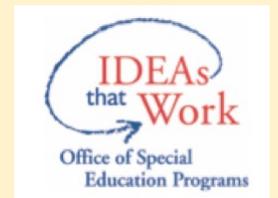


Introduction to Interveners for Children and Youth with Deafblindness

**Montana Deaf-Blind Project Webinar
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Primary outcomes of this webinar

Participants will better understand the following:

- The unique role and responsibilities of this important support service.
- The knowledge and skills an effective intervener should demonstrate.
- Tools to assist IEP teams in determining the need for an intervener for individual students who are deafblind.
- Training opportunities available to interested paraeducators to prepare them for this role.
- National advocacy efforts related to interveners.



Common Questions

- “A parent is asking for an intervener. I’ve never heard of this position. Who is this person?”
- “Is an “Intervener” part of IDEA?”
- “Is it another term for an interpreter for a student with both vision and hearing loss?”
- “Can any paraeducator fill the role?”
- “How is an intervener trained and who supervises a student’s intervener?”
- “How do I know if a student requires the services of an intervener?”

What is “intervention” for an individual who is deafblind?

Intervention is a process that allows an individual who is deafblind to receive visual and auditory information that they are unavailable to gather on their own in a way that is meaningful to the individual and enables them to engage and interact with their environment and the people in their environment.

Intervention Principles

1. Total and unconditional belief in and respect for an individual who is deafblind.
2. Total and unconditional belief in the value of intervention for all individuals who are deafblind.
3. The amount of intervention and the form it will take must be individualized to meet the specific needs and desires of each individual who is deafblind.
4. Individuals who are deafblind have a right to access information in their modes of communication.

Source: Canadian Deafblind Association



Intervention Principles (2)

5. Intervention is *“Doing With, Not For”*.
6. No assumptions should be made regarding the abilities of an individual with deafblindness.
7. Never underestimate the importance of the relationship between the intervenor and the individual who is deafblind.
8. The process of intervention must always provide the individual who is deafblind with the information required for anticipation, motivation, communication, and confirmation.

Source: Canadian Deafblind Association



Intervention Principles (3)

9. Every experience is an opportunity to provide information and encourage interaction.
10. The focus of intervention should always be on the needs of the individual who is deafblind.
11. Intervention is recognized as as a process that requires intervenors to have specific skills, knowledge and experiences in order to be effective in providing the best possible opportunity for people who are deafblind to gather information, process it and develop communication, concepts, and skills.

Source: Canadian Deafblind Associat



Interveners

“Intervener” is the term used in the field of deafblindness to describe the role of one-on-one paraeducators serving children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss. Interveners have specialized knowledge and skills in order to effectively meet the unique and complex needs of these students.

Interveners provide ACCESS.



Disability of access

- Learners who are deafblind represent a range of abilities, levels of vision and hearing, communication modes, and accommodation and support needs.
- Their combined vision and hearing losses means that neither sense can be used as a primary means of gathering information.

ACCESS

- To the curriculum
- To communication
- To the environment
- To peers and others in the environment

