Perkins SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Unlocking opportunity

A guide to admissions

About Perkins

Imagine your child learning to swim in physical education class or solving mathematical equations alongside their peers. At Perkins School for the Blind, these are the types of experiences we offer to every student regardless of their disability.

Since 1829, we've focused on providing customized, quality education for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind—with or without additional disabilities. Today, Perkins continues to offer superior educational services to students from across the U.S. and internationally.

At Perkins, students receive robust academic instruction while also preparing for the future. They learn how to live independently, how to advocate for themselves, and how to identify personal interests and set tangible goals.

They also become part of a vibrant, supportive community where all students are valued for their unique abilities and strengths. With help from expert staff and teachers, our students develop social skills and forge meaningful connections with peers. They participate fully in all areas of the community—from sports to student government—and take part in school traditions like the holiday concert and the prom.

At Perkins, we are dedicated to unlocking every child's opportunity to define their own success.

Why Perkins?

Our mission is clear: to prepare children and young adults ages 3-22 with multiple complex disabilities, visual impairments, or who are deafblind with the education, confidence, and skills they need because we believe every child can learn and learning is for life. **At Perkins, we believe…**

Early diagnosis and support are critical

Experts have shown that the quality of social, emotional, and physical development of children at a young age has a direct effect on their future development. Our Early Learning Center, Lower School, and Deafblind Preschool provide individualized education and intensive related services for a lifetime of positive development.

Every child can learn

We serve children with a range of needs and abilities, from college-bound students to those in need of ongoing community support. With the right services and an individualized approach, students can make meaningful progress and learn skills that will help them for the rest of their lives.

Technology is a powerful teaching tool

Perkins is home to state-of-the-art classrooms where students are trained to use the latest devices, building a toolbox of technology skills to help them succeed.

Education should be customized

We take an individualized approach to education, because each student learns in unique ways. For a student with cortical/cerebral visual impairment (CVI) all learning activities, including core academic lessons, incorporate best practices and strategies from the Perkins CVI Center.

Experienced educators make a difference

Our faculty has decades of experience teaching students how to access information. Our specialists in orientation and mobility, speech and language pathology, physical and occupational therapy, individual and group counseling, and assistive technology are the best in their fields. They all share a common goal: to prepare our students for independence today and later in life.

Parent and guardian partnerships

You know your child best and we've learned that a close partnership between families, teachers, and staff is critical to students' success. That's why we work closely with families and guardians to make sure every child gets what they need, both at home and at school.

What Perkins families are saying:

"At Perkins, I feel like my child is going to have the same opportunities as a child with no disabilities. No stone is left unturned when it comes to Cam and everything he needs."

Jessica Rojas

Mother of Deafblind School student Cameron

Who we serve

Our day and residential programs serve students ages 3-22 with multiple complex disabilities and visual impairments, including those who are deafblind. Students attend one of four academic programs at Perkins:

Early Learning Center (Ages 3-6)

Supporting students who are learning foundational skills such as orientation and mobility, social interaction, communication, and concept development.

Lower and Secondary Schools (Ages 7-22)

Supporting a wide range of learning profiles:

- Students who are working at or are within two grade levels of their age and have the potential to pass state-wide assessments, attend college, or obtain competitive employment. These students have the potential to live independently or semi-independently and take academic classes such as Algebra 2 and chemistry.
- Students who are accessing education below their grade level and may or may not achieve a standard high school diploma. These students benefit from individualized instruction and real-life experiences in functional academics, assistive technology, and independent living.
- Students who have complex needs coupled with sensory impairments that make it difficult for them to learn in a traditional school setting. These students may be nonverbal or have limited verbal skills and benefit from intensive training in fundamental communication (including augmentative communication), self-regulation of behavior, and community integration.

Deafblind School (Ages 3-22)

Supporting students who are deafblind with or without additional disabilities. These students benefit from functionally appropriate curriculum in Perkins' acclaimed Deafblind School with its total communication learning environment.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to life after Perkins.

Some students pursue higher education at 2- or 4-year colleges, while others transition directly to the workforce or find meaningful engagement in their communities. Our transition specialists work closely with all students and their families to help them set realistic goals and design a holistic plan to meet them.

"There's such a peace of mind as a parent to have your child in the best place in the world she could be in for school. It's allowed me, when Natalie's home, to just be Mom. I don't have to be her teacher too. I know she gets what she needs—her education—at school."

