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HAPPY NEW YEAR

RE:SOLUTIONS

By Tanni L. Anthony

Let's be honest, it has been a rough, tough past year. Brutal for many. We are all hopeful for an improved year ahead with good health, an eventual return to steady in-person instruction, travel, real face (and hug) time with our loved ones, etc. We are looking forward to a new year. In tradition, it is time for our classic new year promises for self, home, and work improvements. For 2021, let's focus on the word RESOLUTIONS in memo format—**RE:** for the word "regarding" and the all important word for being a proactive problem-seeker and solver—**SOLUTIONS**. This puts the focus not on our problems or challenges, but what we can do about them in not just a hope / prayer / promise manner, but with concrete actions that get results.

Think of it this way. Rather than tell myself, "YOU need to exercise more," I can reframe "How can I improve my cardio health?" and then look for solutions. All of a sudden ideas emerge: a virtual yoga class before work starts, a regularly scheduled "date walk or bike ride" around the neighborhood hills with my husband, or taking Skipper for a brisk walk when I am at my mom's house. Bit by bit, moments of exercise can be woven into my life with the side benefit of being with people (and critter) that I love and activities that I enjoy.

2020 has given us opportunities to be solution-based. I have heard so many excellent examples of problem solving during the BVI Office hours and found some of my own in my personal life facing the pandemic. Porch braille, O&M lessons using iPads / cell phones, virtual connections for work and personal reasons, getting outside for mental health walks, a parent questionnaire to gather information about a child's visual abilities ... many, many solutions to pandemic-related challenges.

Some RE: SOLUTIONS on the Vision Coalition docket for the new year are to look for the effective answers / work-arounds for online instructional platform accessibility issues and to build strategies for Expanded Core Curriculum and college / career readiness activities for our students across settings and throughout the calendar year. Get ready for identifying and implementing solutions on these topics.

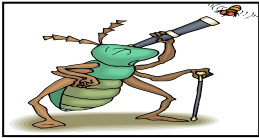
We still have hills and valleys ahead. Whether your RE:SOLUTIONS are related to the pandemic and/or are personal, student-based, or address other issues, I wish you the best on being solution-based. I have always believed that together we can do anything . 2021, take a memo—**RE: SOLUTIONS** is coming your way!

KEEPING IN TOUCH!

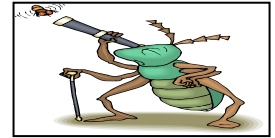
A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
October—December 2020

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LOW VISION EVALUATION



Low Vision Regional Evaluation Clinics for School Year 2020-2021

Region	Dates	Site Coordinator(s)
Western	To Be Determined	Angela Sims
Southern	To Be Determined	Debbie Haberkorn
Northern	To Be Determined	Liz Wieder
Metro	To Be Determined	Morgan Fitzpatrick and Karin Hensel

Instructional Strategies for Students with Low Vision

This article can be found at [Paths To Literacy—Instructional Strategies for Students with Low Vision](#)

A Functional Vision Assessment and Learning Media Assessment should be done for each student, and these generally offer specific suggestions for optimal visual functioning, including magnification, lighting, font size, color preference, and ideal environmental conditions. The individual needs of a student will depend on factors such as his or her eye condition, age, learning style, and additional learning challenges.

Strategies for Reading Print: There are a variety of ways in which students with low vision can access print, and many students will use different strategies in different situations. For example, out in the community, they may prefer to use spot magnification to check menus or prices, but in school they may prefer to use text books in large print. A CCTV (Closed-Circuit Television) or other form of video magnification may be the preferred way to view graphics or a text in school that is not available in large print. It is often necessary for the student to try different tools in various circumstances in order to be part of the decision-making process about what works best. SET-BC (Special Education Technology British Columbia), a provincial resource program of the BC Ministry of Education, outlines strategies for paper materials, as well as e-text, as outlined below:

Instructional strategies for paper materials include: 1. provide regular print; 2. use hand-held magnification with regular text; 3. enlarge small amounts of text, pictures, diagrams, charts on photocopier; 4. provide large print version of the text; 5. use stand-alone video magnification; and 6. use video magnification with computer integration.

Additional strategies for e-text, include: 1. change appearance of text and/or background; 2. magnify text and/or computer screen; 3. provide e-text with tracking support or highlighting; and 4. provide e-text with auditory support. For additional information, see: [Reading Strategies for Students with Visual Impairments: A Classroom Teacher's Guide](#) This [impressive guide can be downloaded](#).

Environmental Factors: The Functional Vision Assessment will include specific strategies and suggestions for the individual student, based upon his or her visual condition, the type of educational program, the child's age, and other challenges the student may face. The needs of each student will be different depending on the eye condition, but in general it is necessary to consider the following: 1. glare; 2. contrast; 3. lighting; 4. positioning; 5. reducing visual clutter; 6. visual cues; and 7. self-advocacy.

For more information, see this webcast from Perkins: [Adapting Environments for Individuals with Vision Loss](#). In this webcast, Darick Wright, Coordinator of the New England Eye Clinic at Perkins, talks about the design issues that should be considered for individuals with vision loss. Darick provides some general guidelines as well as some specific examples in his presentation on this topic. [Checkout the webcast](#)

Font: When determining which font to use, it is important to look at both the size and the type of font.

[APHont: A Font for Low Vision](#): American Printing House for the Blind; APHont™ (pronounced Ay'-font), was developed by APH specifically for low vision readers. APHont embodies characteristics that have been shown to enhance reading speed, comprehension, and comfort for large print users. Free download is available.



The Colorado Chapter for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

CAER Works for You!

Are you a member of the Association of the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired? CAER, our State Chapter, hopes so! Check out the many good things our Colorado State chapter is doing for you and for us! They maintain the [CAER website](https://aerbvi.org/), that includes updated information regarding Colorado AER. (<https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado/>)

To get there from the [national AER website](https://aerbvi.org/) (<https://aerbvi.org/>)

- Go to **About** at the top and pull down to AER Chapters
- Then find **Colorado** on the left side and click on it

This will take you to the [Colorado Chapter for the Association of Education and Rehabilitation webpage](#).

Update News:

The International AER Conference has been rescheduled for July 20-24, 2022

Please note this session is only for AER members who on the Multiple Disabilities Division

AER is pleased to invite you to a free webinar only for Division 3 members presented by your Division 3 Chair-Elect, Carlie Rhoads. We know there are many online professional development options, and we think that a top priority is our students' mental health.

Webinar Title: Mental Health for Children: How we can best meet their needs

Date: December 7, 2020

Time: 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 (Eastern); 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Central);
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 (Mountain); 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (Pacific)

Synopsis: Increasing numbers of children are experiencing difficulties with mental health and, more specifically, with experiencing trauma. This webinar talks about how to develop strong attachments with children, how to foster healthy brain development, and what we can do when our children experience a traumatic event. Medical trauma, which affects children with deafblindness and other disabilities will also be explored.

Please use [this registration link](#) to receive the Zoom link before the webinar. A certificate of attendance will be issued for everyone who registers and attends.



The Colorado Chapter for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired



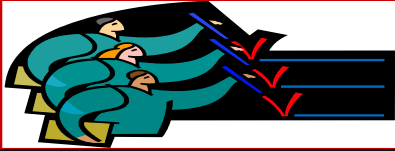
CAER 2020 Award Winners

The CAER Board hosted a virtual Awards Evening on October 8th. This was a delayed ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the cancellation of the April 2020 banquet.

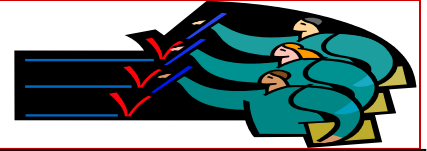
The Ken Neve Award was given to **Jadwiga Brown**. This award is in memory and honor of Ken Neve. It honors an amazing teacher, co-worker and role model in the world of O&M. Ken brought humor and warmth to all situations. He worked at the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for 29 years. Jadwiga (Jadi) was nominated by Stephanie Crosen, who noted that Jadwiga was the first VI professional (O&M) that she came into contact with when she moved to Colorado. Jadi is extremely connected with everything having to do with the BVI community in Colorado and serves on the RTD Accessibility team. She builds an incredible rapport with all of her clients and cares for them immensely. She is an overall wonderful human being! Jadi is an O&M Specialist for the Golden DVR and was very close with Ken Neve.

The CAER Community Connection Award was given to **Brad and Bryan Manning, founders and owners of The Two Blind Brothers LLC**. The nomination was made by Barb Galgano and Jeannie Lei. This award honors an individual(s) who has supported the lives of people who are blind/visually impaired. The two brothers, who experience Stargardt's disease, established this company. Their company designs clothing for sale that in turn 100% of their profits goes to research to finding a medical cure for this disease. They also support the Texas Lighthouse for the Blind with employment for over 75 workers who are blind / visually impaired who manufacture the clothing line. Over the past two years, Two Blind Brothers, LLC has graciously donated over \$500 worth of gift cards to CAER with the intentions to help our organization grow and benefit from their generosity. This company's mission is to support individuals in the Blind and Visually Impaired Community while emphasizing medical research and development.

The President's Award was given to **Tanni Anthony**. This award is given by the President of the CAER Chapter. The nomination was made by Nancy Cozart, the immediate Past CAER President. Nancy shared, "As the president of CAER from 2018-2020, an important part of my role has been to lead our state chapter of AER in its purpose. It is listed as follows: ARTICLE II - Purpose; the purpose of the Association shall be to render all possible assistance in the promotion, development, and improvement of all phases of education and rehabilitation of blind and visually impaired persons of all ages in the State of Colorado. The President's Award Recipient for 2020 embodies this purpose in her day-to-day actions and decades of commitment to persons with visual impairments."



CHECK IT OUT!



CDE COVID—19 Resources

- [CDE Website](#) [CDE COVID Resources](#) [CDE Office of Special Education COVID resources:](#)

The CDE Office of Special Education COVID resource webpage has many topics specific to federal/state guidance, topics for instruction, disability-specific resources, and parent support resources.

Also the [CDE Visual Impairment, Including Blindness webpage](#) has been built out.

[Google Drive with BVI COVID Resources:](#) thanks to Nancy Cozart, Elsa D’Angelo, Karin Hensel, Julie Hutchinson, Jamie Lugo, and Tanni Anthony. This link does not require that you have a Google account.

Save the Dates—Winter Dates: February 11-15, 2021

Winter Mountain Mobility with the Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte, Colorado

The Adaptive Sports Center (ASC) in Crested Butte will be running winter and summer adventure sports camps specifically designed for youth who are blind or visually impaired. The winter camp will bring youth together for a weekend of skiing, snowboarding and other fun activities in the Rocky Mountains. The camp will focus on building confidence and making connections with others who share similar experiences. There will be a summer camp as well so stay tuned for those dates later. Connecting to the outdoors will be a large aspect of the camp, yet campers will also focus on a variety of invaluable life skills throughout the weekend. Campers will shop for groceries, prepare their own meals, and interact in a team setting. Additionally, campers will advance their orientation and mobility skills as they learn to travel through the bustling town of Crested Butte, Colorado. These camps are for middle and high schoolers with blindness/visual impairments who are independent in their care of activities of daily living and want to experience some adventure. Spots are limited and paperwork should be turned in as soon as possible. Expect to see paperwork for winter camp by late November.

For more information and questions contact Mike Plansker at pla011923@adams12.org

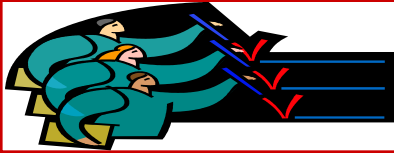
Apply for the National Federation of the Blind Teachers of Tomorrow Program

- Connect with fellow teachers Develop relationships with blind professionals
- Learn skills that will benefit you and your students for years to come

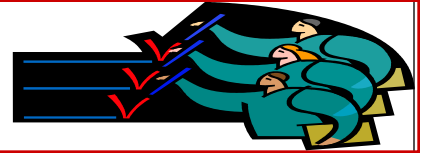
Teachers of Tomorrow is an immersive, professional development program that connects teachers of blind and low-vision students to the lived experiences of blind people, equipping participants with knowledge about the skills and attitudes that can help blind students thrive in school and beyond. This yearlong program is free to participants thanks to a partnership between the National Federation of the Blind and the Gustavus and Louise Pfeiffer Research Foundation. **Submit Application by December 10th.**

If you are preparing for a career in teaching blind students, or if you are an early career educator looking to enhance your teaching, then the National Federation of the Blind invites you to apply for a spot in the 2021 cohort that kicks off in January.

Learn more about the program and apply today at <https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/education/teachers-tomorrow>.



CHECK IT OUT!



**American Council
of the Blind**
Together for a bright future

PLEASE HELP SPREAD THE WORD!