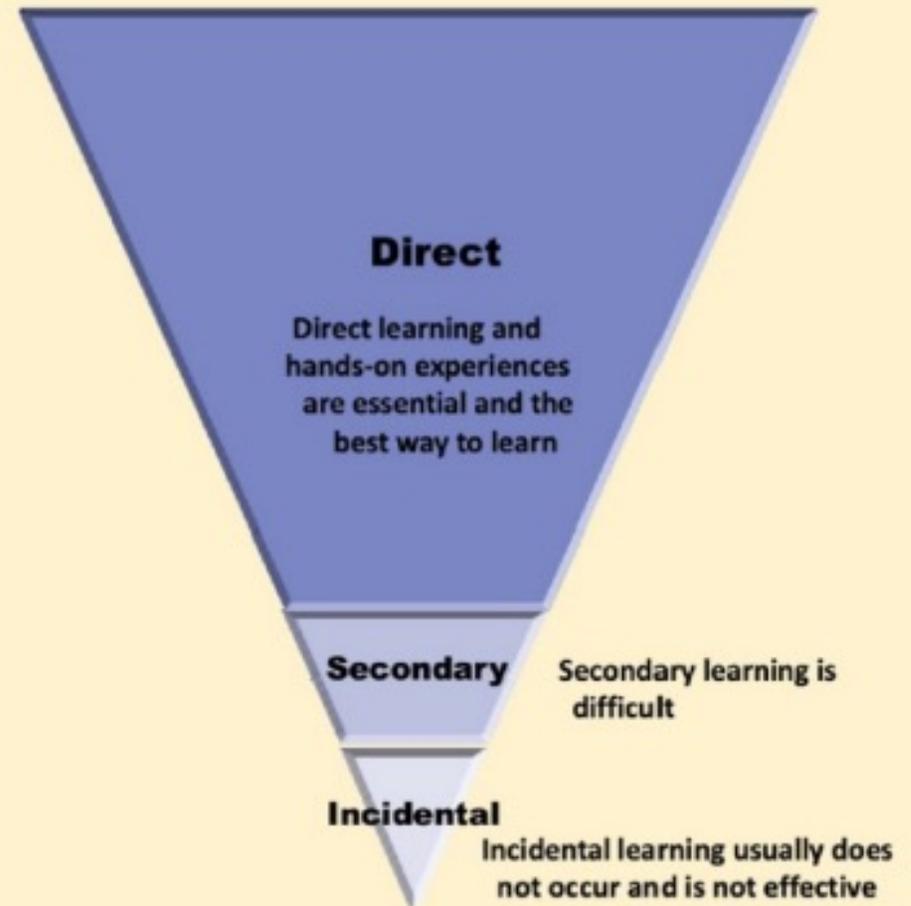
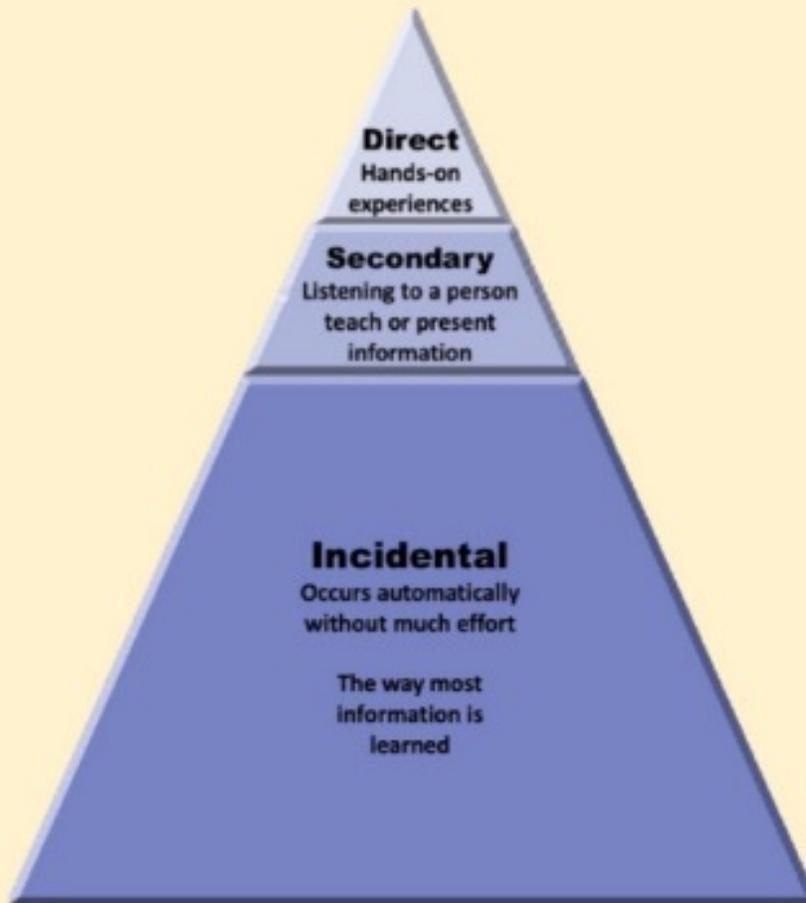
Primary roles of an intervener

- Provide consistent access to instruction and environmental information that unavailable or incomplete to an individual who is deafblind.
- Facilitate concept development.
- Provide access to and/or assist in the development and use of receptive and expressive communication skills.
- Facilitate the development and maintenance of trusting, interactive relationships that promote social and emotional well-being.
- Provide support to form relationships with others and increase social connections and participation in activities.

