

What is Cerebral Visual Impairment?

Cerebral visual impairment (CVI) is a disorder caused by damage to the parts of the **brain** that process vision.



Medical advances have led to improved survival rates of pre-term babies, as well as those with central nervous system diseases.

This has resulted in higher incidences of CVI among infants, especially in developed countries, where it is estimated that **30-40%** of children with visual impairment have CVI (*The American Foundation for the Blind, 2008*).

Diagnosis

Cerebral visual impairment is a medical condition and would require a diagnosis by a doctor and a team of specialists.

(i.e., medical, occupational, speech and language therapists, and vision teachers)

Children with CVI may experience visual difficulties that can range from mild to severe. They may have **difficulty**:

- Seeing more than one thing at a time
- Seeing and listening concurrently
- Picking things up accurately
- Seeing moving objects like balls and cars
- Locating people or objects in a cluttered space
- Recognizing faces and everyday objects
- Coordinating movement or actions

They can find life confusing, stressful, challenging, and frightening at times. Thus, exhibiting behaviors like:



Showing dislike to changes to routines and environments



Hurting themselves
(e.g., biting, pinching, scratching, and hair pulling)



Preferring to be alone than with peers

By learning about your child and understanding that the behavior is a way of communicating their feelings, you can introduce ways to help your child manage their CVI.

Need for Intervention

There is a growing concern over more potential cases of children with **undiagnosed CVI**, and where regular programmes for ocular visual impairment will not meet their needs.



While there is no medical cure, there are strategies that can help children with CVI, such as:

- Keeping the learning space uncluttered and simple
- Presenting one item at a time
- Providing time for the child to respond

These individualized strategies can be put in place by professionals to support your child in learning and thus help improve their quality of life. It may also help improve your child's visual skills.

Who are at **RISK** of developing CVI?

- Babies who are born early (before 37 weeks)

Individuals who have:

- A lack of blood supply or oxygen to the brain
- Developmental brain defects
- Low blood sugar at birth
- Hydrocephalus
- Infections of the central nervous system (meningitis)
- Head injury
- Periventricular white matter disease
- Periventricular leukomalacia

Contact us

for more information and to receive support for children with CVI:

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Additional Resources

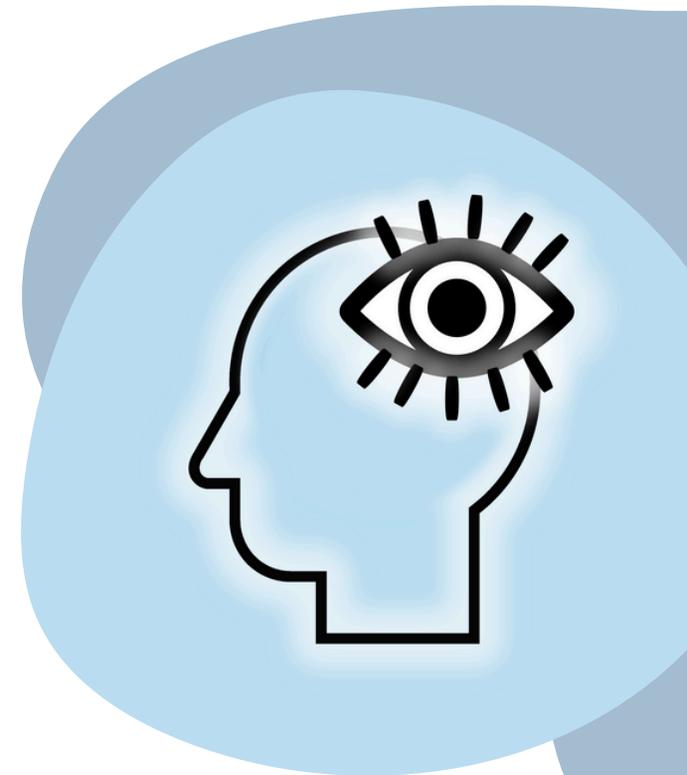
CVI Scotland: <https://cviscotland.org/>

Teach CVI: <https://www.teachcvi.net/>

Scottish Sensory Centre:
<https://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/>



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CEREBRAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

“Cerebral Visual Impairment is an umbrella term for brain-related problems with vision.”

-The CVI Project