BENEFITS OF AUDIO DESCRIPTION IN EDUCATION CONTEST -- "BADIE"

Young People Who Are Blind Write Reviews of Film and Video

The American Council of the Blind's Audio Description Project (ACB-ADP) and the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) are continuing their co-sponsorship of an exciting opportunity for blind and visually impaired young people, in four categories from ages 7 to 21: the Benefits of Audio Description in Education (BADIE) contest.

Kids love movies! Movies, videos, and other forms of multimedia are, these days, integral to public, private, and special education curriculum. If you're a young person who can't see or can't see well, audio description provides access to all the visual images of the movies that sighted young people enjoy.

Students choose an audio described film or video from the thousands of titles available through DCMP via streaming or on DVDs – visit www.dcmp.org.

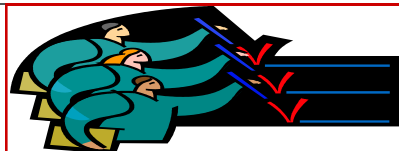
Or a young person who is blind can borrow an audio described video or film from a library, and thousands of audio described films and videos are available via streaming services. You can visit the [ACB-ADP's website](http://www.acb-adp.org) for lists of DVDs and films with audio description.

Reviews can be submitted in writing, in braille or via an audio recording. [Register for the contest](#). Entries can also be submitted via e-mail or postal mail (submissions from outside the United States are fine) to:

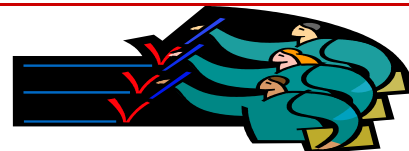
ACB-DCMP Benefits of Audio Description In Education
1703 N. Beauregard Street, Suite 420, Alexandria, VA 22311 USA
E-mail: jsnyder@acb.org Phone: (202) 467-5083

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: Friday, January 22, 2021

Contest winners in each category will be chosen by **February 19, 2021**, and the grand prize winner will receive an iPad Mini! Each first-place winner will receive a \$100 iTunes gift card. Second-place winners will receive a \$50 iTunes gift card, and third-place winners will receive a \$25 iTunes gift card. Each supporting teacher who has a first-place winning student will be awarded a \$100 Amazon gift card.



CHECK IT OUT!



APH Virtual ExCEL Academy

The American Printing House for the Blind will continue to provide the APH Virtual ExCEL Academy for students in the new year. They will be offering FREE engaging lessons for students with a variety of abilities and hope to model ways that online learning may be used to supplement services. The staff of APH understands that children's needs are unique and that lessons may not apply to all kids, but they are dedicated to working out a plan to provide as much as they can. Beginning January 12, 2021, the APH Virtual ExCEL Academy will be held at 3:00 eastern time (1:00 p.m. mountain standard time) on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The days will be grouped by age; therefore, APH will work hard to provide classes as follows:

Tuesday: Focus from Birth to 6th grade

Wednesday: Focus from 7th to 12th grade

Thursday: Focus on students with multiple impairments

Once a student is registered, the link remains active from October 13, 2020 until May 27, 2021. Because APH knows students are not always able to attend during the scheduled hour, they will be recording these sessions so all have the opportunity to learn. Many educational professionals as well as college students preparing to enter the field will be participating in the webinars to watch teachers at work. Remember, professionals are able to observe but please stay in the background just as if you were in a physical classroom. APH will not be able to provide you with ACVREP credit for this type of activity.

[APH Virtual ExCEL Academy Registration](#)

Virtual ExCEL Academy and Summer Camp Archives

Missed a chance to attend one of the American Printing House for the Blind webinars or just looking for more resources? Check out their ExCEL Academy and ExCEL Camp webinars on the APH YouTube Channel.

It has been suggested that these webinars may be a good way to spend an administrative unit inservice day, as approved by your administrator. The content is relevant to personnel working with students who are blind/visually impaired. [Check out the many archived webinars.](#)

APH Access Academy

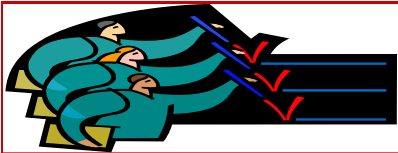
Access Academy (formerly #AtHomeWithAPH) is a one-stop resource for the meaningful education and training webinars you need to get the most out of APH products and services. From tutorials on new products and hacks on how to get the most from your technology, to information on resources, services, and programs: the goal is to give the information needed for home, the classroom, and the workplace.

The majority of Access Academy webinars also provide [Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals](#) (ACVREP) credit. Credit is only available for the live presentation at this time. To collect ACVREP credit, please listen for the opening and closing codes during the live session and submit these on the ACVREP Certificate Request form linked from our [Education Training](#) page. Following submission, a certificate will be emailed to you within a week.

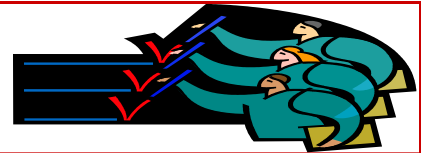
[Check out the upcoming Access Academy](#)



AMERICAN
PRINTING
HOUSE



CHECK IT OUT!



EDUCATORS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Coffee Hour with TSBVI



*Mondays at 3:00 pm (CDT), Thursdays at Noon (CDT)
TSBVI.EDU/COFFEEHOUR*

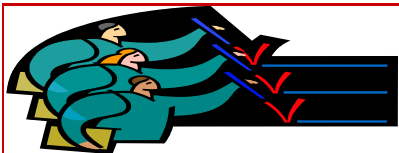
Please join members of the TSBVI Outreach team in discussing topics related to supporting students and families of students with visual impairments or who are deafblind.

TSBVI Outreach Coffee Hour happens on Mondays at 3:00 PM (CDT) and Thursdays at 12:00 PM (CDT) .

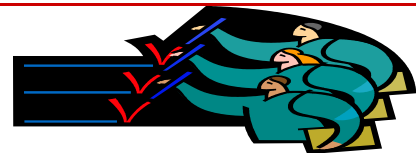
Captioning will be provided, if you need anything else, please email Kaycee Bennett. Some logistics will be different this time around, but you can expect the same commitment to providing information, discussion, and collaboration on topics important to students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind, including CVI, Active Learning, distance strategies, and family engagement.

Here are some important details:

1. Coffee Hour sessions happen every week on Mondays at 3:00 pm (CDT) and Thursdays at noon (CDT).
2. Registration is required for each session. This means that CEUs are available! Registration links can be found in the schedule on the next page. (You must have an account in our ESC-Works system to register for the Coffee Hour sessions. If you do not have an account, you can [set one up here.](#))
3. Zoom links will be provided for each session. Please make sure you register!



CHECK IT OUT!



Winter 2020 Schedule for the Texas School for the Blind Outreach Program's Coffee Hours

December 7th:

Making Connections: Base-10 Manipulatives & the Cranmer Abacus with John Rose

Most elementary students benefit from instruction using real objects (manipulatives) alongside abacus instruction, and students with visual impairments may benefit from these materials on a more consistent basis. Base-10 manipulatives can be used to directly transfer place value, counting, and operations concepts to the abacus. This presentation will demonstrate these strategies using base-10 blocks, an APH work-play tray, and the Cranmer abacus. Registration is open until 2:30 PM Central time, December 7th. [Enroll Now](#)

December 10th:

Screening and Assessment for Birth to 3 - 2 HOURS with WREIC--Colorado

Vision screening is unusually challenging because of the pandemic. As we are not able to meet in person with families, Colorado is now using telehealth capabilities and an updated vision screening protocol to determine if there is a vision concern that requires further examination by a pediatric eye doctor and an EI-TVI. Our call to action in Colorado is because far too many very young children with visual impairments are not being identified or supported with vision services. While caseloads are dropping across all early intervention programs, the families of children with blindness and visual impairments still need support from vision professionals. This training will share with you the protocol that Early Intervention Colorado is using to address this problem. You will learn about the new "Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire (Birth to Age Five)" developed by the Colorado Department of Education and the companion piece, "Scoring Guidance," from A Shared Vision.

Registration is open until 10:30 AM Central Time, December 10th. [Enroll Now](#)

December 14th:

Using the Intervener Team Model for Students who are Emerging Communicators with Adam Graves

The intervener team is a supplementary service model designed to improve access to visual and auditory information in the classroom for students who are deafblind. This presentation will provide a description of the some of the tools and resources developed for use by teams incorporating the intervener model in their educational setting. It will include discussion on various ways in which educational teams may choose to incorporate these resources in creating instructional activities for students who are visually impaired or deafblind and are in the process of developing formal language acquisition.

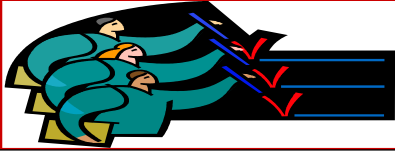
Registration is open until 2:30 PM Central Time, December 14th. [Enroll Now](#)

December 17th:

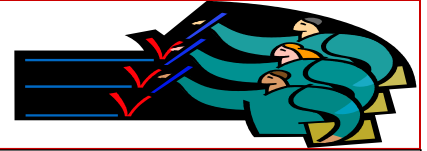
Using the Intervener Team Model for Students who are Proficient Communicators with Deanna Peterson

While the majority of the children and youth who are deafblind are emerging communicators, there is a growing number who are "proficient communicators" being served in general education classrooms. There are many resources and strategies available detailing how Interveners can support emerging communicators. This session will explore the roles of Interveners for Proficient Communicators through information shared by the presenter and information gathered from participants.

Registration is open until 11:30 AM Central Time, December 17th. [Enroll now.](#)



CHECK IT OUT!



OSEP-Funded TA Centers

OSERS' technical assistance centers are ready to address your questions regarding the IDEA and best practices and alternate models for providing special education and related services, including through distance instruction. The National Center for Systemic Improvement is the primary source for technical assistance resources during the COVID-19 national emergency for IDEA Part B programs. The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center is the primary source for IDEA Part C programs. For questions pertaining to Part C of IDEA, States should contact their Early [Childhood Technical Assistance Center State Contact](#). For Part B of IDEA, States should contact the [National Center for Systemic Improvement](#).

** Early Childhood



The [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#) is providing State Part C and Part B, Section 619 programs with the [latest information](#) on funding and guidance.

** NCSI

The [National Center for Systemic Improvement's](#) web page provides a resource hub for supporting students with disabilities during the COVID-19 national emergency, including [educator resources to support remote learning](#).



** Proficient Communicators Who Are Deaf-Blind

The [National Center on Deaf-Blindness](#) has compiled and organized [Resources for Providing Technical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). It covers OSEP guidance, distance TA, resources for families and service providers, and online learning for proficient communicators who are deaf-blind. The page is being regularly updated with input from state deaf-blind projects and national partners.



** Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

[TIES Center](#) has launched a distance-learning series that provides a framework for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to get through these new transitions, engage fully in academics online, and interact with their teachers and peers, a critical component of well-being. TIES Center is regularly adding resources to the distance learning series that offer the following recommendations to support the inclusion and engagement of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Current resources include:

- [TIES Distance Learning #1: Morning Meetings](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #2: A Collaborative Start to Behavioral Supports](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #3: Effective Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\) Within the Distance Learning Environment: What in the World Does That Look Like?](#)



** Accessible Materials and Technologies

The [National AEM Center at CAST](#) has developed resources to support students who need accessible materials and technologies while learning remotely during the COVID-19 crisis.



** eBooks

[Bookshare](#) provides accessible eBooks for eligible individuals with barriers to reading. The resources linked here will help students with dyslexia, blindness/visual impairment, cerebral palsy, and other print reading barriers to continue learning during school closures.





University of Colorado **Anschutz Medical Campus**

Stressed? Virtual learning and changing plans wearing you down? Want support around COVID chaos?

W e ' r e h e r e f o r y o u .

Teacher/Educator Well-Being Support Line

303-724-2500

C a l l o r t e x t .

Talk to a trained Crisis Counselor volunteer who can listen and support you.
8 a.m.-8 p.m. 7 days a week via telephone or text message.
Free & immediate access to mental health services available as needed.

The Well-Being Support Line is a free service for all educators and school employees including ECE, K-12 programs, and higher education. The support line is available to any educator across the state including teachers, administrators, para-professionals, health care teams, and support staff.



BRAIN HEALTH for all, for life.

In collaboration with the University of Colorado Department of Psychiatry and
CDPHE Colorado Spirit's Crisis Counseling Program

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count

Each school year, all of the federally funded deaf-blind grant projects complete a Child Count of students, birth through 21 (and older in some states) with combined vision and hearing loss. This count is essential as it is the only comprehensive count of children and youth with deaf-blindness in the United States. Our count gives depth to the CDE Exceptional Student Services Unit's December 1 Count that provides information about Colorado's 3-21 year old learners with deaf-blindness, as the vast majority of the children and youth identified by the project fall into the eligibility category of multiple disabilities. The project's Child Count also provides detail of the number of infants and toddlers with deaf-blindness are identified in Colorado.



