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| IRIS Center logo. | **Outline** |
| **Accommodations to the Physical Environment**:Setting Up a Classroom for Students with Visual Disabilities |

Module Home

* Module Description: The resources in this module offer helpful tips on setting up the physical aspects of your classroom and will introduce types of equipment used by students with visual disabilities (est. completion time: 1 hour).

Challenge

* Video: Yesterday, just three days before the first day of school, Ms. Milton found out that she would have two students with visual disabilities in her class.

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Initial Thoughts

* What resources should Ms. Milton consult to learn more about Evan and Emily’s needs?
* What should Ms. Milton consider when planning her room?
* What is all this equipment? Where should Ms. Milton put it?

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Perspectives & Resources

* Module Objectives
* Identify resources for obtaining assistance with including students with visual disabilities in the classroom
* Describe key considerations for organizing your classroom to include students with visual impairments or blindness
* Help students with visual impairments safely navigate the classroom
* Consult with professionals who will assist you in familiarizing students with the school and classroom environment and who are knowledgeable about the equipment that students with visual disabilities may use
* Identify and describe the functions of commonly used assistive equipment designed for students with visual impairments and blindness

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* Page 1: Getting Started
* It is certainly understandable that Ms. Milton feels at a loss about how to prepare for the inclusion of Evan and Emily in her classroom with only 3 days left before school starts.
* Establishing Your Resources
	+ The members of the support teams may include… [bullet points]
		- Link: individualized education programs (IEPs) [definition]
		- Link: teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) [definition]
		- Link: orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist [definition]
		- Link: paraprofessional [definition]
		- Link: other professional [definition]
	+ Keep in Mind
		- Link: Click here for a contact form that you can use. [drop-down menu]

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* Page 2: The Individualized Education Program
* The IEP (individualized education program) document is a valuable resource for obtaining information regarding the student’s visual disability and any other identified health or cognitive impairments.
* Notes from Emily’s IEP [table]
* Notes from Evan’s IEP [table]
* Link: Click below to access a blank note-taking form. [PDF]
* Link: Click below to access a blank note-taking form. [Word doc]

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* Page 3: The Student and the Family
* Getting Student Input
	+ It is imperative to talk with students with visual disabilities to gather the necessary information to assist in their successful inclusion and active participation within the classroom and in other school activities.
	+ For example, they may be able to tell the teacher… [bullet points]
	+ The students may also be able to tell the teacher… [bullet points]
	+ Link: Click here to view a list of questions the general education teacher may ask students with visual impairments to assess their needs and abilities. [drop-down menu]
* Getting the Family’s Perspective
	+ Family members can provide… [bullet points]
	+ Link: Click here to view a list of sample questions to ask family members. [drop-down menu]

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* Page 4: The Professionals
* In addition to gathering information from the student and the family, the classroom teacher should meet with the professionals, specifically the teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) and the orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist.
* Support from the TVI
	+ The TVI will be familiar with the student’s visual functioning and should be able to provide… [bullet points]
	+ Link: Click here to view a list of questions the general education teacher can ask the TVI. [drop-down menu]
* Assistance from the O&M Specialist
	+ The O&M specialist can also be a valuable resource for… [bullet points]
	+ Link: Click here for a list of questions the general education teacher can ask the O&M specialist. [drop-down menu]
* Aid from Paraprofessionals and Other Professionals
	+ Paraprofessional
	+ Other Professionals

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* Page 5: Tips for Setting Up Your Classroom
* After reviewing the IEPs, and after talking with Evan and Emily, their parents, the TVI, and the O&M specialist, Ms. Milton realizes that she does not have to make major changes to her classroom.
* Functional Considerations/Guidelines for Accommodations [table]
* Keep in Mind
	+ Link: Listen as Sharon Sacks discusses the importance of flexible seating for different classroom activities.
* Link: Color and contrast considerations [drop-down menu]
* Link: Materials storage [drop-down menu]
* Link: Bulletin boards/other posted materials [drop-down menu]
* Link: Safety considerations [drop-down menu]
* Link: furniture arrangement [drop-down menu]
* Link: lighting needs [drop-down menu]
* Activity
	+ Link: Click here to help Ms. Milton identify areas of concern. [drop-down menu]
		- Link: Click here to see how your concerns corresponded to Ms. Milton’s. [drop-down menu]
		- Link: Click here to see Ms. Milton’s improved bulletin board. [drop-down menu]

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* Page 6: Helping Students Navigate the Classroom
* The language we choose to express ourselves not only conveys meaning but also communicates attitudes, perceptions, and emotions.
* Current Terminology
	+ Current Terms/Outdated Terms [table]
	+ Did You Know?
* Positive or Neutral Descriptions
	+ Positive and Neutral Terms/Negative Terms [table]
* People-First and Identity-First Language
	+ Did You Know?
	+ People-First Language/Identity-First Language [table]
	+ Video: Taylor’s brother, Lance, addresses the issue of language and terminology in his poem, *Special Needs World*, a portion of which he performs in the video below.
* Activity

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* Page 7: Materials and Devices
* Although Ms. Milton has examined the equipment that was delivered, she still wonders where it should be placed within the classroom and when Evan and Emily should be using the devices.
	+ General Tips

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* Page 8: References & Additional Resources
* Suggested module citation
* References
* Additional Resources
* Page 9: Credits
* Content Experts
* Module Developer
* Module Production Team
* Media

Wrap Up

* Summary of the module
* Video: Now listen as Sharon Sacks lists key points about the role of a general education teacher who has students with visual impairments.
* Revisit your Initial Thoughts responses
* Link: Instructional Accommodations: Making the Learning Environment Accessible to Students with Visual Disabilities [IRIS Module]
* Link: Serving Students with Visual Impairments: The Importance of Collaboration [IRIS Module]

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Assessment

* Take some time now to answer the following questions.

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