

Meet Robyn Black, a Resource Teacher: Vision (RTV)

Based in Auckland, Robyn joined the Ministry of Education in 2011



Robyn's story

Robyn is a trained primary teacher. She has worked in both the primary and secondary sectors.

Robyn's day-to-day

Robyn works with a range of students with a vision impairment. One day Robyn might be supporting a student in a P.E. lesson, modelling ideas on how to include a student with low vision, the next working on transition to university for a year 13 student and the following day working with a five-year-old learning to access literacy through braille. Accessing the school curriculum can be challenging and Robyn ensures that learning materials are accessible. This can range from large print, to e-texts, or to braille.

Communication and working collaboratively are central to the role. Robyn promotes a team approach with whānau at the centre of her practice. *"Collaborating with the education team and whānau is essential; listening, planning, and adapting learning to enable students to successfully access the NZ Curriculum is core."* She often works alongside a variety of specialists to provide services to children with low vision, who access learning through braille or with complex needs. She enjoys supporting teachers and teacher aides both "on the spot", and through scheduled PLD sessions.

Reflecting values in her work

Respecting the Awhinatanga of families is very important, listening to and respecting their ideas and wishes for their children is key. Robyn only sees the children for a short time, and their families know them best.

Rewards of the role

Robyn still loves being an RTV after 10 years in the role, building relationships with her students and their whānau, and feeling a sense of achievement when her students succeed. This is not just only with academic learning, but also having the skills and strategies that will enable them to live independent and fulfilling lives.

Future aspirations

From being an RTV, Robyn can become a Senior Teacher then a Manager of a Visual Resource Centre. Robyn would like to continue developing and growing as an RTV, as it is important to be flexible and adaptable in a job where there is always new research and strategies to support ākonga.

Resource Teacher: Vision – Role Information

Resource Teachers: Vision are employed by the Blind and Low Vision Education Network New Zealand (BLENNZ).

Role responsibility:

- work in partnership with parents, families, communities, teachers and other specialists to help provide a quality education for children and young people who are blind, deafblind or have low vision
- work with children and young people and their families from birth to the end of compulsory education and support children and young people to make the transition to life after school
- adapt learning environments, teaching and learning approaches and the regular curriculum. Ensure access to accessible format materials
- advocate for children and young people who are blind, deafblind or have low vision, and their families.

Qualifications and experience needed:

- a Bachelor or Diploma of Teaching
- Be willing to undertake study for a Post Graduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching (Blind and Low Vision)
- Teaching experience.

A Resource Teacher: Vision must have knowledge of or skills in:

- blindness, deaf blindness and low vision
- Te Whāriki, the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum; the NZ Curriculum/ Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and the Expanded Core Curriculum.
- facilitating access and adaptation of curricula
- education theory and child development
- community and family support services
- effective communication, teaching, research and planning.

Career development

Becoming an RTV will give you the rewards and challenges of the job itself, as well as opportunities to develop your career.

You will:

- be supported, mentored and coached by experienced professional colleagues
- be kept up to date with the latest evidence
- take part in ongoing professional learning and development
- have opportunities to share and extend your knowledge and skills.

Related careers

Orientation and Mobility Instructors work with children and young people who are blind, deafblind or have low vision and their families, whānau and specialist teams. Visit the BLENNZ website for more information www.blennzonline.edublogs.org.

Further Information

Learning support careers and professional development

For more information about the role of a special education adviser and working in learning support, visit our [learning support careers page](#)

Learning support scholarships and study awards

If you're interested in a career in learning support, you may be eligible for a scholarship or study award. Find out [more here](#)