The paperwork for the Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count has been mailed to our agency and district contact personnel. Our contacts include: **A Shared Vision**—Steven Lindauer; **Academy 20, Lewis-Palmer 38**—Deb Andrews; **Adams 12**—Mike Plansker; **Adams 14**—Kaitlin Lombardi; **Adams 50**—Will Reynolds; **Anchor Center for Blind Children**—Jessica Meisel; **Aurora**—Wendy Schlageter; **Boulder Valley**—Sally Burch; **Brighton**—Jennifer Caster; **Centennial BOCES**—Shana Bokelman; **Cherry Creek**—Carol Jordan; **Colorado River BOCES**—Brooke Miller; **Denver**—Morgan Fitzpatrick; **CSDB**—Kathy Emter; **CSDB CHIP**—Ashley Renslow; **Douglas County**—Peg Collins; **East Central BOCES**—Bev Blagg; **El Paso 11**—Morgan Turner; **Falcon 49**—Lori Mattcik; **Greeley 6**—Abby Horner; **Jefferson County**—Kari Finholt; **Littleton**—Nancy Knight; **Mesa Valley**—Angela Sims; **Delta 5J, Montrose**—Meghan Crosby; **Pueblo 60**—Donice Fennimore; **Poudre**—Jeanine Holmes; **San Juan BOCES**—Karen Pacheco; **St. Vrain**—Julie Hutchinson; **Thompson**—Teresa Buirgy; **Ute Pass BOCES**—Chloann Woolley; and **Windsor**—Jenna Martin. Thank you to each of you so much for your care with this paperwork. Most appreciated!

Colorado Intervener Support

A huge shout out to Gina Herrera and Jessica Meisel for growing and supporting the field. We have four interveners enrolled in the San Francisco State University training program and another with the Utah State University Program. Others are being supported by Colorado Deaf-Blind Project training. Jessica is working diligently to organize a network of our interveners and to provide coaching support to the interveners and school-based teams supporting students with deaf-blindness. It takes a team to support the role of an intervener with a student who is deaf-blind. Be in touch with your training and support needs.

The project's advisory met in November and offered input on how best to recruit personnel into this profession. We currently have positions open in more than one school district. If you know someone who would be interested in training and support to become an intervener, please be in touch with Tanni. We have children who are depending on these positions.



2020-2021 DEAF-BLINDNESS WEBINAR SERIES

SESSION THREE: JANUARY 14, 2021 at 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

The Hidden Senses with David Brown

David will share how the ‘other’ senses, the proprioceptive sense and the vestibular sense, are particularly important. Knowing about these senses, how they work, what might happen if they are not working properly, and what to do about it, can make a surprising difference to the development of functional vision and hearing. A consideration of the functions of ALL our senses can help us to understand why we self-stimulate, and also understand what any child’s self-stimulation behaviors tell about their difficulties and needs.

SESSION FOUR: FEBRUARY 11, 2021 at 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Communication and Student’s Availability for Learning with Kathee Scoggin

This session will present participants with internal and external factors that affect a student's availability to learn and communicate. Find out the factors and how to reduce, eliminate and/or adapt your teaching to assist each child’s availability for learning and communication.

SESSION FIVE: MARCH 18, 2021 at 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Self-Determination with Kathee Scoggin

Self-determination is about each child’s ability for goal setting and self-advocacy. This session will address the first ways a **child** develops self-determination and how that leads to the more advanced stages of self-determination.

Participants: Colorado parents of and professionals working with children birth through 21 years with significant supports needs, including deaf-blindness. The focus is on learners who are not yet proficient in verbal and/or sign language.

Training Expectations: Full attendance of either session is a requirement. Please do not sign up for any of these training events if you cannot commit to the two full-hours of each training.

[Webinar series registration link](#)

Please share this registration link with appropriate families and colleagues. Each person must register separately. You can register for any one or all the posted trainings. When registering, please indicate if you will require special aids, services, and or accommodations at least two weeks ahead of each training event. Once registered, the link and handouts will be sent two days ahead of the training.

Colorado Department of Education

Exceptional Student Services Unit | 1560 Broadway, #1100, Denver, CO 80202



Presenter: David Brown

David Brown has been working with children with multi sensory impairments since 1983. In the United Kingdom he was the Head of Family & Children Services for Sense, the National Deafblind Association. He worked for the CA Deaf-Blind Project for many years and is currently a field consultant. David has a credential in the Education of Students with Multi Sensory Impairments from the University of Birmingham in England, and an Honorary Doctor of Science for his research work with children with deaf-blindness.

Presenter: Kathee Scoggin

Kathee Scoggin has 40+ years’ experience as a teacher (12 years), assessment specialist (4 years), principal (10 years), technical assistance (TA) provider 20+ years), and co-director for the Deaf-Blind Project in Washington state. Kathee is always focused on communication no matter what other things the student needs. She holds a B.A. in Deaf Education and M.Ed. in Special Education with an emphasis on visual and multiple disabilities.

Resources and Materials

Free Resources of Educational Videos with Audio Description

DCMP continues to support families and educators with free Remote Learning resources.

- Families and educators who have at least one student with a disability can register for **free membership** and access over 8,000 captioned and described educational videos.
- Teachers can create Student Accounts, group students together in Classes, and assign videos to students and Classes. [Learn more here.](#)
- Users can instantly choose “captioned” or “described” with the Language/Accessibility button found under the video player.

Check it out at www.dcmp.org

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP)

iCanConnect (ICC) is a federal grant that provides free telecommunications equipment and training to those who qualify. There is no minimum or maximum age requirement, just that the person can benefit from this technology that allows for sending an email, texting, chatting on the phone, communicating through online tools, such as Facetime, Skype, Facebook, etc.

iCanConnect provides free equipment including smartphones, tablets, computers, screen readers, braille displays, and more to individuals who meet federal disability and income guidelines. Each person receives an individual assessment to determine the best equipment solutions. For more information or to receive an application, please contact JoAnne Hirsch, Communications Technology Program Manager, at (303) 866-2097 (voice), (720) 949-7457 (VP) or joanne.hirsch@state.co.us. Or go to the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind's (CCDHHDB) web site at <https://ccdhhdb.com/index.php/ctprogram/>.

Paths to Literacy Newsletter

Read past issues of the weekly digest from Paths to Literacy. Each one includes teaching ideas, news, and upcoming events for children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities or deafblindness. Topics range from braille literacy to Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), Learning Media Assessment (LMA) to making math accessible. To find past issues, go to: <https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/newsletter/paths-literacy-newsletter>

Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI): A Fact Sheet for Families & Professionals

This fact sheet by Chris Russel is on cortical visual impairment (CVI) and is designed to provide quick information to families and professionals. It can be found at:

https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/sites/pathstoliteracy.perkinsdev1.org/files/NYDBC_CVI_Fact_Sheet_v3.pdf



CDE Happenings

Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Visual Impairment

For information about the endorsement requirements for the Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

<p>Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21: (9.02)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must hold a Master’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution in special education visual impairment or its equivalent, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education. ✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for Special Education Specialists: Visually Impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements.
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For information about the endorsement requirements for the School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

<p>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist Ages 0-21: (11.03)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution. ✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists. ✓ Completion of practicum or internship, which must be in a school setting and equivalent to a minimum of 320 hours, full-time, under the supervision of an Academy of Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) licensed orientation and mobility specialist. ✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam. ✓ Hold a current and valid ACVREP orientation and mobility certificate.
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Educator Talent Website

Check out the Educator Talent website! Their mission is to develop, deploy and support talent management and human capital development strategies for districts and schools so that the most effective educators are in every school and classroom and all students are prepared for college, career, and life.

Check it out at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent>



Licensure Requirements for TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists Colorado Initial Licensure in the Endorsement Area of Visual Impairment

For information about Colorado licensing requirements in the area of Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment and/or School O&M Specialist, please refer to the information contained within Educator Licensing's Endorsement Requirements page at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

All candidates for initial educator licenses in Colorado have historically been required to take and pass one or more of the PLACE Content Assessments. Candidates for the special education endorsement in Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment were mandated previously to pass the *PLACE Educator Content Assessment for Special Education Specialist: Severe Needs – Visually Impaired*. This particular content assessment is suspended currently as a licensure requirement. Whether this specific test will be revised to include a section specific to Unified English Braille or is fully replaced with another test as a licensure requirement is yet to be determined.

At this time, it is important to note there is not a Professional Services and Educator Licensing Unit content test that requires a candidate for the Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment to demonstrate braille competency as a requirement of licensure. It is further important to note that if such a content test is reinstated, it does not replace the Colorado Braille Competency Test administered through the Exceptional Student Services Unit. This latter test is not tied to CDE licensure.

Braille Competency Testing Requirements

All licensed teachers endorsed in the area of visual impairment, including those individuals employed on a temporary status (Temporary Educator Eligibility-TEE), who are completing their university program in visual impairment, must have a valid CDE Certificate of Braille Competency or a CDE Renewal Certificate of Braille Competency on file with their current administrative unit of employment.

The CDE Certificate of Braille Competency must be earned no later than May 31st of the first instructional year, with a Colorado administrative unit as a teacher of students who are blind/visually impaired. If a TVI moves from one Colorado administrative unit to another, the expectation of first-year braille competency demonstration does not “reactivate” from year-to-year. The testing clock begins with the first day of Colorado employment as a TVI.

For more information about Colorado's braille competency requirements, please go to:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs

CDE Licensure Requirement for O&M Specialists

If you are working in a Colorado administrative unit as a School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, please know that you **MUST** have a current CDE license as a Special Services Provider: School O&M Specialist. If you do not have this license, your scope of O&M services should be restricted significantly to those skills that could already be taught by a TVI. Without this license, you are placing yourself and your AU at risk for O&M-related liability. There is no temporary or emergency licenses for School O&M Specialists.

Questions or need some assistance? Contact Tanni at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.



Several Options for K-3 teachers to Meet READ Act Training Requirements

The Colorado Department of Education has developed a number of options for kindergarten through third-grade teachers to meet the new professional development requirements in the READ Act.

Part of legislation passed in 2019 to improve early literacy rates, the changes to the READ Act require K-3 teachers in Colorado to receive additional training in evidence-based reading instruction by the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. Teachers need to meet this training requirement only once. It is specifically for K-3 teachers who are responsible for literacy instruction and may include the main instructor for a class, an instructional coach, reading interventionist, special education teacher, Title I teacher or others who play a critical role in teaching reading.

CDE is providing both asynchronous and synchronous training at no cost to teachers. Find out about [the online training here](#) or the [face-to-face training here](#).

Teachers also can complete a [district- or BOCES-led training](#) or a [training program included on the CDE Advisory List of Professional Development](#) that has been designed to meet this requirement.

Additional options for teacher to complete this requirement:

- Teachers who have a Colorado Reading Teacher or Reading Specialist endorsement already meet the training requirement. [Click here to explore the reading endorsements.](#)
- Teachers may take and pass an authorized reading content assessment or pass a Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary 5205 exam (approved in April 2020) with a score of 159 or above. [See the board approved assessments here.](#)
- Teachers may submit to CDE evidence that they successfully completed an undergraduate or graduate course in teaching reading. (CDE is currently creating a system for teachers to submit documentation of meeting the requirement.)
- Teachers may submit to CDE evidence they successfully completed a course in teaching reading appropriate for license renewal.

The department has received requests for flexibility in the requirement given the added challenges teachers face as they adapt to remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the State Board of Education at a recent meeting affirmed its commitment to the new requirements for teachers to ensure that all students have teachers who are trained in evidence-based reading instruction before the 2021-22 school year.

[More details about the requirement are available on the CDE website.](#)

[Click here for Frequently Asked Questions on the K-3 teacher training](#)



New State IEP Vendor

The CDE is in process with a new state IEP vendor. Please take a moment to visit the new [Ascend Colorado website: https://co.ascendsuites.com/](#).

This webpage will have the most up-to-date information regarding the development of Ascend Colorado. If you would like, you can sign up for the newsletter to keep up with progress on the development of Ascend at [https://co.ascendsuites.com/announcements/](#).



COVID-19 Information and Resources, including Compensatory Services

Exceptional Student Services-specific information regarding compensatory services and other topics can be found on the [Office of Special Education](#) main page or on the [Special Education Director's Corner](#). Information and resources for schools also can be found on [CDE's main webpage](#). Please check this page often for updated information.

Professional Development Opportunities

[CDE has created a webpage of professional development offerings](#), which includes opportunities specifically from ESSU.

