



# Vision Impairment

**P**eople with vision impairment experience a reduced ability to see. Vision impairment includes moderate and severe vision impairment and blindness. It can be caused by childhood illness, injury to the eye and inherited conditions, to name a few. Children with **Albinism** (lack of colour in the skin) often also have vision impairment.

Refractive errors (including near sightedness and far sightedness) are common eye disorders and occur when the eye cannot clearly focus, resulting in blurred vision. These can be treated with glasses. A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye. Although more common in the elderly, children can also have cataracts. Cataracts can be treated.

Trachoma is a very common disease of the eye in which the eyes become watery, red and sore after coming into contact with an infection. Prompt treatment at a local health clinic prevents progression to vision impairment or blindness.

Children with vision impairment, including blindness, should be enrolled at school. Many children who are blind use Braille machines and computers to read and write. Schools can seek support from the Ministry of Education to assist

children with vision impairment.

## Children with vision impairment may:

- Have difficulty reading the blackboard or small print in books
- Get very tired or have headaches when they read
- Have red eyes or eyelids, have eye discharge or seem to continually produce tears
- Have one or both pupils (the black part in the middle of the eye) that appear grey or white
- Have eyes that cross, turn out, or move differently from each other
- Turn their head to the side, blink a lot or squint (half shut their eyes) when looking at things
- Put objects or books close to face.

## Additional resources:

[Helping Children Who are Blind](#) - Hesperian Foundation and <https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/guide-to-disabilities/assessment-diagnosis/vision-impairment>

**"All schools shall promote fair and equitable access to education for all learners with disabilities regardless of their gender, age, social status, economic background, geographical location, race, ethnicity, religious background, sexual orientation and gender identity, or intersections between these factors."**

(MoE, Special and Inclusive Education Policy)

**"Every person has the right to early childhood education, primary and secondary education and further education."**

(Fiji Constitution)

**Who can help?** Your nearest health centre, the hospital in your division and your community health worker. For additional help refer to your local optometrist, Pacific Eye Institute (Suva), Fiji Society for the Blind, <https://fijisocietyfortheblind.org/>

Produced as part of the **Toolkit for Disability-Inclusive Education – Fiji** - Issued June, 2023.

Please note that this document is for informational/education purposes only and does not replace medical advice.



Ministry of Education

