

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED	SUBJECT: No. 509 Qualifying Criteria for Campus Based Preschool/Kindergarten Services
Effective Date: 27 April, 2001 Revised: 9/6/12	Formerly, Preschool Entrance Criteria <i>This policy was reviewed by legal counsel</i> <i>to ensure State and Federal compliance.</i>
Distribution: All Staff	Kind: Board Policy

GENERAL POLICY

It is the policy of the New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) to adhere to Federal and State Regulations when accepting students to one of its preschools. Federal definition for students with a visual impairment according to the IDEA 2004: Section 300.8(c)(13) and New Mexico Public Education Department's Policies and Procedures for the Provision of Special Education Services define a visual impairment including blindness as an "impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness."

REFERRALS

Referrals are typically made by pediatric ophthalmologists, area hospitals, rehabilitation hospital, parents of the child, New Mexico's Infant/Toddler evaluation team, or through area birth through three providers.

Two criteria must be met for the child to receive services.

1. A child must have a diagnosed visual impairment as determined by an eye care professional or, when appropriate, from a neurologist.
2. Through assessment it must be determined that the visual impairment at this time impacts the child's capacity to access learning. When a child's IEP team determines that the child needs intensive, daily support from a teacher of the visually impaired, placement in one of the school's two preschool programs is then considered to be the least restrictive environment for that child.

PLACEMENT DETERMINATION

Currently, the school operates preschool/kindergarten programs in Albuquerque and in Alamogordo.

1. When it has been determined by IEP to be the least restrictive environment, children, in the greater Albuquerque area or in the greater Alamogordo area, between the ages of 3-5 years, who are blind/visually impaired may be placed on one of the campuses as a day student to receive center-based programming.
2. Children needing less intensive support from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) may be served by a TVI in their neighborhood schools. Depending upon the scope of work of a Memorandum of Understanding between a District and NMSBVI, a TVI may be District or NMSBVI personnel.
3. Albuquerque campus:
 - a. Based on space availability, children between the ages of 6-9 years who are deaf/blind may receive center-based programming during the school day on an NMSBVI campus to support additional development of compensatory communication skills.

- b. Based on space availability, children, between the ages of 6-9 years, with a visual impairment, including blindness, that even with correction adversely affects a child's educational performance, may receive classroom-based programming on a short or long-term basis, if their IEP team determines need in one of the following areas: Braille instruction, orientation and mobility, augmentative communication, or specific technology related to learning to read.
 - c. An expansion of services in the Albuquerque area requires Board of Regents' approval.
- 4. Alamogordo campus:
 - a. After kindergarten, students must meet the criteria set forth by the school's Admissions' Committee for future placements.
- 5. If the child meets the referral requirements for services, NMSBVI will work with the School District to develop a plan that reflects the individual child's vision-specific needs. The team will consider a full continuum of services including placement in a classroom in the child's LEA as well as placement in an NMSBVI Early Childhood classroom.