CMAS English Language Arts Auditory and Sign Language Policy Update

Please take time to read through the **ELA Accommodation Policy Questions and Answers Resource**. This document addresses the changes to auditory and sign language presentations of the CMAS English Language Arts Assessment. Answers to frequently asked questions about the updated ELA accommodation policy regarding the use of auditory or sign language presentation on the CMAS ELA assessment is available on [CDE's website](#). Please note that this change will impact learners who are blind/visually impaired who are unable to access print or braille and are auditory learners. As a reminder, the CDE Assessment Division and ESSU will provide district assessment coordinators and special education directors with technical assistance on the updated policy, including transition strategies. The Standards and Instructional Support Unit is available to support understanding and interpretation of Colorado Academic Standards reading expectations. To review the updated CMAS ELA policy statement, [please visit this webpage](#).

CDE contacts are included in the following:

- 2020 CAS Reading, Writing and Communicating Support and Interpretation - Contact: Olivia Gillespie, literary content specialist, Standards and Instructional Support, gillespie_o@cde.state.co.us.
- Instructional Accommodations and IEP Support - Veronica Fiedler, specific learning disability specialist, ESSU, fiedler_v@cde.state.co.us.
- Instructional Accommodations and IEP Support - Shauna Moden, deaf education specialist, ESSU, moden_s@cde.state.co.us.
- State Assessment Accommodations Support - Arti Sachdeva, students with disabilities assessment principal consultant, Assessment Division, sachdeva_a@cde.state.co.us.
- If you have questions about learners who are blind/visually impaired, please reach out to Tanni at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

Colorado Academic Standards Review and Revision Committee Application

The Office of Standards and Instructional Support (SIS) is seeking applications for review and revision committee membership in the content areas of social studies, dance, drama and theatre arts, music, and visual arts. During the 2020 legislative session, the General Assembly passed Colorado House Bill 20-1032 (section 22-7-1005(6) C.R.S.) amending the provision that required the regular review and revision of the Colorado Academic Standards. The statute previously required all content area revisions to occur within six years of the prior cycle which occurred in 2018. The changes now require the state board to review and revise approximately one-third of the standards beginning in 2022 and an additional one-third every two years thereafter.

More information about the Colorado Academic Standards review and revision process and applying for committee membership can be found on our [website](#).

[Click Here for Additional Information](#)

For More Information, Contact: Joanna Bruno, Teaching and Learning Unit
Email: bruno_j@cde.state.co.us Phone: (303) 866-6571



Join a Virtual Induction PLC

CDE will host a virtual Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting for induction program coordinators from **10 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, Dec. 15**. Anyone involved in the design and/or delivery of an educator induction program is invited to participate. [Registration is required](#) and topic requests may be submitted during registration.

For more information, visit the [induction webpage](#) or email Educator_Development@cde.state.co.us

Educator Licensing—Important Notification: eLicensing Offline December 23 - January 5th

To prepare for the release of a new and improved eLicensing system, the existing system, including all licensing functions, will be unavailable from **Wednesday, Dec. 23, to Friday, Jan. 5**. It is strongly recommended that license holders with credential expiration dates in December 2020 log into the existing eLicensing system to renew their licenses as early as possible but no later than **Tuesday, Dec. 22**. However, license holders unable to renew ahead of the scheduled system downtime will not be penalized for expired licenses and should submit their renewal applications as soon as they can after January 5.

Submit feedback on Educator Licensure Rules: Public comment on revisions to the Rules for the Administration of the Educator Licensing Act of 1991, 1 CCR 301-37 can be submitted through **Friday, December 18**.

Proposed rule amendments stem from the 2020 legislative session, including House Bill 20-1128, HB20-1312 and Senate Bill 20-158. [Visit the Educator Talent Rules Feedback webpage](#) to review the proposed rule amendments and submit feedback via an online form. Written comment can be emailed to state.board@cde.state.co.us through **Tuesday, January 12**.

State Board Extends Deadline for READ Act Teacher Training

The State Board of Education agreed to provide educators an additional six months to complete the teacher training required by the READ Act. K-3 teachers will now have until January 31, 2022 to complete their training requirements on evidence-based reading instruction. The board directed districts to communicate the requirement to all K-3 teachers by December 1, 2020, and ensure teachers meet the new January 2022 deadline. Districts, BOCES and charters that do not meet the requirements will be ineligible for READ Act funds for the 2022-23 school year.

Only 40% of Colorado's third graders are meeting expectations on the Colorado Measures of Academic Success tests in English language arts, yet research shows that students need to learn to read at grade level by the end of third grade so they can read to learn in fourth grade and beyond. The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act was passed in 2012 with the goal of dramatically improving reading for our youngest learners. Since then, however, Colorado has seen only a 2% increase in third graders meeting or exceeding expectations on the Colorado Measures of Academic Success tests in English language arts. In addition, statewide data shows only a 1% reduction in the number of students identified with a significant reading deficiency.

The READ Act aims to ensure all students can read at grade level by the end of third grade. In 2019, the legislature made several changes to the READ Act to help educators support reading success among our state's youngest learners. Not all of Colorado's educators have had the opportunity to learn the science of teaching reading in their teacher training programs, so one of the changes to the READ Act required training on the latest evidence-based reading instruction strategies for all K-3 teachers.

[Teachers have a variety of avenues to complete the training](#), including no-cost options provided by the Colorado Department of Education.



Orientation & Mobility

Parent Mobility Website

Two Utah Orientation and Mobility Specialists have put together a webpage of resources for parents, families, teachers, and O&M Specialists. The [website has resources that explain O&M skills](#) across grades levels and offers activities, calendars, and videos.

White Cane Day!

Thanks to everyone who took the time to make this past October 15th White Cane Day a true celebration. There was a wonderful CAER tee shirt and district / school-level celebrations with students. Thank so much to Abby Horner for taking the time to send in two photos of the Weld 6 School District's celebration with staff and students.





Orientation & Mobility

International O&M Conference

This virtual conference will focus on O&M assessment and strategies. It will be offered for CEUs. Sara Noel from the CSDB Outreach Program is on the planning committee. To check out the conference program and register, go to: <https://orientationandmobilitysymposium.com/>

HomeBound for Adventure: Podcast to Promote O&M Skills Remotely

[homeBOUND FOR ADVENTURE](https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/technology/homebound-adventure-podcast-promote-o-m-skills-remotely) is an interactive podcast that is designed to help kids who are blind or visually impaired to stay connected and engaged while quarantined. Hosted by Tracy Spohn (O&M Specialist in Washington State), this podcast will help to promote Orientation & Mobility (O&M) skills during the COVID-19 school closure. Each episode presents fun lessons, activity ideas, and trivia for kids of all ages. For more information, go to: <https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/technology/homebound-adventure-podcast-promote-o-m-skills-remotely>



SOMA Conference Coming Up this December

The Southeastern Orientation and Mobility Conference or SOMA Conference is virtual this year. There is a well-stocked two day program. To learn about the offering and registration fees, go to: <https://somaconference.org/>






Calendar of Events



2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020

December 2	BVI Office Hours —Topic: Getting and Interpreting Eye Reports Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
December 2	DVR Sponsored - Creating Connections and Exploring Possibilities - Zoom Contact: Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or michele.reed@state.co.us
December 4	CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.) - Zoom Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
December 7	Mental Health for Children: How We Can Best Meet their Needs - 1:00—2:30pm Must register to receive a Zoom link for training
December 7	Making Connections: Base-10 Manipulatives & the Cranmer Abacus virtual training w/John Rose Register: https://txtsbvi.escworks.net/catalog/session.aspx?session_id=40085
December 10	Screening and Assessment for Birth to 3 - virtual training with WREIC—Colorado Register: https://txtsbvi.escworks.net/catalog/session.aspx?&session_id=40134
December 10	CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu Contact: Nancy Cozart – ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
December 12	DVR Sponsored - Creating Connections and Exploring Possibilities - Zoom Contact: Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or michele.reed@state.co.us
December 14-15	Southeastern O&M (SOMA) Conference – virtual Contact: https://somaconference.org/
December 18	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
December 20	Tactile Art Club (TAC) —virtual Contact: Rishika Kartik at rishikakartik@gmail.com

2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021

January	Braille Literacy Month	
January 4	Happy Birthday, Louis Braille! Louis Braille was born on January 4, 1809 and we celebrate his life and legacy during the whole month of January, which has been declared Braille Literacy Month.	

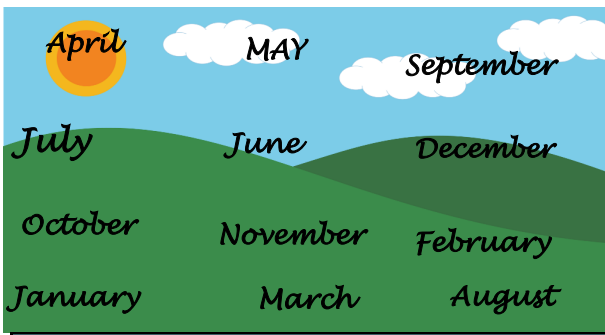


Calendar of Events



2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021

January 7	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
January 8	CIMC Second Friday Training Session - 9:00—10:00 a.m.- Zoom <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
January 13	BVI Office Hours —Topic: DVR Update <u>Registration:</u> https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
January 14	DB Webinar Series —The Hidden Senses w/David Brown <u>Registration:</u> https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4746e2dffe45488db7b3437e5ed631c9
January 14	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
January 14	CAER Chapter Meetings —5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart – ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
January 15	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
January 15	Deaf-Blind Child Count Forms Due back to CDE <u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
January 21	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
January 27	BVI Office Hours —Topic: TBD <u>Registration:</u> https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
January 28	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
February 3-5	International O&M Symposium – virtual <u>Contact:</u> https://orientationandmobilitysymposium.com/
February 4	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
February 5	CIMC First Friday Training Session —9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.- Zoom <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org



Calendar of Events

2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021

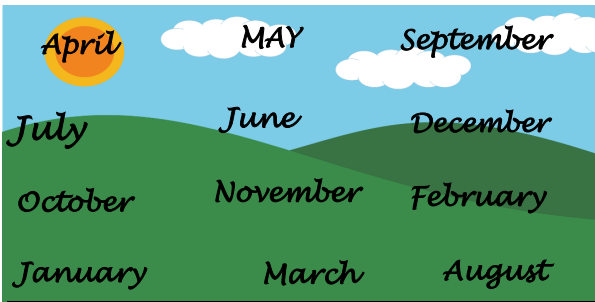
February 10	BVI Office Hours —Topic: TBD Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
February 11	DB Webinar Series —Communication and Student's Availability for Learning w/ Kathee Scoggin Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4746e2dffe45488db7b3437e5ed631c9
February 11	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
February 11	Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting - 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. —hosted by Littleton Public Schools Contact: Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
February 11	CAER Chapter Meetings —5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu Contact: Nancy Cozart – ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
February 11-15	Winter Mountain Mobility—Adaptive Sports Center —Crested Butte, CO Contact: Mike Plansker at pla011923@adams12.org
February 18	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
February 18	Vision Coalition (8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) - virtual or in-person Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
February 18-20	PEAK Inclusive Education Conference —virtual Contact: www.peakparent.org
February 19	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
February 25	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
March 1	Due date for See the Future Scholarship Application Visit See the Future (https://www.seethefuture.org/home.html)
March 4	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
March 5	CIMC First Friday Training Session —9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m. - Zoom Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
March 10	BVI Office Hours —Topic: TBD Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa




Calendar of Events

2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021

March 11	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
March 11	CAER Chapter Meetings —5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu Contact: Nancy Cozart – ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
March 18	DB Webinar Series —Self Determination w/ Kathee Scoggin Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4746e2dffe45488db7b3437e5ed631c9
March 18	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
March 19	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
March 24	BVI Office Hours —Topic: TBD Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
March 25	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
April 1	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
April 2	CIMC First Friday Training Session —9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.- Zoom Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
April 7	BVI Office Hours —Topic: TBD Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
April 8	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
April 8	CAER Chapter Meetings —5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu Contact: Nancy Cozart – ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
April 15	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
April 16	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
April 21	BVI Office Hours —Topic: TBD Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa



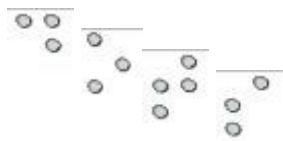
Calendar of Events

2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021

April 22	Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting - 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.—Aurora Public Schools, CO <u>Contact:</u> Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
April 25	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
May 5	BVI Office Hours —Topic: TBD <u>Registration:</u> https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
May 6	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
May 7	CIMC First Friday Training Session —9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.- Zoom <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
May 6	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
May 13	CAER Chapter Meetings —5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart – ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
May 16	BVI Office Hours —Topic: TBD <u>Registration:</u> https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
May 20	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
May 21	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
May 27	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students <u>Contact:</u> Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
June 4	CIMC First Friday Training Session —9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m. - Zoom <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
June 10	CAER Chapter Meetings —5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart – ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022

January 31 **End Date of READ Act Teacher Training Requirement**
For training options, go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/teacher-training>



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Colorado Braille Competency Committee

Please keep this information handy if you are in the process of earning your initial Colorado Braille Competency Certificate or working on your renewal modules. The CDE Braille Competency Committee members serve as part-time employees of the Colorado Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services Unit for their important role in: (a) developing, refining, and reviewing braille competency testing and support materials, (b) proctoring test sessions for initial braille competency and renewal modules, (c) providing approved mentoring to test candidates, and (d) other duties as needed to support our UEB competency process across the state.