Kate Stone

Mother of Deafblind School student Natalie

Visit our website to learn more about Perkins and Admissions:

Perkins.org/Admissions

The Expanded Core Curriculum

Students with visual impairments and multiple complex disabilities need specialized instruction and additional learning opportunities to develop communication and social skills, navigate their world, and advocate for themselves. Perkins educators can help them gain these skills, creating unique opportunities for incidental learning.

Through the **Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)**, students learn how to dress for job interviews and engage in conversation with their peers. They learn to use assistive technology to access information in the classroom and how to speak up and voice their questions appropriately.

How Perkins delivers the nine Expanded Core Curriculum skills:

Independent living

From cooking meals and washing dishes, to personal grooming and managing a budget, students learn how to be independent in our well-staffed and structured environment.

Assistive technology

Students have unlimited access to a wide variety of assistive technology—from screen readers to braille notetakers—so they can learn what works best for them.

Sensory efficiency

Our educators encourage students to use all of their senses—including touch and residual vision or hearing—to learn and interact with the world around them.

Recreation and leisure

Students learn how to exercise for fitness and strength, play sports, and develop life-long interests and hobbies like art, music, and gardening in our horticulture center.

Compensatory access

Students receive ongoing instruction on how to process and share information in ways that compensate for visual impairment or deafblindness.

Orientation and mobility

Perkins specialists teach students how to properly use a mobility device such as a white cane and identify environmental cues to safely navigate their surroundings.

Social interaction

Students are coached to form healthy social relationships, resolve conflicts, and understand the meaning of body language and personal space.

Self-determination

Students learn how to confidently express their opinions, advocate for their needs, and identify their personal strengths.

Career education

Students discover many different jobs through extensive job coaching, internships, and work opportunities on and off campus.

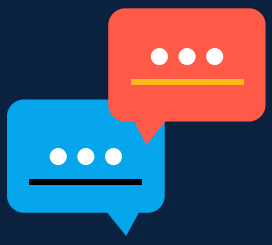
Visit our website to read more about the Expanded Core Curriculum:

Perkins.org/ECC

"It wasn't until he went to Perkins that we really began to see academic progress, both in reading and in math skills, as well as things like science comprehension and social studies. Perkins knew how to present the information so they could work to Aidan's strengths and work around his weaknesses."

Debra McNeely

Mother of Secondary School student Aidan



Please call or email us anytime to discuss how Perkins can play a role in your child's success.

Email: **Admissions@Perkins.org**

Phone: **617-972-7573**

Frequently asked questions

Where is Perkins located?

Our 38-acre campus is located in Watertown, Mass., where our students have the opportunity to learn in an accessible, calm, and safe environment that's just 20 minutes from downtown Boston and Logan International Airport.

Will my child have friends at Perkins?

Yes. At Perkins, your child will be surrounded by peers who share and understand their disability. Many of our students create strong friendships that endure long after they leave Perkins.

How much does Perkins cost?

Perkins has six state-approved tuition rates aligned to the amount of support students need.

What does a typical day look like for a Perkins student?

Students' schedules vary based on their individual learning objectives. All students have a mixture of academic and life skills classes and related services when appropriate. Meals are served family-style in our residential cottages, and after-school hours are reserved for homework, sports, and clubs. We also have a renowned music program for all students.

What kind of extracurriculars does Perkins offer?

Students can choose from a variety of activities that fit their interests. We offer several team sports including goalball, track, swimming, and cheerleading as well as group activities like Spanish Club, student government, and Karaoke Club. Radio Perkins, our internet radio station, allows students to host their own shows. Each school year can be different as activities are driven by student interests.

At what age does residential living typically start at Perkins?

It is not required that students live on campus, but participation in the residential program may start at age 12. Residential living offers students opportunities to work on social interaction and independent living skills. Our residential cottages are fully accessible and staffed 24/7.

What else does Perkins offer students?

No matter where you are on your student's educational journey, we have a program or service that's right for you. We offer:

- **Outreach Programs:** Run on weekends, vacations, and over the summer months. These courses cover topics including Expanded Core Curriculum, cooking, and robotics. Public school students are welcome to apply.
- **Comprehensive Independent Evaluations:** Conducted by Perkins specialists, evaluations help families to improve their child's academic opportunities.
- **Transition Programs:** We offer programs to help students and families identify their path to success after Perkins, including job skills training, college planning, and independent living.

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