

The Michigan Orientation & Mobility Severity Rating Scale For Students With Additional Needs

Michigan Department of Education

Low Incidence Outreach

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State Board of Education

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STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

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Introduction

The Orientation & Mobility Severity Rating Scale for Students with Additional Needs (O&MSRS+) has been developed and revised to assist Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists in making recommendations for services for students who are blind or visually impaired in the state of Michigan. It should be stressed that the Severity Rating Scales are not assessment/evaluation instruments, but rather tools for assisting in determining service delivery times.

The O&MSRS+ consists of eight categories. Each of the Severity of Need Profile categories is structured in terms of impact on independent travel skills as it relates to the student's age-appropriate needs. When using the Scale, criteria provided within each of the categories is not all inclusive and many criteria overlap from one severity of need to the next. Additional factors may influence the selection of the severity of need by the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Rationale

A task force consisting of Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists throughout the state of Michigan and from the Michigan Department of Education Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO) was formed to continue the process of revising the O&MSRS+ and to address the standardization of service delivery to students who are blind or visually impaired. Proposed revisions were presented and discussed during a working session at the 2008 Michigan Association for Education and Rehabilitation (MAER) of the Blind and Visually Impaired conference. The draft scales were also presented at the AER International Conference in July of 2008 in Chicago where they received much support and useful comments. The need for consistency when determining the level of Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services for students who are blind and visually impaired was voiced repeatedly. The Revised O&MSRS+ is the result of these discussions.

Purpose and Development

The purpose of this manual is to define criteria and guidelines for using the O&MSRS+ with students identified as blind or visually impaired and for whom the O&MSRS categories do not adequately apply. It is intended to assist the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team in the selection of an appropriate program of O&M training for students who are blind or visually impaired. The Scale may assist in supporting a change from one service delivery model to another.

A Revised O&MSRS+ may be completed for:

1. Initial assessment
2. IEP team meeting
3. End of each school year
4. Visual status changes
5. Placement changes
6. Other

Suggested steps for the Evaluation of Students with a Visual Impairment:

1. Assess the student to determine his or her O&M strengths and needs using a variety of assessment tools (see Appendix B).
2. Complete the O&MSRS+ to determine service delivery times.
3. Include recommendations of O&M services in the O&M report and share at the IEP team meeting.

The O&MSRS+ consists of the following eight categories:

- Level of Vision (Medical)
- Level of Vision (Functional)
- Use/proficiency of travel tools
- Communication
- Non-visual additional needs
- Level of supervision needed for safe travel
- Spatial/environmental conceptual understanding
- Compliance with instruction

The Severity of Need in each of the scales is sequentially structured based upon a student's need for instruction in age-appropriate travel skills by a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist with input from the parents, other staff, and other interested individuals.

Each of the eight categories is structured in terms of impact on independent travel skills as it relates to the student's age-appropriate needs. The Severity of Need descriptors within each category purposely overlap to some degree. To aid the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist in the selection of the Severity of Need that is most characteristic of the student with a visual impairment, additional evaluations may be necessary.

Category Definitions for the O&MSRS+

The purpose of this manual is to define criteria and guidelines for using the O&MSRS+ with students identified as visually impaired with additional needs. It was developed for use with students in grades K-12 and those in ungraded programs (preschool, young adult).

- Level of Vision (Medical): refers to the student's distance vision and/or peripheral vision as reported by an eye care specialist. If both an acuity loss and field loss are present, add the two Severity of Need scores together and enter in the sum in the Score column.
- Level of Vision (Functional): refers to the student's ability to use vision for all travel tasks (e.g., movement within the classroom, school building, and community) as reported by the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Use/Proficiency of Travel Tools: refers to the student's need for use and skill level of a white cane or alternative mobility device.

- Communication: refers to the ability of the student to communicate with the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist and benefit from instruction. Students with little ability to communicate with the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist may not benefit from a high level of direct O&M service.
- Non-Visual Additional Needs: refers to the impact of the additional needs on the instructional process. Students whose additional needs prevent progress in travel skills (i.e., cane travel, echolocation) may not benefit from a high level of direct O&M service.
- Level of Supervision Needed for Safe Travel: refers to the supervision needed to maintain the safety of the student during travel. Students requiring close supervision may not benefit from a high level of direct O&M service.
- Spatial/Environmental Conceptual Understanding: refers to the impact that the student's level of concept development has on progress in travel skills (i.e., cane travel, echolocation). Students who are unable to improve conceptual understanding may not benefit from a high level of direct O&M service.
- Compliance With Instruction: refers to the amount of time needed to manage the student's behavior so that learning can take place. Students needing significant behavioral management may not benefit from a high level of direct O&M service.

Contributing Factors to Service Delivery

The professional judgment of the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist can influence the selection of a "Recommendation of Service" that has been determined by the Severity of Need Score. The selection of one or more of the Contributing Factors to Service Delivery may be used to place a student at a higher or lower level "Recommendation of Service" than indicated by the Severity of Need Score alone.

