

VIBRATIONS

NEWSLETTER OF COLORADO SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAFBLIND
Serving Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (Deafblindness),
Their Families, and Service Providers
Fall 2006



All About Simon

Written by Cheryl Nelson,
Simon's mom

I didn't arrive in the usual way on that stormy, spring night. I was born with a knot in my umbilical cord, a knot like one in a shoestring. My Apgar scores were 1-1-3 and I experienced an anoxic birth injury. Most children with knots die before term, during labor, at birth or shortly after. Isn't it interesting how many of us live despite the odds given against our survival? We truly are born with a purpose for all those whose lives we touch.

Being a 6 year old boy, who also happens to have Cerebral Palsy, quadriplegia and both vision and hearing impairments, many think my life isn't much. Yet I happily live in the country with my Mom & Dad, sister age 21 and two brothers (or "bothers" as they are affectionately referred to), 18 & 15 who have provided much depth to my life. They have helped to take care of my medical, physical and social needs. My older siblings were told to treat me like I was a "normal" boy, so they have provided opportunities like sledding, playing in the rain, wrestling, feeling power tools, taking wagon rides through clothes on racks in the stores and clothes hanging on the line outside, tractor rides, putt-putt golf, paddle boating and I can still lay across my sisters lap as she practices the piano.

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Simon's Story from page 1 continued:

Everybody reads to me and tries to play with me and teach me and I look forward to "touching and feeding the dolphins" in the future.

The Children's Hospital is a familiar place for me and my family. Viral and bacterial infections, aspiration pneumonias and minor and major procedures from a GI scope to bi-lateral hip dysplasia surgery have allowed me to visit the hospital two to six times in a given year. Some of my stays have been life threatening; for example my last PICU (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) stay, in January 2005, was because my lung collapsed due to tonsillitis.

My family has had the opportunity to meet many other families and their children during my stays; encouraging and praying for them as they go through trials and loss to making a new friend and planning "play dates."

I've broadened my family's vocabulary and social circles to include many medical and therapy terms and procedures. We often see, greet and chat with familiar doctors, nurses and others when walking through the halls at the hospital for follow-up appointments and as well have made many new friends of social workers, teachers and therapists.

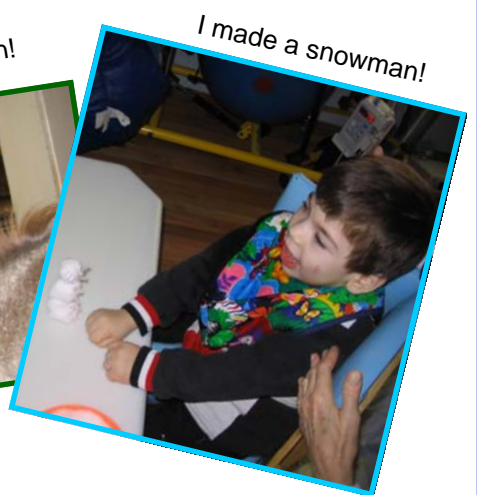
I think an important thing to remember is that children like me provide an opportunity for others to serve, grow and learn in ways only I can provide. My family and caretakers say I have an incredible ability to love and forgive and that I am very patient. It's wonderful to be such a special blessing to others.



Playing in the snow with sissy Elizabeth! It was cold that day!



Horseback riding is lots of fun!



I made a snowman!

Join Us for Breakfast!



The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss will be hosting a couple of breakfast dates for parents of children involved with the project. Moms and Dads are invited to come and talk or listen about the triumphs and trials of parenting a child with special needs. Karen Roberts, Family Specialist and Shannon Cannizzaro, Parent Consultant, will be on hand to answer questions, provide resources, share stories, or to just listen. The first breakfast will be held in the Castle Rock area on February 1, 2007, the location is yet to be determined. Then the group will meet again on March 1, 2007 at the IHOP in Arvada which is located at 5280 Wadsworth Blvd. Both breakfasts begin at 9:30. **Please RSVP to either Karen Roberts at 303-329-8950 or to Shannon Cannizzaro at 303-424-6077.**



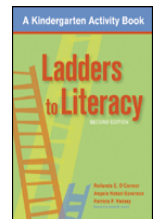
New Items in the Lending Library!

