

Technical Assistance Bulletin

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Assessment Guidelines

March 2018

Overall Emphasis and Purpose:

The term “Orientation and Mobility Services” is defined as services provided to blind or visually impaired students by qualified personnel to enable those students to safely orient and move within their environments (i.e. school, home, and community). The goal of O&M instruction is safe travel in any environment as independently as possible, and O & M instruction must be considered for each blind or visually impaired child. An O&M assessment must be done through the IEP process if O & M instruction is deemed inappropriate. This Technical Assistance Bulletin highlights the O & M assessment guidelines to assist families, staff members and administrators to improve their understanding to meet the needs of students with visual impairments.

What this means for you as a Special Educator/Special Service Provider:

- When working with a student who is blind or visually impaired, IEP team members must be aware of the O & M Assessment guidelines to include process, parent/guardian questions to consider, O & M teacher interview, and O & M report.
- Understand the recommendations for O & M instruction and services for students with visual impairments.
- Understand the decision-making process with the IEP team to determine the need for an O & M assessment.
- Understand that ALL children who are blind and visually impaired who need O&M instruction, including those with other disabilities, receive appropriate instruction in O&M.

What the Special Educator/Special Service Provider needs to do if not already doing:

During the IEP team meeting for a student who is blind or visually impaired invite the O & M Specialist to:

- Review with the team verbal and or written information about O & M instruction; notification to family about availability of services; background information, vision reports, family input and observations of student’s ability to navigate various environments.
 - Support the team if O & M instruction is NOT appropriate. An O & M assessment must be conducted to confirm the O & M specialist will review results of the assessment with team within 30 calendar days.
- Support the team when services are NOT required. The decision will be documented on the Special Considerations section of IEP.
- Support the team when services ARE required and revise IEP to include O & M.