(National Center on Deaf-Blindness, 2019)



Typical vs. Deafblind Learning Model



Incidental Learning and Deafblindness

Listen to Michelle Clyne, coordinator for *Project Reach: Illinois Deaf-Blind Services*, describe the way that limited access to incidental information creates a hole in a child's learning.

Source: NCDB OHOA Module: Overview of Deaf-Blindness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPWar0s0Qpo>

Examples of Incidental Learning

- Trucks are bigger than cars and trains are bigger than trucks.
- My coat hangs on the hook on the wall and my backpack goes in my cubby.
- The person coming toward you is a stranger with a pretty scarf.
- The room gets warmer (or cooler) when you adjust a plastic box (thermostat) on the wall.
- When the bell rings I need to freeze until a teacher blows the whistle and then line up with my class.
- When a classmate falls down and gets hurt, I can help them up and ask “Are you okay?”
- There is a place in the cafeteria called a salad bar and where students can select what to have in their salad.

An intervener...

- Builds a trusting relationship with student.
- Interprets the environment.
- Encourages exploration.
- Supports development of communication.
- Provides access to curriculum at all levels.
- Facilitates and supports the development of positive relationships with others, including peers.
- Stays “in tune” with student, advocates for student, and supports self-advocacy and independence.
- Assists team with planning for student’s participation.
- Supports student’s development of positive self-identity.

Outcomes of intervention for a child or student with deafblindness

- Increased and improved communication skills.
- Higher levels of concept development.
- Increased access to and skills and confidence participating in a variety of school and community settings.
- Friendships and positive relationships.
- Increased independence and self-determination.
- Heightened sense of personal identity and positive self-image.
- Improved quality-of-life for student and family.

Intervener and Paraeducator Comparison

An intervener...

- Works 1:1 with the students who is deafblind rather than groups of students and typically not assigned other duties.
- Engages in training specific to deafblindness and intervention.
- Communicates with the student in **their** mode of communication and “interprets” for other when necessary.
- May need to know how to use and manage upkeep of assistive devices.
- Attends team planning meetings and IEP meetings.
- Works under the guidance of professionals with certification to serve children and youth who are deafblind.



Important team member

An intervener does NOT work in isolation. Instead, they...

- participate as an active member of the student's educational team.
- attend and participate in IEP meetings.
- attend regularly scheduled planning and feedback meetings with the teacher and other team members.
- are actively supervised and supported by the classroom teacher and other professionals responsible for the child's IEP.
- receives ongoing support from professional educators with expertise in deafblindness. (*National Center on Deaf-Blindness, 2019*)

1-1 Paraeducator Support Issues

- Barrier to interactions with others.
- Viewed as student's teacher and limits classroom teacher's interactions with and ownership of the student.
- Makes curricular decisions without adequate training and/or supervision.
- Leads to dependency on adult support.
- Resource that is difficult to financially sustain.

Sources: Giangreco & Broer (2007); Giangreco, Broer, & Suter (2011); Giangreco (2009).



The Intervener is a BRIDGE

Robbie Blaha (Texas DeafBlind Outreach Program) wrote in 1994: “The intervener is ***a bridge, not a wall.*** The overall goal is put themselves out of business in as many situations as possible. This requires that they continually assess the level of support needed by the child to be included in his environment and provide only the amount of support needed. The intervener must continually look for ways to draw others in and train them to provide support across situations.”



Issues in developing this role

- ❑ Lack of knowledge of this role and the unique skills, knowledge, and responsibilities.
- ❑ Concerns about determining the need for an intervener for a student.
- ❑ Recruiting & retaining suitable candidates to fill positions.
- ❑ Providing appropriate and adequate training and professional development.
- ❑ Need for a supervisory teacher or related service provider with competencies in serving students of deafblindness.
- ❑ Bureaucracy.

Guidance from Department of Education

- In 2018 the National Center on Deaf-Blindness requested clarification from the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) regarding their view of an intervener as a related service in an IEP.
- Ruth Ryder, Acting Director of OSEP responded in Aug. 2018:
“If the IEP Team determines that a particular service, including the services of an intervener, is an appropriate related service for a child and is required to enable the child to receive FAPE, the Team’s determination must be reflected in the child’s IEP, and the service must be provided at public expense and at no cost to the parents. 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(IV) and §1401(9).”