Practice Makes Perfect: A Family Program in Orientation and Mobility, A Region 4 ESC Resource, Region 4 Education Service Center, Houston, TX, 2005. Practice Makes Perfect: A Family Program in Orientation and Mobility is a program designed to help parents prepare their children to become independent adults through the development of the child's travel skills. By providing a variety of experiences and expecting the use of correct orientation and mobility techniques, parents can help their children establish both an independent attitude and a desire to become responsible for their own travel needs. Order # 810.018



Vision Skills in the Natural Environment: An Intervention Guide for Use with Children Birth to Three with Blindness or Vision Impairment, Compiled by Barbara Petersen and Judi Nielson, The ViSioN Program, 2005. Providing the appropriate services to infants and toddlers with visual impairments is like putting together a puzzle. The ViSioN Program is an early intervention (E.I.) guide to assist teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs) in assuring that all the pieces of the puzzle are taken into consideration when providing services to young children birth to three years of age with vision impairment and their families in the natural environment. Order #1210.134

Ladders to Literacy, by Rollanda E. O'Connor, Angela Notari-Syverson, and Patricia F. Vadasy, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, 2005. The second edition of this activity-based program gives teaches lively, effective ways to help children at risk for reading failure. Order # 610.065



CVI Perspectives, American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. 2006
In this multi-part DVD, Dr. Christine Roman, APH Project Leader for Cortical Visual Impairment, and Infant Developmentalist in the neonatal Intensive Care Unit & Follow-Up Program at the Western Pennsylvania Hospital, guides the viewer through three perspectives of CVI. Order #1240.02

Change, Change, Change!

The Lending Library is undergoing some changes. Mostly, the cataloguing numbering system is changing. The current Inventory is available on line at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Deafblind.asp>. The order form has also changed and that is also available at the same website address. We have over 800 items which includes books, videos, CDs, DVDs, and Fact Sheets. You can check out up to 3 items for a period of 1 month. You can email Gina Quintana at Quintana_g@cde.state.co.us and she will mail them off to you and you just need to mail them back. We have really seen an increase in materials being checked out lately and would like to see more.

Deafblind Advisory



The Deafblind Advisory meets 2-3 times a year, in Denver, to discuss issues around the Deafblind Project. The current membership includes Project Personnel, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Teachers of the Deaf / Hard of Hearing, Agencies, Helen Keller National Center, Commission for the Deaf, Center for the Blind, Social Security, Part C, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Parents. We are currently looking for a Student Representative for this Group. If you have a High School student who would be eligible to serve of this committee, please give Gina Quintana a call at 303-866-6605.

The first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 8, 2006 at the Anchor Center.

Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

Project Director:

Tanni Anthony
(303) 866-6681
anthony_t@cde.state.co.us



Family Specialist:

Karen Roberts
(303) 329-8950
kdot62@comcast.net



Project Coordinator:

Gina Quintana
(303) 866-6605
quintana_g@cde.state.co.us



Parent Consultant:

Shannon Cannizzaro
(303) 424-6077
stc383@cs.com



Support Person:

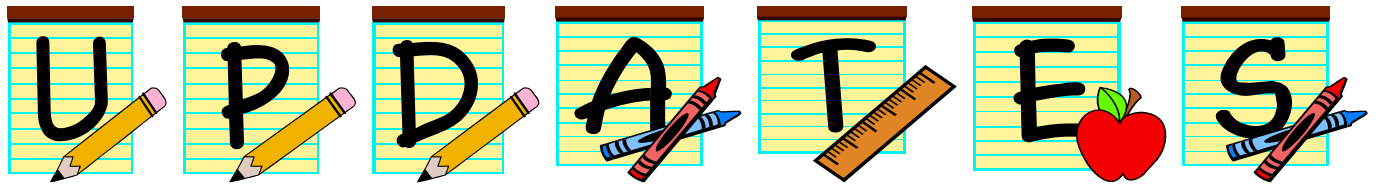
Jennifer Lockhart
(303) 866-6644
lockhart_j@cde.state.co.us

Location: Colorado Department of Education
201 East Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

Fax: (303) 866-6811
TTY: (303) 860-7060

Web Page:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD->

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU!



This Newsletter Edition: This edition of VIBRATIONS is focused on Communication Portfolios and Literacy which was the focus of the 2007 Summer Institute on Deafblindness.

Colorado Census of Children and Youth with Deafblindness: The census is a CDE-approved data collection process to identify the children ages birth through 21 years who have a combined vision and hearing loss. All identified children, their families, and service providers are eligible for free technical assistance from the project. The census forms will be mailed out to each district / agency contact person by the middle of November. If you have any questions, please be in touch with Tanni at (303) 866-6681 or anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

Lending Library: Our library continues to grow with **many** new items. The Library Inventory and the Request Form are on the website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Deafblind.asp>

Technical Assistance (TA): Staff is available to provide free consultative assistance to families and school personnel both in the child's home and school setting. In addition to actual site visits, information can be provided via email, telephone, and the mail. Please let us know your technical assistance needs. The request form is available on the website and in this newsletter edition.