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

Tanni Anthony	(303) 866-6681	Anthony_T@cde.state.co.us
Nancy Cozart	(303) 905-4074	Cozart_N@cde.state.co.us
Christine Maynard	(719) 229-4981	Maynard_C@cde.state.co.us
Brenda Shepard	(303) 995-7913	Shepard_B@cde.state.co.us
Sarah Sonnier	(970) 245-5228	Sonnier_S@cde.state.co.us
Julie Wetzstein	(303) 819-7887	Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us

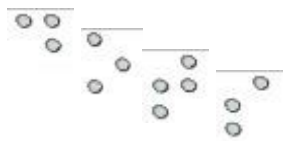
As far as regional representation for initial testing and renewal modules, Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor/mentor and Sarah Sonnier is the western region proctor/mentor. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor for renewal modules. Tanni Anthony is the proctor for initial braille competency testing for the greater metro area.

The Practice Test items have been posted on the braille competency webpage—that information and other resources can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs.

Braillewriter Repair

Mark Carpenter is available for braillewriter repair. His contact information is: 719-634-8720 (phone) and Email: carpdiane@yahoo.com





CONNECTING THE DOTS



Celebrating Braille!



[This information is from an article by Charlotte Cushman](#)

Braille Literacy Month: January is Braille Literacy Month, in honor of the birthday of Louis Braille, who was born on January 4th, 1809. We now celebrate National World Braille Day on January 4th in honor of his legacy. We invite you to play the **Louis Braille Timeline Game** (<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/strategies/louis-braille-timeline-game>) and sing the "Louis, Louis" (<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/news/happy-birthday-louis-braille>) song in celebration! Download the game and lyrics in print and braille to share with your students.

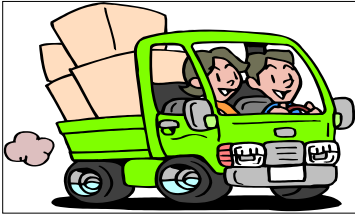
Is Braille Still Relevant in a High Tech World? People ask this question a lot. We think that the most helpful response is to ask if they think that sighted children should still learn to read print, now that audio books are available. What would a parent or administrator think if it were suggested that we could get rid of pencils and pens, now that computers and digital devices are so readily available.

This [video from Perkins School for the Blind](#) presents interviews with braille users of different ages who talk about the value of braille in school, work, and the community. We think it is a valuable way to raise awareness of the importance of braille literacy.

Sources of Free Braille Books: Children in the United States and Canada are eligible to [receive free braille books](#) from a number of sources. In addition, we encourage you to contact the [National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped](#), if you (or your child) have a visual impairment and are a resident of the United States. Each state also has a library for the blind. National Federation of the Blind [maintains a list of these libraries](#).

Learning Braille: Resources for Parents: There are many different reasons people wish to learn braille. The resources and best way to learn will vary, depending on the situation of the individual. For example, sighted parents who would like a basic exposure to braille to support their children who are blind or visually impaired will benefit from a different approach than someone who is an established print reader losing vision later in life. People who wish to be teachers of students with visual impairments will have still other needs. Here are a few resources that may be helpful.

- [Braille Courses](#)—Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired—Hadley offers a wide range of classes, from those designed for parents to those for adults with vision loss.
- [Dots for Families](#)—Free lessons for families to learn the basics of braille.
- [Just Enough to Know Better](#)—This book from National Braille Press is designed to help parents (or anyone who is interested) to learn enough braille to help a young child who is blind learn to read.
- [BRL: Braille Through Remote Learning](#)—There is no instructor for this course, but the materials are available for use.
- [UEB Online](#)— A training program for sighted people to learn Unified English Braille (UEB). The program is suitable for classroom and specialist teachers, parents, teacher aides and other professionals supporting children and adults with vision impairment.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Offerings

This November and December, the Blind and Low Vision Services Unit at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will host *Creating Connections and Exploring Possibilities*, information sessions regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services available to students 15-21. Remaining dates for these information sessions are:

- Thursday December 3, 2020 4:00 p.m. -5:30 p.m.
- Saturday December 12, 2020 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Learn about the following:

- ◆ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- ◆ Pre-Employment Transition Services Provided by DVR
- ◆ When to Make a Referral to DVR?
- ◆ Youth Programs (Pre-ETS Services) vs. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- ◆ When to Contact a Counselor?
- ◆ What can DVR offer to you and your student?
- ◆ Upcoming Pre-Employment Transition activities



Target Audiences: Colorado students (ages 15-21), families, teachers for students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility specialists, and other collaborators working with students who are blind and low vision.

To register to attend an information session, contact Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or michele.reed@state.co.us. A link to the Zoom meeting will be provided when you register. When you register, please inform DVR if any special accommodations are needed to participate (Braille materials, interpreters, closed caption, etc.)

Federal Programs — 2021 United States Senate Youth Scholarship Program Application Now Available

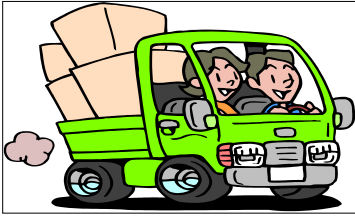
The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) is a unique educational experience for outstanding high school students interested in pursuing careers in public service. The USSYP brings the highest-level officials from each branch of government to meet with this outstanding group of young leaders - two high school juniors or seniors from each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) - for an intensive week-long education and leadership program. For 2021, the 59th Annual United States Senate Youth Program will be held online from March 14-18. Each delegate will be awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate studies, with encouragement to pursue coursework in history and political science.

High school juniors or seniors are eligible to apply for this opportunity and must show demonstrated leadership by serving in elected or appointed positions in which they are actively representing a constituency in organizations related to student government, education, public affairs, and community service.

Applications are due on Friday, December 11th [Click Here for Additional Information](#)

For More Information, Contact:

Patricia Gleason, Competitive Grants and Awards
Email: gleason_p@cde.state.co.us Phone: 303-866-6143



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Putting Your Best Foot Forward Weekly Job Search Skills Training Beginning January 2021

By Michele Reed

Knowing how to find a job is an important skill that you will likely use often over your lifetime. Research shows that youth and young adults with visual impairments who find jobs on their own are more likely to have a job in the future, so it is important to learn how to find your own job now!

The purpose of the *Putting Your Best Foot Forward* program is to develop your job search skills so you can use these skills to find a job.

During the *Putting Your Best Foot Forward* program, we practice things such as:

- how to interview for a job,
- how to write an effective cover letter and resume,
- how to find information about job openings, and
- how to contact employers.

We also cover issues related to starting a new job. This program can help you prepare for transition from school to work and find jobs that correspond to your professional goals, interests and abilities.

Starting January 7, students 15-21 are invited to join the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Blind and Low Vision services unit every Thursday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for *Putting Your Best Foot Forward*. The goals are to:

- Develop the job search skills for youth with visual impairments
- Strengthen youths' job search self-efficacy and confidence
- Encourage a proactive approach to finding employment
- Develop strategies to overcome barriers to employment

If you are interested in participating in this program, please complete the google registration form and return to Michele Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us.

[Putting Your Best Foot Forward- Job Search Skills Training for Youth with Visual Impairments Registration Link](#)

ARE YOU PUTTING YOUR



FOOT



Forward?

just for PARENTS

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind

NFADB is the largest nonprofit organization serving families of individuals who are deaf-blind (combined vision and hearing loss). [Check out the NFADB website](#)

The organization provides information on deaf-blindness, hosts webinars on a variety of topics, and is very involved in national conferences to support families of children with deaf blindness.



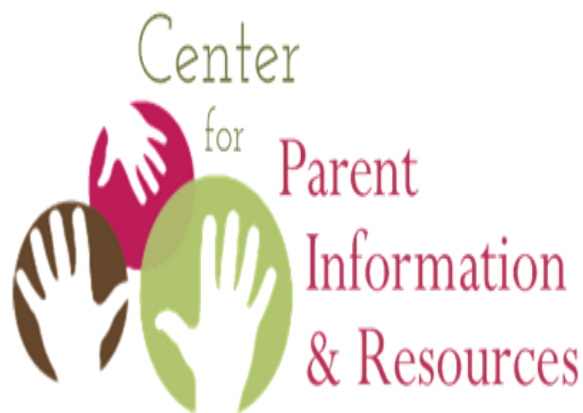
NATIONAL FAMILY
ASSOCIATION
FOR DEAF-BLIND
Empowering Families with
Individuals who are Deaf-Blind



Center for Parent Information and Resource Library

Find webinars, articles, stand-alone pages, publications.
Share with families, professional support providers, staff.
Focus searches with multiple filters on the results pages.

[Search the Parent Resource library for important resources.](#)



National Organization of Parents of Blind Children



Founded in 1983, the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC) is a membership organization of parents, educators, and friends of blind children reaching out to give each other vital support, encouragement, and information. They have thousands of members in all fifty states plus Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

The NOPBC offers hope, encouragement, information, and resources for parents of blind or low-vision children. NOPBC provides emotional support and a network for families. They also provide information, training, and resources to empower families to take an active role in guiding their child's development and education.

Their status is as a division of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), an important organization of blind people in the world, provides many benefits. NFB provides its members information about the societal, legislative, and technological issues that affect blind people. One of their most exciting activities is our annual conference. Every year since it was established, the NOPBC has conducted an annual conference for parents and teachers of blind children as part of the national convention of the NFB. The program has grown to include five exciting days of workshops, training sessions, activities for all family members, including sighted siblings, and countless opportunities to meet blind adults and other families and children from around the country.

Most states have an NOPBC affiliate chapter. Colorado has one!
For more information, call the Colorado Center for the Blind at (303) 778-1130.

just for PARENTS

Read With Me Campaign Encourages Early Reading



The Colorado Department of Education is embarking on a public awareness campaign to encourage and empower parents to make reading part of their daily routine with their children. As part of the campaign, parents and caregivers will be encouraged to find opportunities to read with their young children beginning long before they start school.

The stark reality is that more than half of all Colorado third-graders don't meet grade-level expectations when it comes to reading and research shows that students who struggle with reading by the end of the third grade rarely reach the academic level of their grade-level peers and are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

In 2019, the Colorado legislature passed legislation to put more focus on early literacy and included the public awareness campaign as part of the initiative.

It is important for parents to understand they do not need to be teachers and don't have to spend hours reading every day in order to foster interest. Singing songs, playing games, reading street signs and pointing out the names of common items also help to build a child's vocabulary and develop eventual reading ability.

Research has confirmed that parents today want what's best for their children, yet they are incredibly busy and may often have trouble finding time or energy to read with their young children. The campaign's theme places reading on the same level as other fundamental needs of young children -- food, water, shelter and love.

The campaign includes social media, digital video, broadcast television advertising and a website at ReadWithMe.Today that provides parents with tips and resources to support their children's reading progress. The website includes materials parents, community members and organizations can use to support reading at home. Youth serving organizations and libraries will be engaged to spread the word and help encourage parents.

For more information, go to the ReadWithMe.Today website to find reading tips and free resources.

In recent years, we have seen a decline in the reading scores of children who are blind/visually impaired in the kindergarten through third grade READ Act scores. This is concerning as primary need for our learners is to have access to books and literacy materials. Our early intervention and early childhood programs model and support strategies for language development, accessible books, and teaching concepts highlighted in book stories.

For children with blindness/ visual impairment and other disabilities, the focus on literacy can often take a second seat to other important needs or there may not be a clear path for how best to provide a literacy-rich environment. This is where a teacher of students with visual impairments is so important. There are multiple resources through the Colorado Instructional Materials Center and the talents of the early intervention or early childhood programs specifically geared to the needs of young children with blindness/visual impairment. For books in braille or large print and/or experience book kit ideas with real props to help bring the story alive, please work with your child's teacher of students with visual impairments. Together, we can support early literacy development of all of our children.



Winter 2021 Online PEP Academy

Friday, January 29
Saturday, January 30
Saturday, February 6
Saturday, February 13

Spring 2021 Online PEP Academy

Friday, March 19
Saturday, March 20
Saturday, March 27
Saturday, April 3

Live Sessions:

- Opening Session
- Parenting a Child with a Disability and Rebuilding Dreams
- Living with a Disability
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Panel for Questions and Answers
- Three Facilitated Small Group Discussions

Self-Paced Content Sessions:

- The Law and the Education of Children with Disabilities
- Early Childhood Supports and Services
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Transition IEP
- Facilitated IEPs
- Significant Support Needs
- Executive Function Skills
- Advocating with Your Child/Teen
- Mental Health



COLORADO
Department of Education

2020-2021 PEP Academy

Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences is offering an Online PEP Academy in 2021. PEP brings families and professionals together by sharing ideas, discussing concerns, celebrating successes and obtaining information related to parenting, educating and partnering to support student learning. PEP is a non-specific disability conference that focuses on commonalities.