Source: <https://www.nationaldb.org/national-initiatives/iqp/>



What is the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act?

- A proposed congressional act with three particular parts each related to a sensory disability area—Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Visual Impairments, and Deafblindness.
- National leadership and advocacy efforts from dozens more organizations and groups. (see website for list)

Congressional Sponsors:

- Congressional representatives Matt Cartwright (D-PA) & David McKinley (R-WV) submitted **HR 1959**.
- Hopeful that Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) submitted **SB 813**. [provided for information purposes only]



Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act Federal recognition for interveners

SEC. 302. RELATED SERVICES.

Section 602(26)(A) ([20 U.S.C. 1401](#)) is amended by inserting after “for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only,” the phrase “and intervener services, which are provided to children who are deaf-blind by a qualified intervener)” and continuing with “as may be required . . .”

[provided for information purposes only]



Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act Interveners and Teachers of the Deafblind

SEC. 303. STATE PLANS.

Section 612 ([20 U.S.C. 1412](#)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(B) there is sufficient availability of personnel, including teachers of the deaf-blind and interveners, within the State qualified to provide the evaluation, instruction, and services described in subparagraph (A) to all children within the State requiring such instruction...”

[provided for information purposes only]



Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Intervener Competencies

Specialty sets of knowledge and skills specific to deafblindness.
Updated Competencies submitted to CEC March 2021.

Seven (7) Strands of Knowledge and Skills:

1. Engaging in professional learning and practice
2. Understanding and addressing student's developmental and learning needs
3. Demonstrating subject matter content and specialized curricular knowledge
4. Using assessment to understand the learner and learning environment for data-based decision making
5. Supporting learning using effective instruction
6. Supporting social, emotional and behavioral growth
7. Collaborating with team members



Open Hands, Open Access (OHOA) Online Deafblind Training Modules

The *Open Hands, Open Access (OHOA): Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules* are a national resource designed to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills related to intervention for students who are deaf-blind.

The 26 modules, created by a diverse group of experts in the field of deafblindness, were designed to be used as part of comprehensive intervener training programs offered by qualified agencies or institutions. The content is aligned with Council for Exceptional Children standards that outline knowledge and skill competencies for interveners.



Components of modules

The highly rigorous, field-tested *OHOA* modules include:

- captioned and audio-described videos
- readings
- slide presentations
- hands-on learner activities
- discussion boards
- assignments,
- quizzes,
- reflections

Resources

- NCDB Intervener Definition
- A Comparison of Possible Supports
- IEP Team Discussion Guide
- CEC Knowledge and Skills Competencies
- *Open Hands, Open Access* Training Modules

Potential Training Options

- University-based programs leading to national intervener **credential**.
- SFSU-CDBS Intervener Training Program leading to state intervener **certification**.
- Fieldwork and OHOA and/or related trainings plus National Intervener Certificate E-Portfolio (NICE) leading to national intervener **certification**.

University-based “Credential” Programs

- Leads to a National Intervener Credential.
- Online courses available to interveners in any state.
- Courses offered by Utah State University & Central Michigan University.
- 4 courses and 100 hours of fieldwork and completion of a professional portfolio demonstrating intervener competencies.
- Approximate cost: \$4,000-\$5,000 depending on program.



SFSU-CDBS Intervener Training Program

- Two (2) concurrent semesters (Fall & Spring) of online coursework using *Open Hands, Open Access (OHOA)* Intervener Training Modules.
- Course instructors are CDBS staff.
- Five modules completed each semester in addition to 3 synchronous video conference group meetings per semester.
- Successful completion leads to California Intervener Certificate.
- Participants can also choose to enroll in NICE to gain national intervener certification with mentorship help from state deafblind staff or a local teacher mentor.
- Cost for Fall 2021 & Spring 2022: \$240/semester or \$480 for program.



National Intervener Certificate E-Portfolio

- The **National Intervener Certification E-portfolio (NICE) System** is an assessment process, managed by the Paraprofessional Resource and Research Center (PARA² Center) that intervener candidates can use to submit evidence of their knowledge and skills through digital documentation of artifacts, such as video samples, described pictures, and other documents from the intervener's training and practice. The e-portfolio is evaluated by expert reviewers in the field of deaf-blindness.
- Current cost \$75 to apply for certification.
- Handout with more information in session's digital folder.



Questions? Comments?

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