The use of the Contributing Factors to Service Delivery may be necessary when it appears that the Recommendations of Services indicated by the Severity Rating does not reflect the true needs of the student. Based upon the professional judgment of the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, all factors which influence the modification of the Recommendation of Services should be marked with a plus (+.5) or a minus (-.5).

The following factors are to be considered:

- Posture, gait, and motor development
- The nature of eye disease or condition
- Transition support needed
- Recent vision loss
- Complexity or introduction of new environment
- Potential for improvement of travel skills
- Age of onset of visual impairment
- Team availability for follow-up
- Instruction in low vision aids

- Community-based instruction opportunities
- Other

Remember, each of these factors may be either positive or negative and should be marked when modifying a "Recommendation of Services."

Recommendations of Services

- **Service Not Indicated:** The student does not require O&M services provided by a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- **One to Five Times per Year:** Contact by the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist may be with the student or other pertinent individuals, one to five times per school year.
- **Three to Four Times per Semester:** The student is seen directly by Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist three to four times per semester. Services may consist of direct instruction in short "units" of instruction clustered within several days or weeks. Consultation is with the student and other pertinent individuals.
- **One to Two Times per Month:** The student is seen directly by the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist one to two times a month for 20 to 60 minutes each. In addition, the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist may provide consultation with pertinent individuals.
- **One to Two Times per Week:** This recommendation is designed for a student with a severe visual impairment who may need to carry a cane for identification purposes or for limited use for some travel safety tasks. Also included may be a traveler with emerging O&M skills or a traveler who is non-visual and who is maintaining and applying O&M skills in various settings. The student requires direct service from the Certified Orientation Mobility Specialist one to two times a week for 30 to 45 minutes each. The Certified Orientation Mobility Specialist provides regular communication to pertinent individuals regarding the student's needs.
- **Two or More Times per Week:** The student is seen by the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist two or more times a week for 30 to 60 minutes each. This recommendation is designed primarily for a traveler who is non-visual and who requires an inclusive program in all areas of instruction related to becoming a safe and independent traveler.

Directions for Completing the Orientation & Mobility Severity of Need Profile and Severity of Need Summary

The Severity of Need Profile and Severity of Need Summary can be found at the end of this document.

1. Category names are listed vertically along the left hand side of the O&M Severity of Need Profile Worksheet. Refer to definitions on the preceding page as necessary.
2. Descriptors are listed horizontally for each category. The descriptors are listed sequentially in terms of severity of need, from none to profound.
3. The numbers attached to each severity of need are considered part of a continuum. The specific number under each severity of need name is the numerical rating to be given for that level. For example, under Mild, a numerical rating of 1 is possible, while under Severe, a numerical rating of 3 is possible.
4. For each category, mark the descriptor that best describes the student. Place the appropriate severity of need number in the right hand column (Severity of Need Score Column).
5. Total the right hand column to get a Severity of Need Score.
6. If appropriate, fill out the Contributing Factors to Service Delivery on the Severity of Need Summary by adding or subtracting 0.5 points. This number will be combined with the Severity of Need Score on the Severity of Need Profile and the result will be placed in the Final Severity of Need Score box on the Severity of Need Summary.
7. Using the Severity of Need Summary, refer to the table titled "Severity of Need Score and Frequency of Need." Locate the range which contains the Final Severity of Need Score to determine the frequency of service.

APPENDIX A

EXAMPLES OF VISION RELATED TRAVEL TASKS

Student is able to:

- Visually track a moving object
- Imitate gross motor movements based on visual observation
- See facial expressions and gestures
- Visually discriminate basic colors and geometric shapes
- Visually scan area and avoid large obstacles in path
- Visually locate or identify familiar rooms in school
- Visually read signage to aid with locating unfamiliar rooms, streets, businesses, etc.
- Visually distinguish shorelines and/or intersecting sidewalks
- Visually detect steps and drop-offs
- Visually detect blended curbs
- See turn signals on cars while standing at a corner
- See drivers inside cars motioning to pedestrians
- See color change on walk/don't walk signal
- See color change on traffic signal
- Read walk/don't walk signal without a distance aid
- Read name of approaching bus without a distance aid
- Visually determine desired bus stop without assistance from driver
- Visually locate doors to stores and other commercial buildings
- Read grocery store aisle signs without a distance aid
- Understand how lighting conditions affect travel skills
- Explain the status of own vision related to travel (day/night)

