

## How Common are Visual Impairments?

**Very** common, especially as we grow older. But there are many causes of visual impairments that have nothing to do with the aging process, and children certainly can be—and are—affected. In the U.S., there are approximately:

- 490,420 children with vision difficulty (the term “vision difficulty” refers only to children who have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses and those who are blind.) ([5](#))
- 42,000 children with a severe vision impairment (unable to see words and letters in ordinary newsprint) ([6](#))
- 59,341 children who are legally blind ([7](#))

Each year States must report to the U.S. Department of Education how many children with visual impairments received special education and related services in our schools under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the nation’s special education law. Data reported in 2011 (for the school year 2010) indicate that the following numbers of children were served in the U.S. and its outlying areas:

- 3,447 children (ages 3-5) with visual impairment ([8](#))
- 25,670 children (ages 6-21) with visual impairment ([9](#))