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Visual Impairment

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What is visual impairment?

Children are not born with full vision.

Vision continues to develop until 5-7 years of age. The table below shows how vision develops in children. Reduced vision during this period of development is normal and not regarded as a visual impairment.

Typical normal distance vision

Age	Distance vision Snellen Metres	Distance vision LogMAR	Near vision
Birth	6/300	1.0 +	difficult to assess accurately
3 months	6/90 to 6/30	1.0 to 0.7	difficult to assess accurately
6 months	6/36 to 6/30	0.8 to 0.7	difficult to assess accurately
9 months	6/24	0.6	difficult to assess accurately
12 months	6/18	0.4 to 0.5	difficult to assess accurately
18 months	6/12	0.3	difficult to assess accurately
2 years	6/12 to 6/9	0.2 to 0.3	6/12
3 years	6/9 to 6/6	0 to 0.2	6/12
3 - 5 years	6/9 to 6/6	0 to 0.2	6/9
7 years	6/9 to 6/6	0 to 0.2	6/6 (N5 print)

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Visual impairment is the consequence of a **functional loss** of vision as a result of a **disorder, disease or injury** to the eye, optic nerve or brain.



A child or young person is thought to have a visual impairment if they have an eye condition that *cannot* be fully corrected using glasses.

The term **visual impairment** is used to cover a **range of conditions** and a **range of levels of vision**. The term includes all blind and partially sighted people.

A person may be registered **sight impaired** (partially sighted) if their **visual acuity** (*a measure of their ability to see fine detail*) is between **3/60** (*they can see at 3 metres what a normally sighted person can see at 60*) and **6/60** (*they can see at 6 metres what a normally sighted person can see at 60*). If, however, they have a restricted field, their visual acuity may be 6/24 with a moderate field reduction or 6/18 with severe field reduction. A person may be registered **severe sight impaired** (blind) if their visual acuity is below 3/60. It's important to understand that you have to take into consideration not only **visual acuity** but how the child **functions** with their vision. Details of testing can be found in the assessment section.

Children may function *very* differently.

Visual acuity measurement		
	Sight impaired	Normal sight
3/60	3 metres	60 metres
6/60	6 metres	60 metres