Literacy in Action: We would love to come to your classroom or home to capture "literacy in action" - we are developing a module of best practices and would love to include your good work!

Project Website: We have been adding information to the website! Be sure to check out the Family Connections section of past articles written by parents! This is a section that we hope to continually expand with more stories from families. Please consider doing an article. Your story may help someone else. Give Gina a call if you are interested in contributing. Her number is (303) 866-6605. To check out the website, please go to:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Deafblind.asp>

Please watch the CDE Website for more information on the location and times of the trainings.

The Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project is part of the Colorado Department of Education. This project is supported by Grant #H326C030022 from the U.S. Department of Education. This newsletter was produced and distributed pursuant to the grant. Points of view do not necessarily represent CDE positions or policies. Mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. The newsletter is published three times a year. Requests to be placed on the mailing list should be mailed to Jennifer Lockhart, CDE, 201 East Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO 80203. This newsletter was prepared by Gina Quintana, and Tanni Anthony.





Assume Good Intentions— A Parent's Perspective By Karen Roberts, Family Specialist

Since the day most of our kids were born, professionals have been very involved in their lives, from keeping our kids alive to caring, teaching and supporting them. Our homes have become revolving doors, and hours back and forth to appointments are too numerous to bother counting. Through it all we seek expertise, compassion and support, not only for our child, but for ourselves. For many of us, these relationships, whether fortunately or unfortunately, have replaced our connections and friends in the “real” world as there is only so much time in the day. As we grow along with our child we learn that some professional relationships will work, and others won't. Frustration can come with the dependency we must have on their expertise and their expertise is often limited in the field of deafblindness.

As I think back on my own journey these past nine years I remember how sensitive I was in the beginning. There were definitely some doctors that were not adequate and we didn't go back to them. In one particular situation we wrote a letter to the head of the department. Benjamin and I learned some hard lessons together but only time and experience could teach us the proper questions to ask and when to be skeptical. There is no such thing as being too protective of your child when it comes to medical issues. But as with everything else, it is a partnership and essential that we do our best to work *with* medical personnel and not against. It's not always easy.

But it was the early intervention services that I really depended on to help me emotionally cope with all that was happening. I needed to know that I was doing every possible thing for Benjamin that might help him. Help him how? To be all he could be. If a phone call wasn't returned within a day by a professional, if the wait for an appointment was longer than 10 minutes, if a casual comment was made that I considered offensive, I remembered it all and had a mental list of grudges. Don't they know how busy I am and how difficult my life is? I think that in the early years it can be hard to find balance and acceptance and for me, at least, I always felt as though I was living on the edge and if I just found the right person, the right program, the right theory or the right toy, I wouldn't fall into the abyss. And that constant panic made it hard to consider the big picture and to not take things personally.

There is a difference between incompetence, ignorance and rudeness and being spread too thin. There is never any excuse for rudeness, on a professional's part or on our part. But along the journey I have learned that the first impression may not always be the most accurate, and it is often to my child's benefit to look beyond the initial contact and give a relationship another chance.

Second chances can be life changing. Many of us have had difficult and emotional encounters with a professional and barriers have been set. From there the trust can be difficult to rebuild. But at times it must be, for the sake of our child. IDEA is a law that governs most of the services we receive for our children from birth to age 21. On its surface it's cold and lifeless. But as the gateway to supports for our child it is up to us and the professionals that work with us to breathe life into that law and make it meaningful. Its success depends on the partnership we form with our child's IFSP or IEP team as well as the other professionals that may work with him at home during the school years.

It might take time and it might take second chances. But it can be worth it.

Most of us didn't choose this road. The bottom line is we can't do it alone and we need help. We may not like what we hear. We may need to choose our battles. This is not a road well traveled and when our kids are involved it is tough to sometimes yield. But our success as a parent depends on our ability to mesh the supports needed at home and in the academic world to our child's benefit. There's no right or wrong way and I know I am constantly adjusting my focus as we travel along--it can be scary but it can be rewarding. Talking to other parents can be of great benefit.

How to do that? I have finally learned to be patient and “assume good intentions.” Just like we must focus on the strengths of our children and always have high expectations, we must remember to do the same with our professionals. It is important, as we form a formal and/or informal team of supports around our children, to **expect the best** and to be a cheerleader for our child. It will be contagious. Every professional who sees our child also sees many others. And the acceptance of our beliefs will be a litmus test regarding the quality of that individual. Other indicators I have found through the years include:

Communication—Do they listen? Can they be empathetic? Can they be honest and treat me as a peer? Can they object in a tactful manner and offer alternative solutions?