Who is encouraged to participate

- Colorado families who have a child with a disability birth-21
- Directors of special education, principals, special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers
- Health care and Colorado professionals interested in the family and school partnership and who work with children or youth with disabilities

What to expect

Live and self-paced sessions that help promote family and school partnerships which are essential in supporting students with disabilities. Participants will have two weeks to complete the online PEP Academy program. Of no cost to attendees.

When

The PEP Academy opens on a Friday evening and continues for two to four hours live on three Saturdays. Live and self-paced sessions will be available to confirmed participants.

Where

Confirmed participants will be sent directions with links to access PEP Academy online from a desktop computer, laptop or other mobile device.

Apply Now!

www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep

Or contact the PEP Hotline: (303) 866-6846

Sign language and other language interpretations are available. If you need an accommodation, please request it on your application.

Colorado Department of Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100, Denver, CO 80202 • 303-866-6943 • ramer_d@cde.state.co.us



**Está
invitado**

Academia PEP en línea de invierno 2021

Viernes, 29 de enero
Sábado, 30 de enero
Sábado, 6 de febrero
Sábado, 13 de febrero

Academia PEP en línea de primavera 2021

Viernes, 19 de marzo
Sábado, 20 de marzo
Sábado, 27 de marzo
Sábado, 3 de abril

Sesiones en vivo:

- Sesión de apertura
- Cómo educar a un niño con una discapacidad y reconstruir los sueños
- Viviendo con una discapacidad
- Apoyos a la conducta positiva
- Panel de preguntas y respuestas
- Tres debates facilitados en pequeños grupos

Sesiones de contenido a ritmo propio:

- La ley y la educación para niños con discapacidades
- Apoyos y servicios para la primera infancia
- Programa de Educación Individualizada (IEP)
- IEP de transición
- IEP facilitados
- Necesidades de apoyo significativas
- Habilidades de la función ejecutiva
- Abogar con su hijo/adolescente
- Salud mental



COLORADO
Department of Education

Academia PEP 2020-2021

Las Conferencias de Padres Alentando a Padres (PEP) está ofreciendo una Academia PEP en línea en 2021. PEP reúne a las familias y a los profesionales compartiendo ideas, discutiendo preocupaciones, celebrando los éxitos y obteniendo información relacionada con la crianza, la educación y la asociación para apoyar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes. PEP es una conferencia sobre discapacidad no específica que se centra en los puntos comunes.

A quién se anima a participar

- Las familias de Colorado que tienen un niño con una discapacidad desde el nacimiento hasta los 21 años
- Directores de educación especial, directores, maestros de educación especial, maestros de educación general, proveedores de servicios relacionados
- Profesionales del cuidado de la salud y de Colorado interesados en la asociación entre la familia y la escuela y que trabajan con niños o jóvenes con discapacidades

Qué debe esperar

Sesiones en vivo y a su ritmo propio que ayudan a promover las asociaciones familiares y escolares que son esenciales para apoyar a los estudiantes con discapacidades. Los participantes tendrán dos semanas para completar el programa de la Academia PEP en línea. Sin costo alguno para los asistentes.

Cuándo

La Academia PEP abre un viernes por la noche y continúa de dos a cuatro horas en vivo los tres sábados. Se ofrecerán sesiones en vivo y a ritmo propio a los participantes confirmados.

Dónde

A los participantes confirmados se les enviarán direcciones con enlaces para acceder a la Academia PEP en línea desde una computadora de escritorio, portátil u otro dispositivo móvil.

¡Aplique ahora!

www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep

O contacte con la línea directa de PEP: (303) 866-6846

Se dispone de interpretaciones en lenguaje de señas y otros idiomas. Si necesita un alojamiento, por favor solicítelo en su aplicación.

Colorado Department of Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100, Denver, CO 80202 • 303-866-6943 • ramer_d@cde.state.co.us

jobs

IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with current vacancies for the current school year. Please keep in touch with Tanni about your job openings. If you know of an anticipated opening in your part of the state, please begin working to recruit someone into our field by ensuring he or she has an opportunity to learn about being a TVI and/or an O&M Specialist. This may be a para-educator, a brailist, and/or a colleague already in the teaching profession.

Please work with Dr. Paula Conroy to learn more about the UNC distance education / graduate program to prepare TVIs and O&M Specialists in Colorado! TVI = teacher of students with visual impairments and O&M Specialist = orientation and mobility specialist.

Southern Region —Jobs

- ◆ **TVI / O&M Specialist** (1 FTE)) Academy 20 School District. Please contact Belinda Lujan-Lindsey at Belinda.lujan@asd20.org or (719) 234-1328

Northern Region —Jobs

- ◆ **TVI / O&M Specialist** (.5 FTE)) St. Vrain Valley School District. Please contact Erica Bowman at bowman_eric@svvdsd.org or (720) 526-1177.

TVIs and O&M Specialists—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE teaching and/or support services licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing in the future with part-time or substitute work.

Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement! We are seeing many retired TVIs and O&M Specialists come back to contribute as subs for maternity leave, do contract work, and/or work at A Shared Vision. You can work at your pace and needs! Magic!

If you want to be added to CDE's contract list, please be in touch with Tanni at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us



VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

November 5, 2020

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Martin Becerra, Melinda Carter, Nancy Cozart, Jayme Cusimano, Julie Hutchinson, Julie King, Paula Landry, Jamie Lugo, Jim Olson, and Michele Reed

Unable to Attend: Deb Andrews

Guest: Lori Mattick

MISSION OF THE VISION COALITION: The purpose of the Vision Coalition is to bring the collective resources of the group together to address state priorities improving services to students who are blind/visually impaired. (April 1998)

ACRONYM LEGEND

ASV	A Shared Vision
BVI	Blind / Visually Impaired
CAER	CO Chapter of the Association of the Education/Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired
CCB	Colorado Center for the Blind
CDE	Colorado Department of Education
CIMC	Colorado Instructional Materials Center
COMS	certified orientation and mobility specialist
CSDB	Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
DVR	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
ESSU	Exceptional Student Services Unit
O&M	Orientation and Mobility
TVI/TSVI	Teacher of students with blindness/visual impairments

MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

- A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
- Anchor Center for Blind Children – Melinda Carter
- Colorado AER Chapter – Nancy Cozart
- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Martin Becerra-Miranda
- Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Michele Reed
- Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Jamie Lugo
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Jayme Cusimano
- Metro TVI / COMS– Nancy Cozart
- Northern TVI / COMS – Julie Hutchinson
- Southern TVI / COMS – Deb Andrews
- University of Northern Colorado – no representative for school year 2020-21
- Western TVI / COMS - Julie King



Norms of the Vision Coalition: Stay present. Verbally identify yourself before you speak. If we get into a serious discussion, please wait for your turn (we will assign someone to take stock of who is next in the discussion). Vision Coalition meetings are a confidential environment. We are here for the common good of students, families, and our profession. In the spirit of improvement, we will bring important issues to the table.

Decision Protocol: In instances where a vote may be taken to make a decision of the Vision Coalition membership, a fist of 5, 3, or 1 will be used. 5 = agreement / can live with the decision; 3 = need more information to decide; and 1 = cannot approve the decision. A majority vote of 5 will indicate that the decision will move forward.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

We had our first meeting of the school year on September 17th. Jim Olson from the CIMC shared updates. Vision Coalition announcements were addressed on the READ Act, linking Learning Media Assessments and Functional Vision Assessments virtually, etc. A big focus was virtual learning check-in: what is working, what is not for TVIs, and virtual O&M brainstorming. People are having different experiences with remote / virtual learning. One variable that contributes to success or difficulty is family situation with parent jobs, internet capacity, etc.

Our next meeting is November 12, 2020 from 3:30-5:00. DPS TVIs are planning this event.

From Rishika Kartik, High School Student and President of the CCB Art Club: "I had submitted a proposal to Museum of Contemporary Arts (MCA) Denver to make their youth programming more inclusive and conduct art workshops for students in Colorado who are blind and visually impaired along with showcasing artists who are blind and specializing in the particular art medium. I am excited to share that MCA has approved the proposal. We are doing two workshops at the end of October (Thursday, October 22 and Wednesday, October 28, 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (MST) and four art workshops for students who are blind and visually impaired in Spring of 2021. The workshops will be free for the participants and the October workshops will be virtual. MCA will ship all the materials for the art workshops to the participants. As part of the proposal, I suggested bringing in guest artists who are blind for each session to share their art experiences, collaborate, and talk about their artwork while the participants create their projects. We will tie in the medium and material to the guest artists' preferred art medium so there is synergy, and MCA will pay the guest artists to be part of the workshop. I cannot thank Ann Cunningham enough for guiding me and connecting me to great Artists who are blind. I am thrilled to get the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from the artists who will be part of the MCA Art workshop. MCA will take the lead in creating the registration form, etc. and promoting the event, but they have encouraged me to spread the word within our community."

Rishika has also put together My White Cane Day Campaign! See below.

1. We invite you to join #MyCaneMyIndependence campaign for #WhiteCaneDay The Mission of #MyCaneMyIndependence campaign is to: Raise awareness for the White Cane Day and the right of individuals who are blind and visually impaired to travel independently.
2. Celebrate the achievements of individuals who are blind and visually impaired and honor the many contributions they make to the society.
3. Advocate for policies and infrastructure for a more accessible and inclusive society.

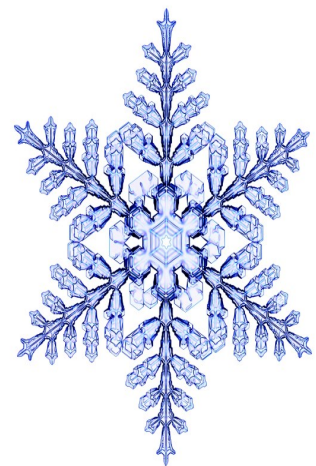
Have a story to tell and make a difference? Use the hashtag #MyCaneMyIndependence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) to: share your story/journey, videos, photos with the white cane. Share your cane adventures and the places your white cane has taken you. Share your dreams and aspirations with your white cane. You can also send your stories to mycanemyindependence@gmail.com.

Upcoming meeting dates:

- November 12, 2020 hosted by Denver Public Schools
- February 11, 2021 hosted by Littleton Public Schools
- April 22, 2021 hosted by Aurora Public Schools

Discussion Item:

- How do we best support families in this time of remote / virtual instruction? It is helpful to give families a heads-up about what to expect from a lesson, the sequence of the lesson and expectation for their involvement, and materials needed. It is important to give them an opportunity to think ahead about how best to be involved in the lesson.



Northern Region (Julie Hutchinson)

A challenge has been virtual instruction for students with significant support needs. There has been more ease in instruction when the students are able to attend school in-person. Another discussion point has been how best to support families.

Goal ball in the northern region! Michael Wright is taking the lead role with this effort. If interested, please reach to him at michael.wright@weldre5j.org

Discussion Item:

- The region is looking for a hub of resources for dual media learners. A question is what are people using to make this decision (using data) and what strategies are being used to support students? A factor in the decision making is working with both the student and the family on expectations and understanding of dual avenues of learning / literacy. There are times when parents and classroom teachers are resistant.

Resources: Learning Media Assessment, people use pieces from different resources such as Anna Swenson, BOEMS for younger children can be a helpful tool. In the early years, it is important to expose the child to many learning media in the spirit of exploration and expanding sensory development. Families are often accepting and pleased to have these options for their child. How we frame these discussions is important to be proactive and positive about all learning opportunities and available options. Braille should always be presented in a positive manner, not as a last resort based on a failure to read print. Anchor Center for Blind Children has offered a braille course and it has been accepted in a fun and positive manner for families. We also hear the emphasis on auditory learning without a deep understanding of auditory as not a literacy mode. For example, a student's literacy mode may be visual or tactual, but emphasis can still be placed on use of auditory learning to accompany/support visual or tactual mode, but not as an expectation that auditory means will be the primary mode of learning. (I was not yet attending the meeting when this was discussed, so that may not even be the correct meaning of that sentence.) Reading / writing / math: also, data collection specific to the efficacy of one media that has been used overtime. Assignment: it may be helpful to have a running document where people can drop in information or ideas or resources. Framing / Tools / Strategies.

