



ESE Program Information Sheet - Dual Sensory Impaired (DSI)

Definition: A student with DSI has dual-sensory impairments affecting both vision and hearing, the combination of which causes serious impairment in the abilities to acquire information, communicate, or function within the environment; or has a degenerative condition which will lead to such impairment.

Overview: Students who are dual-sensory impaired (deaf-blind) have impairments of *both* their vision and hearing. Their instruction can be delivered in settings ranging from regular classrooms to residential schools. Early establishment of communication is essential. Support service programs may include communication interpreters, interveners, classroom aides, orientation and mobility and/or vision instruction. Educational aids are determined by the needs of each student and may be similar to those provided for students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing or have a visual impairment.

State Laws and Regulations: The rule referenced below is specific to DSI. Please refer to [Volume I-B: Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules, Excerpts Related to Exceptional Student Education](#) (PDF, 9MB) for a complete listing of laws and regulations applicable to exceptional student education.

- [Rule 6A-6.03022, Florida Administrative Code \(F.A.C.\), Special Programs for Students Who Are Dual-Sensory Impaired](#) (Word)
- [New! Model Communication Form \(Fillable Form\)](#) (Word, 311KB)

General Resources: The following Resources will provide educators with information concerning Students who are Dual Sensory Impaired.

- [Florida's Educational Opportunities for Students with Sensory Impairments \(8.5 x 11\)](#) (PDF, 821KB)

Tips to support inclusion: Although knowing the general characteristics of DSI is helpful, teaching strategies for students with DSI still need to be individualized. It is important for teachers to realize the wide range of abilities and characteristics students with DSI may exhibit.

- *First and foremost, make the environment safe.* You must make an individual plan for the child with DSI for emergencies (fire drills and other school emergency procedures) and make sure the plan is written down for all staff and substitutes. Also, become aware of potential dangers to a dually-impaired child in your classroom and ensure that walkways are clear, and that doors and cabinets are secured either open or shut. Remember to inform the dually-impaired student if furniture has been moved.
- Become familiar with the “sighted guide technique.”

- Have materials transferred into the student's appropriate reading medium.
- Use real/concrete items as much as possible. Don't assume the student knows what to do with the items.
- Use tactile graphics and raised-line drawings to improve the student's ability to understand line drawings or graphs.