Strategies for Inclusion of Children with Multiple Disabilities, including Deaf-Blindness

The National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute
May 2012 – Chapel Hill, NC

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Outcome: Participants will be aware of a conceptual framework and strategies for including children with multiple disabilities, including deaf-blindness in community preschool and child care programs.

Objectives:

- Awareness of the learning challenges related to combined vision and hearing loss
- Awareness of strategies that facilitate inclusion and emergent literacy based on defining features of access, participation and supports
- Awareness of resources available related to supporting children with deaf-blindness
Children Who Are Deaf-blind

- Deaf-blindness is a condition in which the child experiences a **combination** of hearing and vision losses.
- The range of sensory impairments included in the term "deaf-blindness" is great.
- More than 90% of children who are deaf-blind have one or more additional disabilities or health problems.
Reported Vision Loss in Children Identified as Deaf-blind

- 17% - totally blind or light perception only
- 24% - legally blind
- 21% - low vision
- 17% - cortical vision impairment
- 21% - other
Reported Vision Loss in Children Identified as Deaf-blind

- 39% - severe to profound
- 13% - moderate
- 14% - mild
- 6% - central auditory processing disorder
Additional Disabilities in Children with Deaf-Blindness

- 66% - cognitive disabilities
- 57% - physical disabilities
- 38% - complex health care needs
- 9% - behavior challenges
Educational Settings for Preschool

- 72% - special education classrooms, separate schools or residential facilities
- 20% - inclusive settings
- 5% - home
Early childhood learning

Watching and listening to what’s going on around them
Early childhood learning

Touching, tasting, smelling, reaching, moving, climbing, singing, dancing, yelling
Early childhood learning

Being surrounded by people who provide a safe place to learn
Early childhood learning

Trying things out – repeating things that worked or brought pleasure – avoiding activities that did not
Early childhood learning

Asking lots and lots of questions
Young children who have both vision and hearing loss learn the same way . . . only different!
Deaf-blindness is a disability of access

- Vision and hearing = Distance Senses
- Information and responses are absent, limited or distorted
- Multiple disabilities affect ability to seek information
- Impacts incidental learning
Movement and Exploration

*The world can be a scary place!*

- Body awareness
- Space awareness
- Reaching and movement
- Locomotion
- Safe, predictable, responsive environments
Trustful Relationships

Success begins here!

- Bonding
- Respect
- Security
- Consistency
- Connection to the world
Defining Features of Inclusion

- **Access**
  - Communication systems
  - Sensory accommodations and adaptations

- **Participation**
  - Trustful relationships
  - Cues and prompts
  - Consistent Routines
  - Calendar System

- **Support**
  - Team approach
  - Training and technical assistance specific to deaf-blindness
Factors Influencing Inclusion

- Care and Education Providers’ confidence and comfort level
- Care and Education Providers’ professional development and training
- Administrator support
- Required related services
- Family concerns
Touch Cues for Personal Identification

- **Unique personal cue** to identify yourself

- **Needed by everyone** in regular contact with the child

- Used **each time** you greet and leave

- Familiar trusted individuals should introduce someone new
Personal Identifiers
Cues and Prompts
Tactile Cues

- **Touch Cues** - Specific signals that are executed on the student’s body

- **Object Cues** - Everyday objects that are presented to the student as cues and that may be touched on the body
Touch Cues

Touch cues should reduce startling, help develop anticipatory responses and provide clearer information about your expectations.
Touch Cues

- Directly onto body
- Immediately precede an action/activity
- Consistent – each time, each person
- Alerts child that something will follow cue
- Leads to anticipation
- Facilitates association between a specific action and its consequence
- Can expect response from child over time
Object Cues

- Presented to child as cues for particular activities
- Provide information or directives
- Allows child to ready self
- Consistent and predictable
- Facilitates development of expectation and anticipation
Types of Object Cues

- Actual object
- Partial or associated object
- Arbitrary object
Actual Objects

Spoon or fork to indicate time to eat
Partial or Associated Object Cue
Arbitrary Object Cue
Routines and Schedules
Routines

- Provide predictability, meaning, organization and security
- Opportunities for communication
- Build anticipation
- Reduce stress, increase confidence
Components of a routine

- Clear signal activity is starting
- Each time:
  - Same place
  - Same steps
  - Same sequence
  - Same materials
  - Same person
  - Same pacing
  - Same delivery of assistance
- Clear signal activity is finished
Routines

- Initiation
- Preparation
- Core
- Termination
Calendar systems

- Anticipation schedules
- Daily schedules
- Weekly, monthly, annual schedules
Calendar Components

- Set of symbols representing activities
- Format for presenting and sequencing the symbols (a calendar routine)
- Time built in for communicating about activities
- Accessible storage place for symbols
Anticipation schedules

- Introduction to calendars
- Learn that activities are represented by symbols
- Time concepts - past and future
- Left to right
- Sense of security and control
Anticipation schedule using actual object
Anticipation schedule using tactile symbol
Calendar Systems

Daily schedules
Daily Schedule using actual objects
Daily Schedule using actual objects
Daily schedule using a mix of symbols – objects, photos, line drawings
Weekly schedule using photos, line drawings and sign language pictures
Monthly schedule using tactile symbols
Concept Development
Concept Development

- Limited visual and auditory information creates challenges
- Difficult to integrate experiences and make connections
- Hands-on, holistic approach
- Multiple opportunities and repeated involvement
Consider the child’s perspective

- Motivating and meaningful
- Involve child from beginning to end
- Multi-sensory approach
- Limit voice – but not communication
- Practice “tactile” conversations
Tangible Concepts affected by deaf-blindness

- Objects exist
- Objects have permanence
- Objects differ
- Objects have names or labels
- Objects have characteristics
- Objects have functions or use
Concept Development

- What is a car?
- Getting a drink of water

OM2-05.mpg
OM3-08.mpg
Literacy Development

Building a foundation

- Trustful relationships
- Communication
- Preferences and interests
- Concept development
- Exposure to books, print and writing materials
Exposure to books and writing materials
Exposure to books and writing materials

- Need similar experiences before jumping into formal literacy instruction
  - Opportunities to observe print and Braille
  - Opportunities to explore traditional and adapted writing materials
- Need age-appropriate materials
- Need method for accessing materials
- Need to “see” others reading and writing
- Need consistency, repetition and multiple opportunities
Support and Resources

- Training and Professional Development
- Ongoing support and consultation
- Deaf-Blind Network
  Individual State Deaf-Blind Projects
  National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness
  National Family Association of Deafblind
ALL children CAN read...let us show you how!

STRATEGIES | PRACTICAL EXAMPLES | RESOURCES

Designed to give children with deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities and complex challenges expanded learning opportunities.
Thank you!