdoor numbering systems, describe grid systems • GPS (purpose, use of device, plot route, limitations, determine cardinal direction) and maps (identify key, purpose, describe relationships, use to complete indoor route) • Public transportation: Identify types, obtain information on types of services, routes, and schedules; plan routes • Rural travel: Understanding dangers • Vision-specific O&M: Scanning materials, scanning environment, handheld magnifier, monocular • Community: Comparison shopping (online or via phone call), identify how to get to and from stores 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street crossings: Alignment, physical crossing at intersections, veer recovery (safe monitoring, hazards for all ages and levels of experience) • Additional O&M skills: Actual travel in inclement weather (hazards, safe monitoring)

O&M Assessment: Risk Analysis

What areas need a risk analysis prior to implementation and should be considered for revisiting at another time? Below are factors that could impact this decision:

- Student's age
- Type of assessment (initial versus continuing)
- Student's experience with O&M
- Impulsivity of student
- Predictability of environment
- Weather
- Experience of adult monitoring assessment
- Overall safety level of the task

The concepts marked in bold below may need to be revisited at a later time or likely need a risk analysis and safety monitoring plan. Refer to the Risk Assessment Matrix below for additional information.

Resource: [Risk Assessment Matrix \[PDF\]](https://bit.ly/3j5y7nm) (bit.ly/3j5y7nm) by William Koehler et al., from the Orientation and Mobility Specialist Association

- Body concepts: **Time/distance**
- Indoor O&M: **Revolving door, sliding/automatic door, stairs, escalators, elevators, moving sidewalks, turnstiles**
- Sidewalk travel: **Walk on sidewalk, irregular sidewalks, correcting veers**
- Street crossings: **Line of travel, body alignment, crossing, veering**; pedestrian signals: **Cross at**
- Orientation skills: Describe outdoor numbering systems, **locate**, complete routes (**straight line, L, block U, multiblock routes**)
- GPS (**travel route**), maps (**use to complete outdoor route**)
- Public transportation: **Implementing routes and transfers**
- Atypical O&M: **Fences, fields**, playgrounds (**locate equipment**), **inclement weather** (rain/snow can impact sound), **alignment/crossings**
- Rural travel: **Walk along, crossings**
- Vision-specific: **Identifying terrain changes, crossings, detecting approaching intersections**
- Community: **Travel to locate doors of store and travel within store, restaurants, cafeterias and buffets, sit-down restaurants**

Assistive Technology Assessment

Much of the information below is referenced from *Assistive Technology for Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired: A Guide to Assessment* by Ike Presley and Frances Mary D'Andrea (2009).

- The results of the student's LMA should guide the evaluator in selecting the appropriate media and materials to explore during the assessment: visual, tactile, or auditory.
- When looking at materials and equipment to test with the student, consider whether you already have the materials needed, if you can utilize demo software, or if you can borrow equipment to try during the assessment.

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<p>Review of Records: A review of student records is possible in any unique learning scenario. Individuals can access reports from school districts and parents in order to review medical history, student progress notes, and previous reports. Obtain proper permission to view reports.</p> <p>Observation: Whether remaining socially distant or viewing a student over a virtual meeting, observing a student's behavior is possible across many learning environments. Observational times can remain in short increments across a variety of settings. Continue to observe in familiar and unfamiliar settings for the student.</p> <p>Interview Key Individuals: It is possible to conduct thorough interviews with classroom teachers, support staff, and parents. Information gathered through the interview process can be used to generate student accommodations and potential goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Sections marked in bold may need a skilled examiner to control the tool to show a student how it works in a virtual setting.</p> <p>Access to Print</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visual access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting (Virtual (V), Hybrid (H), Socially Distant (SD)) • Glare issues (V/H/SD) 2. Visual and physical fatigue (V/H/SD) 3. Accessing information presented at a distance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to information (V/H/SD) 	<p>Sections marked in bold may need a skilled examiner to control the tool to show a student how it works in a virtual setting.</p> <p>Demonstrating how to use a device if the student has never utilized it before, unless you have a qualified person that can present it in person.</p> <p>Access to Print</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visual access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of reading stands (V/H/SD) 2. Optical devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnifiers (V/H/SD); may need examiner to control 3. Video magnifiers (V/H/SD) 4. Scanners and optical character recognition (OCR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate device/software (V/H/SD) • Adjust parameters (V/H/SD)

