



## November Focuses on Visual Impairments

Total blindness is the inability to tell light from dark, or the total inability to see. Visual impairment, or low vision, is a severe reduction in vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses and reduces a person's ability to function at certain, or all, tasks. Legal blindness (which is actually a severe visual impairment) refers to a best-corrected central vision of 20/200 or worse in the better eye or a visual acuity of better than 20/200.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines impaired vision in five categories:

- Low vision 1 is a best corrected visual acuity of 20/70.
- Low vision 2 starts at 20/200.
- Blindness 3 is below 20/400.
- Blindness 4 is worse than 5/300
- Blindness 5 is no light perception at all.

The leading causes of blindness include macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts and diabetes. Other possible causes include infections, injury, or nutrition.

Children with visual impairments should be assessed early to benefit from early intervention programs, when applicable. Technology in the form of computers and low-vision optical and video aids enable many partially sighted, low vision and blind children to participate in regular class activities. The law also requires that schools provide accessible instructional materials to all students who need them—this can include large print materials, books on tape/CD, and braille books.

For more information about Visual Impairments visit <http://www.lighthouse.org>, <http://www.afb.org/>, the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)\* webpage at <http://www.pica.army.mil/mwr/ACS/EFMP.htm> or contact the EFMP Manager, Marci Keck, at 973-724-2145 or [marci.keck@us.army.mil](mailto:marci.keck@us.army.mil).

*\*The Department of Defense EFMP is a mandatory enrollment program that works with other military and civilian agencies to provide comprehensive and coordinated community support, housing, and educational, medical, and personnel services to Families with special/exceptional needs.*