



Accessing the Visual Environment: Learning from One Another

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Learning Objectives

- Describe Project PAVE and compare how low vision programs are uniquely implemented in other states.
- Identify best practices for encouraging device use, starting early with young learners, and integrating tools into daily routines and instruction.
- Explain effective collaboration strategies among professionals, supported by real-world examples.
- Recognize key considerations in supporting students' social-emotional needs.

Learning from Existing Low Vision Projects



Project PAVE

- Visual access is a right
- Team-based approach
- Importance of supporting psychosocial aspects
- Best practice for students to own the devices



How the Model Works

- Geographic distribution of students
- Children and youth ages 3-21
- Instruction from 1 ualified personnel
- Multidisciplinary model of service
- TN Dept of Education funding
- Doctor-PAVE staff collaboration



Before Clinic

- Parental consent
- Collection of FVA, eye reports, IEP goals/objectives
- Scheduling of examination (parent and VI team included)
- Review of records by PAVE staff and Low Vision Specialist



During Clinic

- Parent-student interview
- Brief literacy assessment
- Comprehensive clinical exam
- Visual efficiency considered
- Device trial of near, mid-range and distance viewing



After Clinic

- Integration of device use into school environment using ECC framework
- Instruction scheduled and provided by PAVE teachers in the LEA
- Progression of instruction from technical use to real-world integration
- Psychosocial considerations
- Clinic report review with educational team



Project PAVE Outcomes

- Faster reading speeds
- Improved visual efficiency and independence
- Social and academic gains
- Increased participation in life activities



Smokey Powell Center-Georgia (1)

Services provided at no charge

- Clinical low vision evaluations
- Eye health clinics
- AT assessments & consults
- AT loan program
- Professional learning opportunities
- Local on-site support & resources

Smokey Powell Center-Georgia (2)

Low Vision Clinics (LVC) & Eye Health Clinics (EHC)

- Outreach program through the GA Department of Education-Office of State Schools
- 23 Low Vision Clinics per school year and 12 Eye Health Clinics per school year
- 2024-2025 SY approx. 180 students received free evaluations, devices and resources at no charge to the students, families or districts
- We offer an Assistive Technology loan program to assist students and districts to choose the most appropriate technology for both school and home.
- Referrals are made through the school districts
- Students must be between the ages of 3-21, on an IEP or in the eligibility process, and receiving services from a TVI or O&M specialist.
- Students are recommended to return every 2-3 years or if there is a change in their vision

Project Magnify- South Carolina (1)

- Cooperative program sponsored by the SC Department of Education and the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind
- Selects 30 students a year and offers a comprehensive low vision evaluation, prescribed devices, and intensive training at no cost to the student. District is asked to reimburse parent mileage to and from the clinic.

Project Magnify- South Carolina (2)

- Referrals are made throughout the school year. Students for the next school year are selected in May.
- Clinics occur in late August or early September for 3 days.
- Devices are ordered and students receive service in October.
- Students must be between the ages of 3-21, on an IEP, and receiving service from a TVI or O&M instructor.
- Students can go through the program every three years.

Variations in Low Vision Programs

Georgia

- Satellite clinics throughout the state
- Access to Technology Assessments
- Device training and resources are available through a consult model throughout the school year.
- 1- year loan program for districts and ability to purchase at a depreciated value at the end of the loan.

South Carolina

- Clinics are held for 3 days once a year in August or September
- Device training is provided once a month for the school year



Examples of Low Vision Programming in Texas

- Development of low vision programming in collaboration with staff at the state's 20 educational service centers (e.g., bioptic driving)
- Low Vision on the Road mobile program for students and staff with emphasis on optical device use and social-emotional support
- Annual Low Vision Conference with focus on instructional needs of students who primarily use print
- Coordination of TSBVI on-campus low vision clinic (per staff request)

Best Practices and Strategies

Panel Discussion



Early Start, Lifelong Impact

- Can you share a story of a preschool-aged child who benefited from early clinic attendance and what that set in motion for their future success?
- What strategies have worked for you when helping families of young children overcome hesitation or fear about clinical low vision evaluations?

Encouraging Device Use at All Ages

- Tell us about a time you worked with an elementary student who was reluctant to use a prescribed device—and what made the difference for that child.
- What has helped middle school students transition from compliance-based to confident and independent use of their devices?
- Can you describe a high school student's journey who became empowered by learning how to use their vision more efficiently through a clinical evaluation and device training?

Collaborative Success Stories

- Share an example of how a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments and an Orientation & Mobility Specialist worked together to reinforce optical device use in travel instruction and range of settings (e.g., home, community).
- In your experience, what has helped build effective collaboration between clinic-based professionals and school-based teams?

Device Integration Throughout the Day

- What daily life routines or classroom practices have you seen successfully support consistent device use across multiple settings or subjects?

Coaching and Mindset Shifts

- Can you share a time when a family or educator had a mindset shift after seeing the benefit of a student's device use? What triggered that change?
- What's a small but powerful strategy you've used to build student buy-in for learning to use their devices?

Keeping Tools Current & Relevant

- Tell us about a time when a student outgrew a tool or their needs changed—how did you recognize it was time for a new evaluation or device?
- What tips would you offer to teachers or families who aren't sure when a student might need to explore different tools?

Program Insights

- What are one or two key ingredients from your state's low vision project that have helped students go from being unsure of their vision to confidently using it?
- Thinking across ages, what's one story that best represents the value of consistent device use from early years through high school?