Professional Competency—Do they know their field and are they willing to learn about deafblindness and speak with other professionals that know my child?

Respect—Do they respect me, my child and my family? Do they understand that they are one piece of a much larger picture? Do they respect my opinions and experience and offer their own thoughts in a collaborative way?

Commitment—We need academic support but we also need emotional support. This journey isn't easy and there are times when we may need a shoulder to figuratively or literally cry on. We can sense when our child is seen as a statistic and when our child is seen as a human being. I have found that it takes time and the caring and commitment may be stronger than the expertise—but that will come. Remember, we are members of a very low-incidence disability. The number of professionals who understand deafblindness is very small. But the willingness to learn is what's important.

Advocacy—We can't do it all. And there are situations where it is better for our child if we didn't try. One of the best things about entering the public school system was that Benjamin's circle of advocates grew from one (me) to a much larger number, depending on the situation. But it took time. I was on my own for a long time. That's where Gina and the project can help if you need it.

Trust – This is the one final most important quality in a team, the one that supports all others. None of the others matter if the trust isn't there. And it might take time and it might take second chances. But it can be worth it.

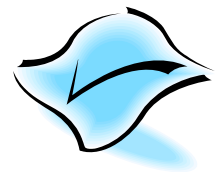
These are my thoughts—please don't hesitate to share yours—either through the listserv for parents of kids with vision and hearing loss or with a phone call or direct e-mail to myself (kdot62@comcast.net) or Shannon. Or—meet us for coffee—

The next coffee is planned for Wednesday, October 18 at 9:30 at the I-Hop in Arvada at 5280 Wadsworth, just north of I-70 on the east side of Wadsworth. All our stories are different. We hope you can join Shannon and me and share your story so far. This location and date may not work for you—let us know of your interest and we'll head in your direction. Have a lovely fall!

“To accomplish great things we must not only act but also dream, not only plan but also believe.”

Author: Anatole

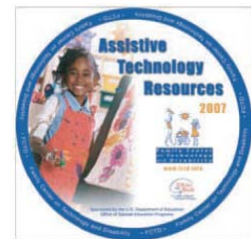
Check it Out!



Deaf-Blind Perspectives is a free publication with articles, essays, and announcements about topics related to deaf-blind people. Published two times a year (Spring and Fall) by **The Teaching Research Institute** of **Western Oregon University**, its purpose is to provide information and serve as a forum for discussion and sharing ideas. The intended audience includes deaf-blind individuals, family members, teachers, and other service providers and professionals. You can receive Deaf-Blind Perspectives electronically. See <http://www.tr.wou.edu/tr/dbp/> for more information.

Assistive Technology Resources CD-ROM—2007

- ◆ 40 newsletters on a range of AT topics
- ◆ Abstracts of more than 750 AT Resources
- ◆ Family Information Guide to AT
- ◆ AT 101
- ◆ Contact Information for more than 2000 Organizations
- ◆ Available FREE at <http://www.fctd.info/resources/orderCD.php>



URLs for Your Favorites List

Please add the following web address to your list of favorite websites. Every month, more content is being added and the plan is to continue to build our webpage over the school year. The site will also be scrutinized for its accessibility as we add content. Check each of them out and let Tanni know what you feel is missing. Your input is important!

Deafblindness Webpage: www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Deafblind.asp

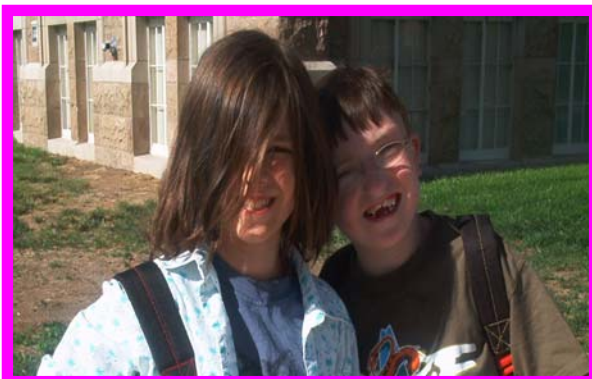
Useful Websites

- ◆ **DB Link** is the National Information Clearinghouse in Children Who Are Deaf-Blind. Their website contains information to help nurture, empower, and instruct children who are deaf-blind. Their website is: www.dblink.org or call 1-800-438-9376
- ◆ **National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB)** has added a listserv for families and professionals to share ideas, thoughts, questions, and successes. Send a blank email to NFADB-SUBSCRIBE-REQUEST@TR.WOU.EDU to join
- ◆ Do you have a child under the age of 3 who uses Assistive Technology? **Tot's-N-Tech** is conducting a survey of AT use and training. Please consider completing the online parent survey. Go to the Tot's-N-Tech website at: <http://tnt.asu.edu> and click on "parent survey."
- ◆ **The Family Center on Technology and Disability** can be found at www.fctd.info. The site has online discussions, links, and free information. You can receive a free 'Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology' and CD-ROM titled '2005 Assistive Technology Resources.'

