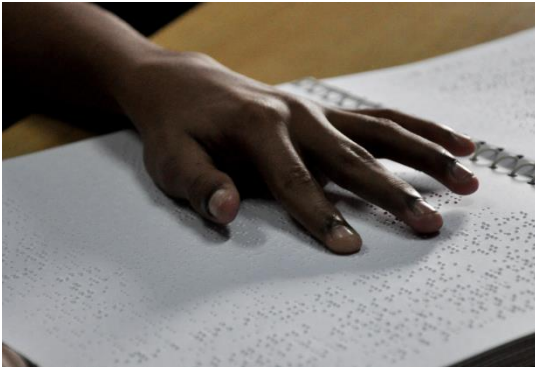


VISION IMPAIRMENT

Produced as part of the *Toolkit for Disability-Inclusive Education - Fiji*

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Every person has the right to early childhood education, primary and secondary education and further education (Fiji Constitution)

All children should be given the opportunity to learn together wherever possible, regardless of difficulties, disabilities or differences (Fiji Ministry of Education Policy on Special and Inclusive Education)

Vision impairment is a reduction in the ability to see. It includes moderate and severe vision impairment and blindness.

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 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 local health clinics 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 help assist your child.

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 looks 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 resource:

“Helping Children Who Are Blind – family and community support for children with vision problems”. Available in electronic form on the CD in the Toolkit for Disability-Inclusive Education, at schools across Fiji.

Who can help? Pacific Eye Institute (Suva) including the Mobile Eye Clinic, United Blind Persons of Fiji, Fiji School for the Blind, Project HEAVEN (hearing and vision enhancement), Fiji Society for the Blind, district hospital, local doctor, local optometrist.