Southern Region (Jim Olson / Lori Mattick)

On October 16th we held our Southern Region TVI-DVR meeting with representation from both school districts and DVR staff. The benefit of hosting the meeting with a video conferencing platform is that it has enabled our colleagues from as far away as Durango and Cortez to join our meeting. We are excited that we can offer the ability for every service provider in the region to join our meetings. We have had attendees that have never been able to attend before attend because they are being held virtually and it has been great to meet our new teachers in the region. Our next meeting is scheduled for November 13th from 2:30 -3:30 p.m.

Josie Shea, DVR, shared with the region that they are still working remotely, which has been extended through January for their department. They have one new staff member, Judy Mathews, in the Colorado Springs office. They also have an intern (O&M and VRT) from the University of Pittsburgh working with Meghan and Liz.

Mountain Metropolitan Transit updates from the Transit Passenger Authority Committee meeting: Route 40 suspended until Pikes Peak Community College resumes in-person classes. Route 6 has changed to remove the diversion off Fillmore street (El Paso to 4th street and back down Hancock) as new sidewalks are being installed.

Pikes Peak Library District update: the library is transitioning from their old app to the new Libby app by OverDrive. If your students access eBooks or audio books from the PPLD this easy-to-use app works beautifully.

CSDB's OverDrive account (SORA) links with the Pikes Peak Library District: <https://soraapp.com/library/csdbc>. Other TVIs present today mentioned their districts use the SORA app also.

New O&M app: “Good Maps Access Explorer” is available for iOS devices. This app is replacing the Nearby Explorer app from APH. Feedback has been positive by teachers who have used it so far.

APH: New learning management system portal called the APH HIVE (www.aphhive.or). The Hive offers free online courses for ACVREP continuing education credits, following completion of each course.

Southern Region TVI-DVR Meeting Dates for 2020-2021: Contact: jolson@cldb.org

- Friday, November 13, 2020 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, December 18, 2020 7:30 am to 8:30 am
- Friday, January 15, 2021 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, February 19, 2021 7:30 am to 8:30 am
- Friday, March 19, 2021 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, April 16, 2021 7:30 am to 8:30 a.m.
- Friday, May 21, 2021 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Western Region (Julie King)

The western slope group has been meeting virtually every month since the start of the school year. It has been a great opportunity to collaborate, brainstorm strategies, and provide support. Grand Junction is seeing an increase in child find referrals. Erin Noe has been coordinating these referrals both in person and virtually. TVIs are working on getting current eye reports. Everyone is watching the COVID -19 numbers and preparing for the second semester.

Discussion Items:

- There has been challenges for many people with families understanding the importance of obtaining a current eye report. Some families have not prioritized a current eye examination with their child during the pandemic. This is especially true when the child has other disabilities and there is a worry about health precautions. In some administrative units, the thinking is that a child with additional disabilities may qualify under another eligibility category and VI services are consultative in nature, so the eye exam update is less needed. It is a complicated situation as the eye report should contribute to the development of an IEP. The CIMC MDB-FDB Form on the CIMC website (cldb.colorado.gov/cimc) for eye doctors has helped, in some situations, to verify legal blindness for purposes of the federal quota census count. form has check boxes for three considerations: (1) Functions better than 20/200 corrected, in their best eye (which means the student would not be considered legally blind), (2) Meets the Definition of Blindness (MDB), or (3) Functions at the Definition of Blindness (FDB). An optional box was added in 2019 that eye doctors may choose check that states, “For eligibility into the annual federal quota census, this child meets or functions at the definition of blindness and no further verification of legal blindness is necessary until this student graduates. This does NOT mean that this child never needs another eye exam! Continued eye health care is recommended and necessary. This simply means that the school district does not need to verify legal blindness again with the Colorado Instructional Materials Center while this student is enrolled in a public-school system at less than college level.” Once a district submits a copy of the signed MDB-FDB form that they have on file in their district, the CIMC will update the student registration database “Notes” section to reflect the information on the MDB/FDB form. If the fourth box has been checked been checked, it will note “FQ verification of legal blindness valid through graduation; by Dr. ____, dated: ____”

We are hearing in some parts of the state, there is reluctance to complete the form by eye care specialist. This has been problematic for CIMC purposes in determining the status of legal blindness needed for the American Printing House for the Blind Quota Funds. One suggestion was for the parent to bring the form with them to the eye examination. A second suggestion, if the eye exam has already occurred is to have the TVI attach the eye exam report you have to the MDB-FDB Form you are sending to the eye doctor’s office to complete and sign. This way, the office does not have to use valuable work time to pull the patient’s file, locate the last exam notes, and leave for the doctor to sign. They doctor can simply look at the exam notes you are referring to, check a box, sign it, and send it back to you. This has happened very quickly with offices in the Colorado

Springs area. Another suggestion was to reach out to Dr. Enzenauer for a conversation about the importance of this form.

Assignment: This form should be shared / discussed again. It might be a good topic for the BVI Office Hours. Tanni and Jim will discuss whether this form be created as a tablet to leave at doctor's office?

- With recent referrals, there are questions regarding qualifying students who are deaf-blind. Can more clarification be provided in situations when a student would not qualify with a visual impairment alone; how do you make the determination? The federal definition of deaf-blindness is clear that this is a combined/ interactive effect of both hearing and vision impairment, the result of which is that the child cannot not solely be served by a program designed for hearing impairment or a program designed solely for visual impairment. The child will need the services of people trained in deaf-blindness. In Colorado this is most often a combination of services with a TVI and a teacher of the deaf. The CO DB Grant is happy to help with eligibility guidance.
- Are there many English learners who read braille in Colorado? Discussion: the CIMC is not providing any foreign language materials in braille for students. As for numbers of Els who are receiving braille materials in English, we do collect information about the language spoken in the home. The only Spanish product with APH is a calendar.

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

A Shared Vision recently celebrated our 4th year of providing home-based vision services for Colorado's youngest children with visual impairment! Since we could not mark the occasion with our annual in-person birthday party, we sent tactile birthday experience kits to our friends and donors.

ASV has provided training on the Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire to almost 600 early intervention providers and other professionals (OTs, PTs, and others) across Colorado and other states. *The Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire for Children Ages Birth through Five* was developed as an interim tool to be used during the pandemic, however, many providers have found it to be helpful in identifying potential vision concerns among children currently enrolled in early intervention. We are hopeful this can be tweaked into a tool for providers continued use when we return to in-person visits.

Per Early Intervention Colorado guidelines, virtual visits remain the primary method of service delivery. In-person indoor visits have been added as a service option along with the continuation of outdoor visits for families on an as-needed basis only. There have been opportunities for in-person visits, but with certain precautions. As the pandemic numbers increase, these opportunities come and go. It has been fatiguing for staff and families. Families need home activities, more so than usual.

ASV teachers and families will greatly miss Tina Martin as she officially retired in October. Tina has been a valuable part of our team for the past several years and we wish her all the best!

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Melinda Carter)

Anchor continues to be open, with a brief 2-week shutdown because a staff member tested positive. All our other staff tested negative and so we are back open. We have provided families with in-person as well as virtual options for program. Unfortunately, this year we will not have our Fall Feast, but we are looking at options for our traditional Holiday Party. We are hopeful that we will continue to be able to see children and families in program as we move through these winter months.

Colorado AER Chapter (Nancy Cozart)

CAER held its annual awards virtually on October 8th. Congratulations to our award winners! 2020 Award Recipients:

October—December 2020 KIT

- Ken Neve Award Recipient: Jadwiga Brown, O&M Specialist with DVR
- CAER Community Connections Recipient: Two Blind Brothers in New York
- President’s Award Recipient: Dr. Tanni Anthony, CDE

White Cane Day Fundraiser: Thank you to Barb Galgano for organizing this event with Custom Ink. The t-shirt fundraiser was a huge success, raising \$1,693.41 for CAER mini-grants!

Mini-grants were due November 1st. There was one submission this year. We encourage professionals to take advantage of this opportunity for financial support (up to \$300) for trainings, materials, etc. As a CAER member, you can also sponsor a consumer, student, or parent with activities they are interested in as well. These funds may also be used (as a possibility) for materials for virtual instruction. Mini-grants can be submitted throughout the year.

Assignment: Regional TVI reps, please be sure you are talking about this opportunity in your regional meetings.

Ideas for Trainings: O&M- Remote Training; Android, What’s New?; Different Modalities with Web Browsers; Head Borne/Wearables; Virtual O&M and other Expanded Core Curriculum Areas; 3D printing to create tactuals for students (technology skill). Give us your input on these topics or others of interest!

Upcoming Meeting Dates: Time is 5:45 – 7:00 p.m.

November 12	February 11	May 13	December 10
March 11	June 10	January 14	April 8

meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu Join by phone (US) +1 347-954-0600 (PIN: 769125319)

Colorado DVR (Michele Reed)

Please note that DVR and the Blind Low Vision Services Unit are open and continuing to accept referrals, complete intakes, and provide Personal Adjustment Training. If you have a student that needs to complete a referral to DVR to participate in our Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), please contact Audrey Wille at audrey.wille@state.co.us. If you have any questions regarding the referral process for Pre-ETS, please contact Michele Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us.

Staff Updates: Our current vacancies include: Field Instructor (O&M/VRT) in Pueblo office, Rehabilitation Counselor in the Golden office, Rehabilitation Counselor at the Denver Metro Office. Judy Mathews is our new Assistive Technology Specialist for the Colorado Springs office.

The Personal Adjustment Training Unit continues to provide training in the community and at the center if needed on a one-to-one basis. We continue to discuss and examine ways to provide comprehensive services to the people we serve including: remote training, in-person training when needed, and Zoom groups (Reflections, Enrichment Hour, Women’s Group, and a Braille Group).

This November and December, the Blind and Low Vision Services Unit at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will host *Creating Connections and Exploring Possibilities*, information sessions regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services available to students 15-21.

Dates for these information sessions are:

- Thursday November 5, 2020 4:00 p.m. -5:30 p.m.
- Saturday November 21, 2020 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday December 3, 2020 4:00 p.m. -5:30 p.m.
- Saturday December 12, 2020 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



Learn about the following:

- ♦ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- ♦ Pre-Employment Transition Services Provided by DVR
- ♦ When to Make a Referral to DVR?
- ♦ Youth Programs (Pre-ETS Services) vs. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- ♦ When to contact a counselor?
- ♦ What can DVR offer to you and your student?
- ♦ Upcoming Pre-Employment Transition Activities

Target Audiences: Colorado students (ages 15-21), families, teachers for students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility specialists, and other collaborators working with students who are blind and low vision.

To register to attend an information session, contact Michele Reed at 303-866-3512 or michele.reed@state.co.us. A link to the Zoom meeting will be provided when you register. When you register, please inform DVR if any special accommodations are needed to participate (Braille materials, interpreters, closed caption, etc.).

In January 2021, Blind and Low Vision Services will launch a weekly job seeker skills training for students 15-21 called *Putting Your Best Foot Forward*. Through discussions, group activities, and individual activities, students will learn the ins and outs of finding a job, including what employers are looking for in employees, how to present his or her skills well, and the best sources for information about jobs.

Discussion Item:

- Could these sessions be recorded for those who could not participate? DVR will look at this as a possibility. The model is very interactive with group thought and peer interaction, so the person watching later may not fully benefit. The first goal is to try the curriculum in its recommended format and then analyze how it might be offered with more flexibility. There may be a time for an in-person and a virtual group. At this time, it will be offered virtually. The benefit of the virtual mode is taking away the challenges of transportation of the participants.

Students participating in this program will complete such activities as developing a resume, filling out job applications, contacting employers, and participating in job interviews.

Discussion Item:

- How can we best support students and parents in understanding what DVR can provide? It is wonderful when DVR staff can be involved in the regional meetings to share updates and problem solve with TVIs. We want to be proactive with inviting them to these meetings. The sessions that Michele shared in this report are designed for the purpose of sharing just this type of information. It is important to invite parents and students to these meetings to learn more about DVR services. Want to focus on students when they are 15 and not a focus in their senior year of public school. We encourage all TVIs to be proactive with learning about DVR services and assisting with the connections with their age-appropriate students. It is important to understand the role of making the connection and then the parent's role of following-up with next steps. This may also be a good topic for BVI Office Hours! It may also be a topic for the parent section of the newsletter.

Colorado Center for The Blind Youth Programs (Martin Becerra-Miranda)

CCB/CSDB Mentoring Program: The Colorado Center for the Blind and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind are once again holding our mentoring program. It is virtual and will be taking place on a bi-weekly basis, on Wednesdays from 4:30 to 5:30. Some of the topics that we will be covering in the upcoming sessions include: (a) the upcoming holiday season and how to involve yourself in all the fun activities; (b) finding new and creative ways to continue developing cane travel skills, and; (c) celebrating braille during the month of January.