Save The Date!



Family Learning Retreat 2007



**June 1-3, 2007
Colorado School for
the Deaf and the Blind
Colorado Springs,
Colorado**

This conference is for families who have a child who is deaf, blind or deafblind. If you have questions If you have questions, you can contact:

- ◆ Shannon Cannizzaro (deafblind)
303-424-6077
- ◆ Stefanie Morgan (blind)
719-570-0793
- ◆ Gina Quintana (CDE)
303-866-6605
- ◆ Diane Covington (CSDB)
719-578-2225



THANKS, FRIENDS!

Many thanks to the entire team who helped to make the Family Learning Retreat a huge success!

Diane Covington
Louise Gettman
Jon Vigne

Stefanie Morgan
Shannon Cannizzaro
Val Walker

Gloria Romero
Sandy Fuentes and
all the Child Care
Providers

A *special* thank you goes to all that helped us set up the day of the Retreat!

Jillana and Kevin Reuter

Caitlin Caulfield

Michael Caulfield

Kenny Caulfield

Mike Morgan



Resource Fair Participants

Blind Role Model Team
Deaf Role Model Team
Social Security
VIBES
Special Olympics
USABA
Sprint
Resource Exchange
Vocational Rehabilitation
Hands and Voices
Seedlings
Beyond Sight
Helen Keller National Center
PEAK Parent Center
National Braille Press



Easter Seals
ADCO
Commission for the Deaf
CAD
Early Communication
Marion Downs
Service Dogs
Easter Seals—Break Time
Lion's Camp
HHH
Hadley School for the Blind
Colorado Talking Book Library
Colorado School for the Deaf
Colorado School for the Blind
Colorado Department of Education

Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

FOR PARENTS ONLY!

Interested in connecting with other families raising children with combined hearing and vision loss? The western regional Family-2-Family Listserv is up and running and we'd love to have you check us out! Recent topics include communicating effectively with doctors, interpreting your child's difficult behaviors, what computer programs work well for children with dual sensory loss. To be connected to the family-only listserv please e-mail Karen Roberts, Colorado Family Specialist at kdot62@comcast.net and your name will be forwarded to the Washington State Family Specialist who maintains the list.



Many thanks to those of you who completed and returned the Parent Needs Survey. From this survey, information is gathered to help us decide what resources and trainings we need to be providing for families, educators and other service providers in Colorado. We had 33% of the families return the survey. Special congratulations goes out to **Carin Feekes** who was the winner of the Target Gift Card.

Below is a synopsis of the information that was gathered.

What are the three topics most important to you are (top 3):

1. Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs)
2. Communication systems (how to help your child communicate)
3. Networking with other parents of children with special needs AND Understanding what your child sees and hears

What are some topics or presenters you would like to have offered at workshops or trainings?

- ◆ Deaf/Blind presenter.
- ◆ Working with a permanent team who gets to know child
- ◆ Topics that include; transition from school to adult hood, social skills, legal matters.

Resources & Materials



Free Resources Available in CHARGE Syndrome—The CHARGE Syndrome Foundation announces that their manual, "*CHARGE Syndrome: A Management Manual for Parents*" version 2.1, is available as a free online resource. The manual is broken down into over 30 chapters that can be downloaded separately, or the entire 269 pages can be downloaded as one file. The manual can be found on the internet at www.chargesyndrome.org/resource-manual.asp

Sight Loss Web site—SightLossSolutions.org is designed to help people who have lost or are losing their sight. It includes information on access, resources, high tech items, reference lists, national organizations, and a "just for fun" category.

Biopoem Poetry Page

Biopoem poetry is a poem about someone that describes that person in 11 lines. The first line is the person's first name followed by a dash. The second line consists of four adjectives describing the person it's written about. On the third line, it states brother of, or sister of and then the name(s) of any siblings. Lover of followed by three different things that the person loves. So on and so forth. This is a great method to use for students with deafblindness or significant support needs especially when introducing them to someone new such as a new teacher, intervener, service provider, etc.

