

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEAFBLIND PROJECT

A Federal Technical Assistance and Training Project for Children who are Deafblind in New Hampshire, Their Families and Service Providers



**New Hampshire Deafblind Project/
New England Consortium of Deafblind Projects (NEC)**
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The New Hampshire Deafblind Project is funded by the United States Department of Education/Special Education Programs (OSEP), under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) to assist state and local education agencies in developing their capacity to adequately serve infants, children, and youth who are deafblind.

MISSION STATEMENT

To build and strengthen a collaborative state and regional system that enables infants, children and youth who are deafblind to participate meaningfully in their homes, schools and communities in New Hampshire.

What is Deafblindness?

The Federal Government through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) defines deafblindness as “concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness” (Section 300.8 (c) (2)).

The New Hampshire Deafblind Project uses a functional definition of deafblindness and defines deafblindness as: combined vision and hearing losses, which challenge a person’s ability to communicate, interact with others, access information, and move about safely. Incidental information that most children acquire naturally must be introduced deliberately and systematically to children who are deafblind. Infants and children with this disability require early intervention and specialized services to facilitate and support learning and development.

Most individuals who are deafblind have some useful vision and/or hearing. There is a wide range of cognitive and developmental ability among individuals who are deafblind. Estimates indicate that there are approximately 40,000 people in the United States who are deafblind. It is estimated that 11,000 children and youth are deafblind (ages birth to 22).

Contributing Factors: Several factors that may contribute to the overall impact of deafblindness on an individual’s learning and development include:

- Age of onset
- Degree and type of vision and hearing loss
- Stability of each sensory loss or medical condition
- Previous learning history and type of interventions provided

Impact of Deafblindness: When both vision and hearing are compromised, a child's development can be significantly impacted in several areas:

- Communication and language development
- Movement and motor development
- Cognitive development
- Emotional and social development
- Body image and self concept

Vision is our key to exploration and mobility, to building concepts, and to developing social relationships. Hearing is the basis of the language and communication system that most people use. The development of communication skills, mobility skills, and social relationships are the three areas most impacted by deafblindness.

Available Technical Assistance and Training Includes:

- State and regional training relative to “effective practices” in deafblind education (i.e., communication, impact of combined vision and hearing losses on learning, assessment and curriculum, strategies for successful transitions). *The New Hampshire Deafblind Project also is a member of the New England Consortium of Deafblind Projects (NEC) which provides regional training to the states of: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.*
- Onsite or school-based training for team members relative to effective practices in deafblind education
- Training, information and support to families (i.e., family networking and sharing, parent participation in the educational planning process, parent leadership training, and self-advocacy)
- Information dissemination (i.e., community resources, evaluation referral, newsletters, and informational packets for families, service providers, and community agencies)

Requirements for Project Support:

- Clinical reports of vision and hearing loss
- Or Functional Vision and Auditory Assessment
- Educational Team determination that the student requires specialized services based on documented or suspected vision and hearing losses.

Eligibility Chart and Classification Codes:

Many children who are considered deafblind do not have total vision and hearing losses. In fact, children who have mild losses often need instruction to support and maximize their learning. The chart below depicts a wide spectrum of combined vision and hearing losses. All children who are within this range, their families and service providers are eligible for technical assistance and training from the New Hampshire Deafblind Project and the New England Consortium of Deafblind Projects.

		Degree of Vision Loss						
		Normal 20/12 - 20/40	Near Normal 20/41- 20/70 or field loss of 10° >	Low Vision 20/70 - 20/200 or field loss of 10° or >	Legally Blind 20/200+	Legally Blind with Light Perception	Totally Blind or No Light Perception	Cortical Vision Impairment (CVI)
Degree of Hearing Loss	Normal 0-25 dB							
	Mild 26-40 dB					C		*
	Moderate 41-55 dB		A	B		D		*
	Moderately Severe 56-70 dB							*
	Severe 71-90 dB							*
	Profound 91 dB or greater		C	D		E		*
	Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD)							*

How is Eligibility Determined?

Individuals from birth to age 22 who have any combination of the disabilities described below are eligible for support from the New Hampshire Deafblind Project, as outlined within the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C, Section 622, 307.11. The following descriptions and classifications apply to the chart:

- A. Individuals who have documented vision and hearing losses. The child's etiology may be mild to moderate or progressive in nature.
 - B. Individuals who have sensory loss of both vision and hearing (low vision; mild to moderate hearing loss).
 - C. Individuals who have sensory loss of both vision and hearing, one of which is severe and the other less severe (20/200 acuity or greater; 71-90 dB or greater).
 - D. Individuals who have sensory loss of both vision and hearing (low vision to total blindness; moderate to profound hearing loss).
 - E. Individuals who have significant sensory loss of both vision and hearing (legal blindness; severe or profound deafness).
- * Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD): Individuals who have difficulty with auditory perception of spoken language and other meaningful sounds in their environment. Such a diagnosis is typically confirmed by an audiologist.
 - * Cortical Vision Impairment (CVI): Individuals who have a documented visual impairment caused by the disturbance of the posterior visual pathways and/or the occipital lobes of the brain.

Contact Process:

To contact us or to make a referral to the New Hampshire Deafblind Project:

NEC (Birth – 22 Years) Main Office of New England Consortium of Deafblind Projects (NEC) c/o New Hampshire Deafblind Project, 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA 02472

M.I.C.E. (Birth – 2 Years) PO Box 2274, Concord, NH 03302
Phone: 603-228-1028

NHVHN (3-21 Years) 117 Pleasant St., Dollof Building, Concord, NH 03301
Phone: 603-226-2900



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