

SESA

Special Education Service Agency

Your observations provide important information about your child's visual skills. If you note any of the following, it may be an indicator that your child has a vision problem that needs your attention:

- baby does not react to bright, direct light
- baby is extremely sensitive to bright, direct light
- baby does not gaze at surroundings
- baby is inattentive to objects unless there is a sound cue
- squints or frowns with fixation
- stumbles, trips or hesitates to move
- assumes a head tilt or head down posture for visual concentration
- holds books and other play items close to face in order to see
- eyes are watery, red or inflamed
- eyelids are red, encrusted or swollen
- eyes are crossing inward or drifting outward frequently
- eyelids are "droopy"
- eyes move constantly in a back and forth movement.

Please contact the VISIT program if you have concerns about a child with a possible visual loss.



VISIT is housed at the Special Education Service Agency (SESA). SESA provides outreach low incidence disability services to rural Alaskan school districts. SESA is a public agency with non-profit status.



VISIT is funded through a grant from the Department of Health and Social Services and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

SESA does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.



Vision Impairment Services for Infants and Toddlers

VISIT provides...

- Early intervention consultant services to families of infants and toddlers who experience, or are at risk of experiencing, a vision impairment. This includes functional vision, developmental, orientation and mobility assessments; adaptive materials; and collaboration with a child's related service providers.
- Inservices and workshops to community organizations upon request on functional vision screenings; the impact of a sight loss on a child's development; and strategies for working with children who experience a vision impairment.
- Information and referral services for families that need to connect with a pediatric ophthalmologist for an eye exam.
- Services throughout the state of Alaska without cost to families, infant learning programs, or related service providers.



VISIT services are important because...

- 80% of typical developmental skills are learned visually.
- Children with vision impairments are at high risk for experiencing developmental delays. An educator with specialization in vision impairment and early childhood education can facilitate skills development, and help reduce the risk of unnecessary delays.
- There is a wide range of sight loss, and each family should have materials and information to meet the individual needs of their child.



Reasons for referral include...

- A diagnosed eye condition such as cataracts, albinism, optic nerve damage, or retinal detachment.
- Abnormal appearance of the eyes.
- An inability to perform visual tasks appropriate to age or developmental level.
- At-risk factors such as prematurity, birth trauma, or multiple impairments.

Children are referred to VISIT...

- By their parents, infant learning program teachers, community therapists, physicians, and public health nurses.
- Via phone, fax, or mail.
- Only after parent permission for the referral has been given to the referring agency.

After a referral is received...

- A VISIT early intervention consultant will coordinate a visit with the person who made the initial referral. Visits typically take place at the family's home, the local infant learning program office, or the community therapist's office.
- An initial screening of functional vision will be completed. If there is evidence of decreased visual functioning, an educational program will be developed based on the information gathered during the screening.
- If a child qualifies for enrollment with VISIT, ongoing consultant visits will be provided until the child turns three years old. Program involvement can include child care providers, grandparents, and siblings.
- The VISIT consultant will assist in contacting other agencies or medical providers that might be helpful for the family.



If you have any questions or would like to make a referral please contact:

Vision Impairment Services for Infants and Toddlers

Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
(907) 562-7372

(888) 633-9405 (toll-free for parents only)

Fax: (907) 562-0545

email: VISIT@sesa.org