(First name)
(Four adjectives)
(Brother of and/or Sister of)
Lover of (three different things that the person loves)
Who feels (three different feelings and when or where they are felt)
Who gives (three different things the person gives)
Who fears (three different fears the person has)
Who would like to see (three different things the person would like to see)
Who lives (a brief description of where the person lives)



What is Deafblindness?

It may seem that deafblindness refers to a total inability to see or hear. However, in reality deafblindness is a condition in which the combination of hearing and visual losses in children 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" (34 CFR 300.7 © (2), 1999) or multiple disabilities. Children who are called deafblind are singled out educationally because impairments of sight and hearing require thoughtful and unique educational approaches in order to ensure that children with this disability have the opportunity to reach their full potential. A person who is deaf-

blind has a unique experience of the world. For people who can see or hear, the world extends outward as far as his or her eyes and ears can reach. For the young child who is deaf-blind, the world is initially much narrower. If the child is profoundly deaf and totally blind, his or her experience of the world extends only as far as the fingertips can reach. Such children are effectively alone if no one is touching them. Their concepts of the world depend upon what or whom they have had the opportunity to physically contact. If a child who is deafblind has some usable vision and/or hearing, as many do, her or his world will be enlarged. Many children called deafblind have enough vision to be able to move about in their

environments, recognize familiar people, see sign language at close distances, and perhaps read large print. Others have sufficient hearing to recognize familiar sounds, understand some speech, or develop speech themselves. The range of sensory impairments included in the term "deafblindness: is great.

Reprinted with permission from *Overview on Deaf-Blindness* by Barbara Miles. (Revised January 2005). Monmouth, OR: DB-LINK (The National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-Blind), www.dblink.org.





Supporting Early Literacy Development

By Dinah Beams, MA
Lead Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinator
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

The development of early literacy skills is a process that begins at birth. It is vital that children have many opportunities during these early years to interact with written materials of all kinds. Typically developing children must have thousands of hours of print exposure by age 5 to develop the skills needed for learning to read and write. Children who have combined vision and hearing loss need the same number of opportunities to develop these vital skills including opportunities to interact with books, read aloud experiences, exposure to a variety of print materials, and observation of the reading and writing habits of caregivers.

The Early Literacy Initiative is designed to foster early literacy skills with young children (0-5) who are deaf and hard of hearing. The initiative encompasses programs which are designed to assist parents who have chosen to use sign language with their child in their desire to encourage a love of reading. This statewide program is supported by the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. The program has two strands: the Integrated Reading Project (designed for families who have chosen to utilize both sign and spoken language communication with their child) and the Shared Reading Project (designed for families who have chosen to communicate using American Sign Language). Trained sign instructors (typically deaf adults) teach parents how to read books and communicate with their child using sign.

The Integrated Reading Project (IRP) is an in-home, family-centered program developed in Colorado for families who have chosen a simultaneous communication approach (signing and voicing at the same time). Developmentally appropriate children's storybooks are used to teach the family how to sign with their child. The family is supplied with books, DVDs to support the acquisition of sign, and ideas and activities to make literacy more meaningful.

As part of this program, special books have been selected which are appropriate for use with children with combined vision and hearing loss. These books were selected for their bright, clear, bold illustrations and tactile components. Tactile objects are also supplied with some books. We also have transparencies that have been developed to use with light boxes for children who utilize this approach.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact Dinah Beams (dbeams@comcast.net) or at 303 735 5405.

It is never too early to begin to develop a love of books in your child!

Creating a Communication Portfolio:

Questions and Answers

By Tanni Anthony and Gina Quintana

The theme of the 2006 Summer Institute on Deafblindness was “Links to School and Life Success: Communication and Literacy for Children with Deafblindness and Other Significant Support Needs.” Thanks to the good work of Susan DeCaluwe and Lisa Jacobs, Colorado participants learned a lot more about how to create a Communication Portfolio for their students or children. The New England Center Deafblindness Project, through a federal matchmaker project, has developed a wonderful manual on Communication Portfolios. You can check it out through our project lending library or download it from [www](http://www.necdb.org).

The following Q and A has been developed based on the manual and our notes from the summer institute. For more information, please check out *Communicating and Connecting with Learners Who are Deafblind* from our project lending library.

What is a Communication Portfolio?

The communication portfolio (book and, if needed a video) is a rich visual tool, used by families and a child’s educational team. This tool creates a common view of the learner’s communication skills, abilities and challenges across all settings. It is designed to capture the personal experiences of the learner’s individual processing style, favorite and non-favorite activities, and social relationships. The portfolio helps to reduce the time it takes new team members to get to know the child. This tool has been used in developing and modifying the general education curriculum as well as being used as part of the alternate assessment process. It is critical that this tool continues to grow and expand with the learner! Each Communication Portfolio is unique and may include all or some of the following contents.

