

## Welcome to BESB Preschool Services

\_\_\_\_\_ has been diagnosed with a visual impairment and will now be receiving services from BESB. You and your child will work with an education consultant who specializes in the education of children who are blind or visually impaired.

You are probably wondering exactly who we are and what we do. Here is a brief description.

As Education Consultants (Teachers of the Visually Impaired) within the Children's Services Division, Preschool Unit:

- We work with children aged birth-5
- We work wherever the child is: home, daycare, nursery school, preschool, playgroup, etc. We often see children in a variety of settings, rather than just at one place. Our visits usually last about one hour.
- Because the children are young, we work closely with families as well: providing support, information, advocacy, assistance navigating through the "systems," etc.
- For children aged birth to 3 who have a visual impairment as their primary or only disability, we act as "Service Coordinators" within the state "Birth to Three" system. As service coordinator, we are responsible for assisting your family in identifying, finding and coordinating all services for the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- For children aged 3-5 (or in preschool), we act as a part of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). We usually work in the school program, consulting with the educational team (teachers and therapists), and providing direct service (such as functional vision evaluation) as appropriate. We maintain contact with the family, and sometimes provide home services at this time as well.
- Education consultants may also arrange for services such as: Orientation and Mobility, a Low Vision Evaluation, and/or Assistive Technology related to vision impairment.

Your education consultant will help to assess and monitor your child's functional vision skills and general development and will suggest ways to adapt the environment and activities in various settings where your child may be. That is, in addition to working with you and your child in your home, the consultant would schedule visits with your child and teacher at a daycare setting, and later on (ages 3-5) with your child and teacher at preschool.

It is our role to help you understand your child's vision and to help teach you and your child how he can best use his vision and other skills that he will need as he develops, learns and grows. We will give you information about strategies and methods, to assist your family and your child in achieving IFSP outcomes (goals) or IEP objectives in all areas. Our department will also provide or guide you to appropriate educational materials.

We have found that parents have many questions when they begin working with their education consultant. Below is a short list of the questions we most often hear. They may be things you are wondering about or they may remind you of questions you have yourself. They may be questions you are asking now or those you would like answers to later. Please feel free to ask. We will do our best to answer these and any other questions you may have.

**Questions about my child's vision:**

You are called Services for the Blind: Can my child see?

What does she see?

Will my child's vision improve or get worse?

I think he sees better than the doctor says he does-is that possible?

Should I get a second opinion?

Is there an operation that will help?

What do I do if the doctor recommends patching or surgery to straighten his eyes?

**Questions about learning and play:**

Are there special toys that I should get?

How will my child walk, move, get around?

How will she make friends?

Will he learn to ride a bike?

**Questions about school:**

Will my child go to a special school?

How will he learn to read?

Will she need to read large print or braille?

How will she see the board?

Will she be able to go to gym?

What sports will he be able to play?

**Questions about the future:**

Will he need a cane?

Will she be able to drive?

What will he do when he grows up?

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Education Consultant

\_\_\_\_\_

phone extension

Feel free to write down any questions you think of later.