Possible	Probable	Problematic (But Not Necessarily Impossible)
<p>Direct Assessment Components:</p> <p>Access to Print:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Visual access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handwritten text from a variety of tools ((Virtual (V), Hybrid (H), Socially Distant (SD)) Optical devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glasses (V/H/SD) Contacts (V/H/SD) Visual and physical fatigue (V/H/SD) Tactile access and braille <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tactile graphics (V/H/SD) Reading braille (V/H/SD) Reading Rate (V/H/SD) <p>Auditory Access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to information read by the evaluator (V/H/SD) Listening to a digital story (V/H/SD) <p>Written Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Non-electronic tools for producing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting writing samples with various tools (V/H/SD) Raised-lined and bold-lined paper (V/H/SD) Pen types (V/H/SD) <p>Whiteboard and marker (V/H/SD)</p>	<p>Access to Electronic Information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Computers and electronic devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance from device (V/H/SD) Computer access: Input devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keyboard use (V/H/SD) Pointing device (mouse and cursor) (V/H/SD) <p>Written Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Nonelectronic tools for producing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing guides (V/H/SD) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Refreshable braille display (V/H/SD) auditory access Accessing information presented at a distance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance camera (V/H/SD) <p>Access to Electronic Information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Computer access: Output devices (V/H/SD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Font type and size (V/H/SD) Magnification (V/H/SD) Tactile access (V/H/SD) Synthesized speech (V/H/SD) Computer access: Input devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keyboard use (V/H/SD) Pointing device (mouse and cursor) (V/H/SD) Accessing electronic information using a personal digital assistant (PDA) (V/H/SD) Accessing apps (V/H/SD) <p>Auditory Access</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Using a digital player-recorder-scanning system (V/H/SD)

Possible	Probable	Problematic (But Not Necessarily Impossible)
		<p>Written Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Nonelectronic tools for producing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Braille writers (V/H/SD) Slate and stylus (V/H/SD) Electronic tools used for producing written communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phones, iDevices, PDAs, computers, and tablets (V/H/SD) Calculators and dictionaries (V/H/SD) Electronic braille writers and notetakers (V/H/SD)

Additional Resources

MDE-LIO Resources:

- [Independent Living Skills \(ILS\) Checklists and Guides on ILS Page](https://bit.ly/LivingSkills) (bit.ly/LivingSkills)
- [Assistive Technology Guidelines](https://bit.ly/ATGuideLIO) (bit.ly/ATGuideLIO)

MDE-LIO Blind/Visually Impaired Resource Library

[The following assessment resources can be found in the MDE-LIO BVI Resource Library](https://bit.ly/BVIResourceLib) (bit.ly/BVIResourceLib):

- Assessment of Braille Literacy Skills: UEB and EBAE (ABLS)
- Oregon Project for Preschool Children Who Are Visually Impaired Skills Inventory, Sixth Edition
- Essential Tools of the Trade: A 2019 Assessment “How to” Guide for Completing Functional Vision, Learning Media, and ECC Evaluations
- Learning Media Assessment of Students With Visual Impairments: A Resource Guide for Teachers

American Printing House for the Blind (APH):

- [Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment \(FVLMA\) Kit](https://aph.org/product/fvlma-kit) (aph.org/product/fvlma-kit): Gain knowledge about an individual's functional vision and needs for adapted media by proctoring this assessment.
- [NewT Kit](https://aph.org/product/newt) (aph.org/product/newt): This kit includes accessible tools and activities for use with the Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment.

Other Resources:

- [Teaching Students with Visual Impairments](https://teachingvisuallyimpaired.com) (teachingvisuallyimpaired.com): This site offers free forms as well as free printables for Unified English Braille (UEB) checklists, literary braille code checklists, and assistive technology assessments.
- [Risk Assessment Matrix \[PDF\]](https://bit.ly/3j5y7nm) (bit.ly/3j5y7nm) by William Koehler et al., from the Orientation and Mobility Specialist Association.
- [Five Tips to Promote Access for Students Who Use Assistive Technology During Distance Learning](https://bit.ly/2RPI8hC) (bit.ly/2RPI8hC)
- [Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards for Unified English Braille: Braille, Formatting, and Tactile Graphics Checklists By Grade \[PDF\]](https://bit.ly/2RuWjU3) (bit.ly/2RuWjU3)

Suggested Sample Statements

Below are some samples of statements you might include within the report to make the reader aware of the circumstances and why a comprehensive evaluation was not completed at this time.

- **Teacher of students who are visually impaired (TVI):** As a result of the unique constraints due to COVID-19, a full comprehensive evaluation was not conducted. When access to in-person assessment is available, the TVI will review the following areas: [add areas here].
- **Orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist:** As a result of the unique constraints due to COVID-19, a full comprehensive evaluation was not conducted.

When in-person instruction and safety measures are available, the O&M specialist will assess the student's ability to perform the following skills: [add areas here: street crossings, stair travel, etc.]