

PROJECT VIISA
(Vision Impaired In-Service in America)

A Model In-Service Training Program for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Professionals Serving Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers Who are Blind or Visually Impaired who may have additional disabilities.

Course I: Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers (0-2) with Vision Impairments and Their Families

The purpose of this course is for participants to gain and develop skills in understanding the unique needs of infants and toddlers who are blind or visually impaired in a home-based setting. The focus will be on working with these children, as well as in collaboration with the family and other members of the service delivery team. Transitioning from a home setting to preschool will also be addressed. Participants will gain knowledge and skills in observation, assessment, intervention techniques, use of appropriate methods, curricula and materials in teaching skills in all developmental domains, developing the use of all senses, meeting the child's needs in the group setting, socialization, early literacy and orientation and mobility.

The course consists of:

- Six total days of training to be held at the Missouri School for the Blind (3815 Magnolia, Saint Louis, MO 63110). First three days of training November 3-5, 2021 (half day Nov 3, full days Nov 4-5). Final three days of training April 13-15, 2022 (half day Apr 13, full days Apr 14-15).
- Five home study packages with readings and written assignments are required and are to be emailed to the instructors. These assignments will involve observations, hands-on mini-practicum experiences with infants and/or toddlers with vision loss, and reactions to assigned readings.

Additional Details:

All VIISA classes will be in-person at Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) in Saint Louis, MO. **Vaccinations will be required to attend. Please bring your ID and vaccination card to sign in at MSB. Accommodations requested at least two weeks in advance may be offered on a case-by-case basis for those unable to be vaccinated due to disability. CDC guidelines will also be followed.**

Participants will receive, at no charge, the Project VIISA Home Study Assignment Manual, other necessary course materials, and the curriculum manuals at the beginning of the first class. Participants are encouraged to bring an electronic device (laptop, tablet, etc.) to access virtual materials during classes.

Participants may apply for two college credit hours after successful completion of the VIISA Course I Training Program. Credit hours are offered through Lindenwood University at a reduced rate of \$75/hr (\$150 total).

VIISA is provided by the Missouri Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project at no expense to participants. Working lunch will be provided on Thursday and Friday of each session. Transportation, lodging, and other related expenses will be the responsibility of the applicant.

First Classes – November 3-5, 2021

The first series of classes will take place in person at the Missouri School for the Blind in Saint Louis, MO. The class will consist of lecture and discussions; observation and application with case studies on video; work in small groups; exposure to resources (i.e., materials, curricula, agencies, and personnel); and sharing of ideas. The topics for the first class are as follows:

- Course Overview
- Introduction to Vision Impairment, Impact on Learning and Development
- Working with Families
- Ocular Disorders and Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI)
- Hearing, Auditory Skills, and Listening
- Visual Development and Functional Vision Assessment
- Use of Touch
- Attachment and Early Communication
- Strategies, Materials, and Modifications

Second Classes – April 13-15, 2022

This class will be similar to the first, but with new topics; additionally, you will evaluate the course. The topics for the second on-site class are as follows:

- Cognition, Play, and Concept Development
- Motor and Early Orientation and Mobility
- Child Care Routines
- Active Learning Environments
- Multiple Disabilities, including Deafblindness
- Early Literacy
- The Senses/Sensory Processing Issues
- Assessment of Infants and Toddlers
- Goals and Interventions
- Transition from EI to Preschool

Home Study Assignments – varied dates

There are nine home study units in the VIISA manual. It is recommended that you look over all of the units and read as much as you can. You are required to complete one assignment from five out of the nine units. You may complete them in any order you wish. Due dates for the five assignments are listed below.

Class Schedule

First Class	<i>November 3-5, 2021</i>
Home Study Assignments	<i>November 19, 2021</i>
	<i>December 10, 2021</i>
	<i>January 7, 2022</i>
	<i>February 18, 2022</i>
	<i>March 18, 2022</i>
Final Class	<i>April 13-15, 2022</i>

Application

If you are interested in joining us for Project VIISA Course I, please submit an application no later than October 8, 2021 by visiting the [VIISA Application](#).

Additional Questions? Contact Mandy Clayton (Missouri VIISA Coordinator) at mandy.clayton@msb.dese.mo.gov or call 314.633.1553.