**Functional Vision Evaluations (2011 –Update)**

**Why the focus on FVEs?**

- They are necessary to qualify students for vision services
- They are required by law and must meet requirements and timelines
- They may be a gateway to other services
- They are one of the most important aspects of services to individuals who are visually impaired

**FVE Requirements**

- Must be completed by a TVI or a COMS – (only a TVI can complete a Learning Media Assessment)
- Must have a report and address information from an eye care specialist (Ophthalmologist or Optometrist)
- Must include observations of students in various settings and different times of day using both near and distance vision – this is the functional aspect

**More Requirements**

- Must address whether there is a need for a Low Vision Evaluation
- Must address whether there is a need for an O&M evaluation
- Learning Media Assessment must make a determination if the student is functionally blind

**AND SO………..**

- It is so much more than meeting legal requirements

**A FVE**

- Should provide current, accurate, and relevant information on your student
- Should involve input from parents and teachers as well as your observations of the student
- Should address medications, fluctuations, environmental needs, health issues, and eye condition

**More…A FVE**

- Should be the basis for educational programming (IEPs and IFSPs)-
Should provide information and recommendations for adaptations

Should translate medical information

Should be a *LIVING DOCUMENT*

**IT'S ALIVE, IT'S ALIVE**

Give your functional a useful life-

Explain all technical information

Delineate the unique characteristics of your student

Use the information in the functional to develop VI specific student information sheets for teachers

Update the sheets as needed to make them relevant - not based on the 3-year anniversary of the document

**NOTE ON EARLY RE-EVAL**

***** If a student has a significant change in visual functioning you may need to ask for another assessment prior to the 3-year re-evaluation date...This will require meeting all of the legal requirements of consent to test etc. Functionals and IEPs are legal documents and require permission, agreement and/or acceptance (an ARD/IEP/IFSP meeting) to change.

The info sheet you develop is different - You can and should update the information sheet that you develop to reflect the student’s abilities and successes. Some of the data for your information is from the FVE/LMA but some can be from your work with the student. I reviewed my information sheets at least annually, usually at the beginning of school. You will be surprised how much your student changes from year to year)

**You Should...**

Give practical examples of current abilities (i.e. best type size, best working distance, reading speed, writing ability)

Make recommendations and describe ways to help your student learn and access the curriculum

Review your findings with the parents prior to the ARD meeting

Get medication updates and research medications for visual side effects

Get the information out to providers in other disciplines
A Word About Doing the FVE

- Tailor your supplies and assessment materials to the student
- Tailor the assessment to the student
- Be prepared
- Be fast
- Don’t try to do it all in one day
- Make it fun

Doing the FVE

- Collect data
  - Record only what you see
  - If you “think” you saw something recheck it on your next visit
- Explain what you’re doing and why
  - To the student
  - To the parent
- Demonstrate when appropriate
- Make your eligibility determination after reviewing your data
- Don’t diagnose!
- Don’t base eligibility solely on the doctor’s report

A Note About Eye Doctors

- We are required to get certain information from Eye docs... unfortunately they are not required to give it
- Do the research when you get a report – i.e. abbreviations and conditions
- If you can... go to the appointments with your students
If you have questions or need more information….Call the doctor’s office and ASK

A word about O&M referrals

O&M literature states that the best practice is that all students with visual impairments should get receive an O&M evaluation

Your area may have their own practices

- Screenings
- Cost issues

If there is no formal policy COMS and TVIs will need to work together to establish system to ensure all students have their O&M needs met/evaluated

Tips

- Build kits that are comprehensive and portable
- Check your equipment – have backup lights, batteries, pens, paper, markers, etc
- Secure a location and set up
- Carry copies of data sheets
  - Protocols
  - Parent interview questions
  - Student information sheets

More Tips

- Go over the FVE report with the parents prior to the ARD meeting
- Bring supplies to ARD
  - Copies of
    - Eligibility forms
    - ARD/IFSP supplements
    - Resource information sheets
    - TSBVI information and Info Receipt Forms
    - Confidential Info Release – for VI and DB
And More Tips

You are required by law to evaluate under different conditions and in different settings

- Start early
- Don’t rush
- Do the observations
- Don’t ever do one in couple of days – if you do you will be doing ALL of them that way
- Don’t determine if the student will “qualify” after one visit – collect data and then judge

Finally

- Help your assessment personnel
  - They may never have had a student with a visual impairment before – that makes you the expert
  - Work with them to make sure all the necessary paperwork for the ARD/IEP/IFSP meeting is available
  - Review standardized tests with assessment personnel to make sure that they are appropriate for your student

Are You Scared Yet?

- You will be nervous
  - Bring someone with you
  - Go back and re-check
  - Watch others do a FVE
  - Ask for help if you have questions
  - I PROMISE- you will get better the more you build your experiences
  - Keep them- to review, to cannibalize, to show your growth