Who Makes a Communication Portfolio?

A Communication Portfolio should be made by the people who know the child best, beginning with the child him or herself! Since the purpose is to communicate important information about the child, his or her parents and other family members can contribute, along with his or her school professionals.

What is Included in a Communication Portfolio?

A Communication Portfolio should be personalized to a student. An example of one student, Andrew’s, portfolio included:

A binder with his picture, name, grade, and date on a sheet of paper that fit into the front plastic sheath. This clearly demarked the contents as being about this student.

All text should be written from the child’s point of view. It is also helpful to put in writing not only what you want them to know about the child, but what he or she can do to support the child’s learner. “When you show me something, please put it....

Included in the binder were:

- ◆ A biopoem written by Andrew's mom. Andrew is eight years old.

Andrew
 Love to giggle, happy, brother's best friend, and likes to talk
 Dad, Mom, Michael, Sara, and Buster
 String cheese, bubbles, and books about basketball.
 Enthusiastic, serious
 Friends, laughter, and time to say what he needs to say
 Sudden movement, clowns, and strong smells
 Hugs, handshakes, and an understanding heart
 Michael Jordan, pictures of animals, and his cousin Danae
 Montrose
 Graham

- ◆ A Family Contribution List that identified their priorities for Andrew. There were photos accompanying these priorities so that the reader could see walks in their neighborhood, going to church, camping, and dinners with nearby relatives.



- ◆ Information in text and pictures about Andrew's likes and dislikes. There is a picture of the family dog with the text, "I like my dog Buster" and a picture of peas with the text, "I do not like peas anytime or anyplace!"

- ◆ Information in text and pictures about how Andrew communicates. There is photo of Andrew in front of his communication board with a hand on a selected object. The text reads, "When given a choice and a little time, I can pick what I would like to say or do by touching the object of my choice." There is a photo of Andrew listening to a story. The text reads, "Tell me what we are doing. Use objects, touch, gestures, and your voice. I need time to understand and respond."
- ◆ Information in text and pictures about instructional strategies used in Andrew's classroom. There is a photo of Andrew with his hearing aids and glasses. The text reads, "I wear glasses to help me see better. The world is still blurry, but my glasses help out. I see best at about arm's length and out of my right eye. I also have hearing aids. My hearing loss is moderate and I hear best out of my left ear. There is a photo of Andrew in the correct position on his a therapy ball. The text reads, "My trunk should be supported by the provider sitting behind me while I am on the therapy ball."



Reference:

Communicating and Connecting with Learners who are Deafblind by Susan M. DeCaluwe, Barbara A. McLetchie, Mary Hill Peters, Tracy Evans Luiselli, and Barbara Mason. New England Center DeafMatch Maker project (grant number CFDS 84.326C).

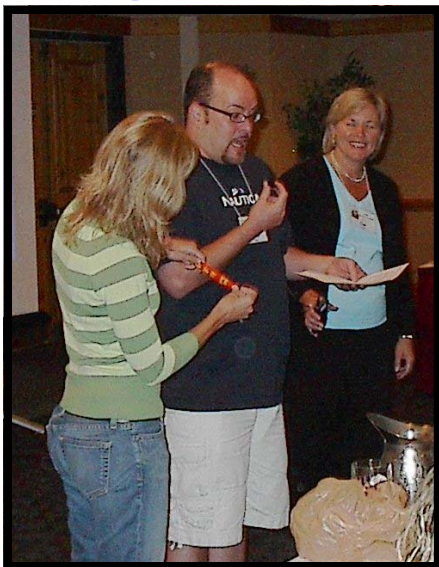


Tanni Anthony and Cheryl Nelson



Robin Brewer and Melinda Graham

Summer Institute 2007



Nancy Cozart, Ann Gillmeister, and Nancy Knight

Ann Marie Jansen and Jim Olson explaining to presenter Lisa Jacobs, what they did the night before, using objects to tell their story.



Technical Assistance Request Form

If you would like to receive **free** technical assistance for your child or a student who is deafblind (has both a vision and hearing loss), please complete and return this form to Gina Quintana. Once this information is received, you will be contacted to determine: (a) the type of technical assistance you need (b) what the specific need is, and (c) when is the best time to schedule the visit.

Contact Information

Your name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Your address: _____

Name of the child that you would like assistance with: _____

Date of birth of the child: _____ Your relationship to the child: _____

What Kind Of Technical Assistance Are You Interested In?

