



# The Rights of Children Who Are Blind, Deafblind, or Low Vision in Canada

It is time we make an unwavering commitment to children and youth who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision. With the right supports for children and their families, children who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision can achieve the same outcomes as their sighted peers. This charter only works if **all children** in Canada have access to their first eye exam at 6 months, again at 2 years old, and every year after.

We will ensure barriers are eliminated for children with blindness, Deafblindness, and low vision so they have the same opportunities as any other children to achieve their true potential. In pursuit of this goal, stakeholders across the health care, educational, and legislative systems must put in place these essential building blocks:

- 1 Early identification of vision problems
- 2 Elimination of social stigmas
- 3 Implementation of best practices, accountability measures, and opportunities for continuous learning about the challenges associated with blindness, Deafblindness, and low vision among health care and educational professionals

## A) Commitments of Health Care Systems

Children who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision and their families, including those in rural and remote areas, must be able to rely on health care systems for a commitment to providing:

- 1) clear, accessible, and comprehensive information relating to eye health;
- 2) referrals to community support services at the time of diagnosis;
- 3) health care professionals who advocate for the child and family, collaborating with other professionals throughout the continuum of care.

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## B) Commitments of the Educational System

Students who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision and their families must receive a commitment from the educational system to:

- 1) integrate low vision, blindness, and Deafblindness into the general curriculum to cultivate a culture of equal participation and inclusion;
- 2) equip teachers with the tools, training, and resources needed to support students who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision;
- 3) provide students with timely access to technology, devices, materials, and accommodations - including ensuring the physical and social environment is inclusive, extracurricular activities are accessible, and braille support is provided to every child who needs it.

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## C) Commitments of Families

Families of children who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision will commit to:

- 1) maintaining regular communication with health care, educational, and other community partners who interact with their child;
- 2) keeping appointments and following up on referrals and recommendations related to their child's wellness;
- 3) being transparent about changes in their child's situation (e.g., change in sight, change in behaviour, etc.) so their care team can best support the child's changing needs.

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