APPENDIX B
RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

- Beyond Arms Reach
- Concept Development for Visually Handicapped Children
- Early Focus
- Move with Me
- Reaching/Crawling/Walking/Let's Get Moving
- Preschool O&M Screening
- Standing on My Own Two Feet
- TAPS Curriculum
- Foundations of Orientation and Mobility
- The Oregon Project for Preschool Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired
- Where In the World Am I
- BRIGANCE® Inventory of Early Development
- Hill Performance Test of Selected Positional Concepts
- Body Image of Blind Children
- Perkins Activity and Resource Guide: A Handbook for Teachers and Parents of Students with Visual and Multiple Disabilities
- Teaching Orientation and Mobility in the Schools
- Imagining the Possibilities: A Creative Approach to Orientation and Mobility Instruction for Persons Who Are Visually Impaired
- The Art and Science of Teaching Orientation and Mobility to Persons with Visual Impairments
- Orientation and Mobility: Techniques for Independence
- Orientation and Mobility Techniques: A Guide for the Practitioner
- Independent Movement and Travel in Blind Children

Orientation & Mobility Severity Rating Scale FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS (O&MSRS+) Revised 2013 Severity of Need Profile

Student: _____ Birthdate: _____ Grade/Program: _____ Date: _____

Severity of Need		NONE 0	MILD 1	MODERATE 2	SEVERE 3	PROFOUND 4	SCORE
(1) Level of Vision (Medical)	Distance Acuity	20/70 – 20/100	20/100 – 20/200	20/200 – 20/600	20/600 – LP	Light perception to nil	
	Peripheral Field	No loss	No loss	30 degree–10 degree Field or hemianopsia	10 degree–1 degree Field		
(2) Level of Vision (Functional)		Visual/ non-visual skills adequate for developmentally or age appropriate independent travel	Visual impairment affects ability to travel in a few selected environments	Visual impairment affects ability to travel in some environments	Visual impairment affects ability to travel in most environments	Visual impairments affects ability to travel in all environments	
(3) Use/ Proficiency of Travel Tool (Cane/ Alternate Mobility Device)		Travel tool inappropriate <u>or</u> use of travel tool mastered	Level of travel tool use has mild impact on travel and in few environments	Level of travel tool use moderately impacts safe travel in some environments	Level of travel tool use severely impacts safe travel in <u>most</u> environments	Level of travel tool use profoundly impacts safe travel in <u>all</u> environments	
(4) Communication		Level of communication prevents ability to benefit from instruction	Level of communication significantly impacts ability to benefit from instruction	Level of communication impacts ability to benefit from instruction in some situations	Level of communication minimally impacts ability to benefit from instruction	Level of communication is sufficient for student to benefit from instruction	
(5) Non-Visual Additional Needs		Non-visual additional needs profoundly impact success in O&M	Non-visual additional needs severely impact on success in O&M	Non-visual additional needs moderately impact success in O&M	Non-visual additional needs have mild impact on success in O&M	Non-visual additional needs have no impact on success in O&M	
(6) Level of Supervision Needed for Safe Travel		Needs total assistance for safe travel	Needs close supervision and physical prompting for safe travel	Needs close supervision and verbal prompting for safe travel	Needs close supervision for safe travel	Able to safely travel with minimal or no supervision	
(7) Spatial/ Environmental Conceptual Understanding		Progress in O&M is profoundly inhibited by conceptual understanding	Progress in O&M is severely inhibited by conceptual understanding	Progress in O&M is moderately inhibited by conceptual understanding	Progress in O&M is mildly inhibited by conceptual understanding	Conceptual understanding sufficient for development of travel skills	
(8) Compliance with Instruction		Non-compliant with instruction	Significant time spent in behavior management	Moderate time spent in behavior management	Minimal time spent in behavior management	Cooperative and compliant	
Severity of Need Score							

Orientation & Mobility Severity Rating Scale FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS (O&MSRS+) Revised 2013 Severity of Need Summary

Student: _____ **Birthdate:** _____ **Grade/Program:** _____ **Date:** _____

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SERVICE DELIVERY							
If appropriate, add (+.5) or subtract (-.5) points for each							
	Posture, gait, and motor development						
	Nature of eye disease or condition						
	Transition support needed						
	Recent vision loss						
	Potential for improvement of travel skills						
	Age of onset of visual impairment						
	Team availability for follow-up						
	Instruction in low vision aids						
	Complexity or introduction of new environment						
	Community Based Instruction opportunities						
	Attendance						
	Other (explain)						
	Other (explain)						
	Other (explain)						
	Other (explain)						
➔	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr style="background-color: #d3d3d3;"> <td style="width: 60%; text-align: center;">Severity of Need Score</td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #d3d3d3;"> <td style="text-align: center;">Contributing Factors +/-</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #d3d3d3;"> <td style="text-align: center;">Final Severity of Need Score</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Severity of Need Score		Contributing Factors +/-		Final Severity of Need Score	
Severity of Need Score							
Contributing Factors +/-							
Final Severity of Need Score							



Severity of Need Score	Frequency of Service
0 - 2	Service not indicated
3 - 4	1 – 5 times/ year
5 - 6	3 – 4 times/ semester
7 - 12	1 – 2 times/ month 20 – 60 minutes each
13 - 24	1 – 2 times/ week 30 – 45 minutes each
25 - 36	2 or more times/ week 30 - 60 minutes each



RECOMMENDATION OF SERVICES	
Final Severity of Need Score	Frequency of Service