_____ In-service _____ Home Visit _____ School Visit _____ Other

What Topics Are You Interested In (check all the ones you are interested in for this child):

- _____ Auditory Training / Listening Skills
- _____ Assessment (circle area: vision, hearing, communication, development, or other)
- _____ Behavior Management (for problem or disruptive behavior)
- _____ Communication System Development (how to encourage a child to communicate)
- _____ Daily Living Skills (personal care and self help skills such as toileting, dressing, etc.)
- _____ Inclusion into School Program (techniques that support the child's learning in the classroom)
- _____ Literacy Mode Determination (use of Braille, large print, etc.)
- _____ Medical Issues (gaining more information about a child's diagnosed condition)
- _____ Orientation and Mobility Skills (travel independence)
- _____ Organizing a Daily Routine (sequence of activities, transition from one activity to another)
- _____ Personal Futures Planning (a system of looking ahead and planning for the future)
- _____ Sensory Skill Development (vision, hearing, tactile skill use)
- _____ Social-Emotional Concerns (relationships with others)
- _____ Transition from Program to Program (e.g. preschool program to kindergarten program)
- _____ Transition from School into Adult Services (college, rehabilitation, group home)
- _____ Vocational Training

Other areas of need: _____

Please return this form to Gina Quintana, CDE, 201 East Colfax, Denver, Colorado 80203. It can be faxed to Gina at (303) 866-6811. If you have questions, call Gina at (303) 866-6605.

Literacy Kits



A Literacy kit is a set of activities designed to allow a student to actively participate and communicate during book reading events. The kits provide access to vocabulary, hands-on props, and related literature.

Each literacy kit should contain some combination of the following:

- ◆ Large and small symbols, pictures or words that represent key phrases and characters in a book. They can be laminated and / or attached with Velcro.
- ◆ Overlay containing all symbols, picture or words for direct selection such as “read it again,” “I want to write,” “I don’t like it,” or “all done.”
- ◆ Puppets, felt cut outs, and / or small objects representing concepts in the book to be used as props while reading the book.
- ◆ A version of the book on tape or in a computer program that allows the child to independently read or listen to the book.
- ◆ Additional books targeting similar topics to build background knowledge or similar themes to facilitate knowledge of story structure and support students comparisons between authors.
- ◆ Overlay for alternate keyboards that support story retelling.
- ◆ Other fun activities, arts and crafts, math, or science experiments.



Tips for preparing the book:

- ◆ If possible, the book should be taken apart, laminated and put back together to make it durable.
- ◆ Improve access to page with texture, Velcro, fabric, or popsicle sticks.

Jacobs (2003) Adapted from Spadorica and Strum (2001)



Calendar of Events

2006 2006 2006 2006 2006 2006 2006 2006 2006 2006

November 8-11 **2006 TASH Conference**—Baltimore, MD
Contact: <http://www.tash.org/index.html>

2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007

January 13 **Affective Needs Conference**—Denver Four Points Sheridan
Contact: [Jessica Krueger <Krueger_j@cde.state.co.us>](mailto:Krueger_j@cde.state.co.us)

January 19-20 **Courage to Risk Collaborative Conference**-Colorado Springs
Contact: www.couragetorisk.org

February 7—March 9 **CSAPA Administration Window**—3rd Grade Reading / writing

February 7—March 30 **CSAPA Administration Window**—Grades 4-10, all tests

February 15-17 **2007 Conference on Inclusive Education**—Denver
Contact: <http://www.peakparent.org/conferences.asp>

February 16-17 **2007 TX Symposium on Deafblindness**—Austin, TX
Contact: TX School for the Blind—www.tsbvi.edu

March 1-3 **Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference**-Estes Park
Contact: [Katherine Keck <keck_k@cde.state.co.us>](mailto:keck_k@cde.state.co.us)

April 18-21 **National Council for Exceptional Children Conference**—
Louisville, KY
Contact: <http://www.cec.sped.org/>

June 1-3 **Family Learning Retreat 2007**—Colorado Springs
Contact: [Gina Quintana <quintana_g@cde.state.co.us>](mailto:quintana_g@cde.state.co.us)

July 27-29 **International CHARGE Syndrome Conference 2007**-Costa Mesa, CA
Contact: <http://www.chargesyndrome.org/conference-2007.asp>

September 25-30 **14th Deafblind International Conference 2007**, Perth, Australia
Contact: <http://www.dbiconference2007.asn.au/>

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Exceptional Student Services Unit
201 E Colfax Avenue, Room 300
Denver, CO 80203-1799

386B 3401