FAST Program (Fun Activities and Skills Training): During the month of September, we returned to our in-person FAST programming on Sunday, September 13. We had a great time working with the Arapahoe County Sheriffs Office's Mounted Unit to learn all about horses, how to groom them, walk with a miniature horse, and feed them. When we last met in September, we were still hoping to hold our FAST Halloween activity once again this year. Unfortunately, we did not move forward with this activity. In accordance with Tri-County Health Department's emergency public health order, which went into effect on Friday, October 16, we made the difficult decision to not hold our in-person FAST event, which would have undoubtedly exceeded the 10-person limit for gatherings. We will be relaunching our FAST Zoom monthly sessions on the third Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. starting Wednesday, November 18. The topic for the November session will focus on the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday and finding new and cool ways to be included in the cooking and everything else that makes up this great day.

National Federation of the Blind's STEM2U: Along with 14 other states and the NFB National Office, Colorado is participating in one-day virtual STEM workshops. We had six Colorado students participate in the October 17 workshop. Students in grades 3 – 12 are encouraged to register for the Saturday, November 14 workshop. The deadline to register is Friday, November 6. The program will take place via the Zoom meeting platform. The lessons that have been selected include Tangrams, Snap Cubes, and origami. The lessons will focus on tactile learning, spatial awareness, observing structures from different perspectives, and fine motor skills. Students who participate will receive a materials package before the workshop date.

National Federation of the Blind of Colorado: the NFB of Colorado held its 66th Annual State Convention from Thursday, October 29 to Saturday, October 31. Like everything else, the convention took place virtually and the participation was fantastic throughout the state. One seminar we want to highlight is the Colorado Parents of Blind Children (CO-POBC) seminar, which took place the afternoon of Thursday, October 29. The seminar was coordinated and hosted by Amira Lucas, who is heading up the revamping of the Parents of Blind Children organization here in Colorado. The seminar included tactile art activities to create your own storybook, remote learning round-table discussion with three parents of students with differing ages, a Staying Social and Safe during the Pandemic Panel, and a recreation for all ages Q & A. We are looking forward to continuing to work with Amira to grow the organization and connect students and families throughout Colorado. The overall take-away was to connect families with Parents of Blind Children.

For information on any of our Youth Programs, please contact Martin Becerra-Miranda by emailing mbecerra@cocenter.org or by calling (303) 778-1130 Extension 253.

Discussion Items:

- How are instructional options offered / supported to families? School districts use state and local health guidance to determine their service options. For example, there may be multiple options such as in-person, hybrid, remote, or virtual options. There may also be one option. If families have unique circumstances, they should talk with their school district personnel.
- Are there flyers developed for FAST or events such as the Annual Convention? This would help TVIs have an easy tool to share with students and parents. Martin will develop a flyer for FAST and share with TVIs. The Annual Convention was advertised through local means and was advertised in the KIT newsletter. We like the idea of flyers to help with easier dissemination.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

New websites:

- CSDB website: www.csdb.colorado.gov
- CIMC website: www.csdb.colorado.gov/cim

Currently, we have two CIMC pages; a "CIMC" page and a "CIMC Forms" page. The CIMC page gives you a brief overview of CIMC services and procedures by category. There is a "CIMC Forms" page link towards the bottom of the page where you will find CIMC order forms and guidance documents. All of the CIMC forms are on the Forms page.

Statewide Registration Database: in early October, every administrative unit should have received an encrypted email from cimcregistrations@csdb.org which contained their current statewide student registration database report and instructions for what to do to make edits to the report. Registration and exit forms were attached for your convenience. Due date to return these first-round edits is Friday, November 20, 2020. Students can be registered throughout the calendar year. Discussion: red codes on eye report date field indicate the encounter date of the last eye exam on file in the district is at least three years old, this may need a disclaimer, so people understand that the red is not an alert, but just how the system was set up (which cannot be changed). Jim is available to setup a district-specific meeting or come to a regional meeting to explain this paperwork. Students with 504 Plans can be registered on the statewide registration database and for the APH Quota Fund Count. This is a local decision on what is helpful for the TVIs.

Federal Quota Census: (Monday, January 4, 2021): the Student Registration System (SRS) was opened by APH on November 3rd. The CIMC will now begin entering your student data into this federal database. Directions for this year's count will be available on the CIMC website soon.

CIMC "First Friday" Meetings: Feedback from the first meetings of the year have been overwhelmingly positive. There is not an agenda – it is an open forum. Please bring your questions and join in some great professional sharing with your colleagues across the state and CIMC staff. This is a recurring meeting, held on the Zoom platform, on the "First Friday" of each month (except for January) with a morning session (9:00 - 10:00 a.m.) and an afternoon session (2:30-3:30 p.m.). Contact the CIMC staff if you need the Zoom link resent to you. Upcoming meeting dates:

November 6, 2020	December 4, 2020	January 8, 2021 (this is the "Second Friday")
February 5, 2021	March 5, 2021	April 2, 2021
May 7, 2021	June 4, 2021	

APH Updates:

- 56 videos from the 2020 APH Virtual Annual Meeting have been posted to YouTube. To access the YouTube playlist, just right click and choose Open Hyperlink: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETlyA4p_f3_GAM7IGSkLz **Be patient as it takes a moment to open.**
- The APH InSights Art Contest is now open. Link to the InSights Art website: <https://insights-art.org/enter-the-contest>. All the artwork is audio described. APH is currently accepting entries now through March 26, 2021. APH website enhancements deployed 11/3/2020: created a cookie policy page; and the weekly order review will now contain the Back Orders at the bottom of the list each week.
- A reminder: APH has a Downloadable Manuals page on their website: <https://sites.aph.org/manuals>
- New Service: APH HIVE. Here is the link: <https://aphhive.org/#/home>
The APH HIVE offers a variety of free online courses for vision professionals and educators to increase their ability to respond to the needs of students with visual impairments. This "one-stop" for professional development offers ACVREP continuing education units upon successful completion of a course. The course can also be taken by parents, students, and consumers to gain information related to students with visual impairments. Each course includes single or multiple videos that range in length from five minutes to several hours. The course catalog is divided into the following categories: (a) Assessment; (b) Early Childhood; (c) Core Curriculum; (d) Expanded Core Curriculum
- LEGO® Braille Brick Kits: All orders have been filled. We would love your feedback. Some useful links for you: LEGO® Braille Bricks webpage: <https://www.legobraillebricks.com> APH YouTube videos archived: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIAYkn-HLG8&list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETBrf17n6IKIxSihSU-gx>
LEGO Foundation: What we Mean by Learning Through Play
LEGO Foundation: LEGO Braille Bricks Play-based Teaching Method

LEGO Foundation: Learning with LEGO Braille Bricks – the Building Blocks of Braille Literacy
LEGO Foundation: Hands-On, Minds-On, Fun-On: Play Based Activities with the LEGO Braille Bricks
LEGO Braille Bricks Community. In this private Facebook Community, practitioners are coming from more than 20 countries. LEGO Braille Bricks introduces a fun and engaging way to help blind and visually impaired children develop tactile skills and learn the braille system. Supported by a strong pedagogical concept accessible online at www.legobraillebricks.com, this inclusive tool not only ensures braille proficiency, but also offers children the opportunity to develop a breadth of skills. Let us work together to build a strong community of educators, who share best practices, creative ideas, and playful experiences with LEGO Braille Bricks!

Six Bricks Community. The Six Bricks Community is a private Facebook group for teachers, caregivers and practitioners working with the Six Bricks concept. They invite you to share your experiences and to use the group for getting new inspiration or ideas. The LEGO Foundation aims to build a future where learning through play empowers children to become creative, engaged, life-long learners. Six Bricks is one of the tools used to demonstrate the power of learning through play.

CSDB – School for The Blind (Jamie Lugo)

White Cane Day was celebrated on October 15th. Secondary students made signs to bring awareness around our CSDB campus block. Younger students created unique cane identifiers. A virtual celebration was held via zoom with the national anthem, an inspirational speech from a CSDB alumni, an original poem and speech from CSDB students, and a fun rendition from our Bulldog Band. CSDB hosted fall Parent-Teacher conferences. This school year conferences were done online during the week of October 26th, 2020. Our Student Body Government organized a spirit week with daily themes to boost morale. The elementary students dressed up in Halloween costumes for their annual trick or treating parade around the CSDB campus. Current 10th - 12th grade students were given the opportunity to make up their PSAT and SAT exams that were cancelled in the spring. Finally, some CSDB students and families attended the National Federation for the Blind of Colorado Conference virtually October 28th-October 31st. Our Braille Challenge is tentatively scheduled as an in-person competition on January 28th.

CSDB Outreach Services (Jayme Cusimano)

CSDB Outreach continues to provide a combination of in-person and remote services, implementing all safety precautions when in-person. The decision to continue in-person or go fully remote is re-evaluated on an on-going basis taking into consideration all variables, including COVID-19 numbers within the state, to keep staff and student safety the number one priority.

The International Orientation and Mobility Online Symposium (IOMOS) planning update from Sara Noel: the conference schedule is set and our own Tanni Anthony will be a presenter this year. Also, everyone should have received an email letting them know that they can refer friends to join the symposium; the person with the most referrals will win a free pass to the conference! There are other prizes as well. Anyone who didn't receive an email or who hasn't been invited to join the Ambassador Program for IOMOS should reach out to another O&M Specialist in the state (to be referred) or contact me directly at snoel@csdb.org or by text/phone call at (719) 822-4112.



The Braille Challenge is being planned for this school year. There are two Colorado contests:

- A statewide contest (hosted by CSDB Outreach)
- A CSDB - School for the Blind contest

Both will be offered virtually.

CSDB is working now to plan these events. Be watching for more information. General details are as follow:

Younger Students:	Older Students:
Apprentice (grades 1-2)	Sophomore (grades 5-6)
Freshman (grades 3-4)	Junior Varsity (grades 7-9)
Contest Categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Comprehension 2. Proof Reading 3. Spelling Do not need an electronic device for this age group.	Varsity (grades 10-12)
	Contest Categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Comprehension 2. Proof Reading 3. Charts & Graphs 4. Speed & Accuracy* <p>*Requires independent use of an APH BookPort+, Humanware Victor Readers Stream; or a Victor Reader Trek device (to play the SD cards which contain the tests for the Speed & Accuracy categories)</p>

Discussion Item:

- Are TVIs/O&M Specialists in the state interested in offering their students the opportunity to attend virtual club meetings to connect with other students who are blind/visually impaired? There is a thought to do this in the evening with separation of students based on age brackets. There is a question about how to address ability levels. This is a good area for further discussion as an inclusive set-up may be doable as students learn about each other and can offer supports for everyone to be involved. Preliminary discussions considered the option of a CSDB dormitory staff member facilitating the discussions and/or a professional from across the state volunteering to host and facilitate a virtual meeting. There is definite interest for a state opportunity, as this has been a regional discussion. The social-emotional component of our current pandemic situation is weighing heavily on kids. There are many topics and activities that could be explored to help build student-to-student connections. It may also be a launch-pad for key topics such as offering DVR or role model guest speakers. Julie H and Lori willing to be a representative at the next CSDB discussions.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: we are in the third year of our five-year grant cycle. The project’s mission is free technical assistance to parents and service providers of children and youth, ages birth through 21, who are deaf-blind or who have both a vision and a hearing loss. The project has a lending library and a website with a multitude of electronic resources that are available to families and educational personnel.

Project Goals: Goal One: to collaborate with State, Local Education, Agencies, and Local Agencies to implement a statewide system to identify Colorado children and youth, 0-21 years of age, who are deaf-blind, and to heighten awareness of deaf-blindness. Goal Two: to ensure family members of children who are deaf-blind have the training and information needed to maintain and improve productive partnerships with service providers and contribute to the academic and functioning outcomes of their children. Goal Three: to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills of EIS providers, general / special educators, and related service providers regarding evidence-based practices that will promote academic achievement and improve results for children and youth with deaf-blindness.

Project Staff: Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are Co-Directors on the grant project. Wendy Stoltman and Shelley Moats are our Technical Assistance (TA) Specialist for the project. Both provide onsite consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. Shannon Cannizzaro is our Family Specialist. We are pleased to share that the project has hired Jessica Meisel as our intervener specialist and are working on a contract for a second Family Specialist.

To request FREE technical assistance, please contact Gina Herrera at (303) 866-6681 or Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us

Annual Deaf-Blind Count: The Child Count Data for December 1, 2019 was tallied for submission to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness. Thank you to all who submitted their updated census forms. You are most appreciated! Here are key details:

CO Deaf-Blind Child Count Data as of December 1, 2019

Birth-21 years old: 157 Girls: 71 Boys: 86
Birth-2 years old: 17 3-15 years old: 113 16-21 years old: 27

Top 3 Most Common Heredity/ Chromosomal Syndromes in CO:

Down syndrome CHARGE syndrome Usher syndrome (all 3 types combined)

Please note that a child can be registered at any time in the school year. If you work with a learner with both vision and hearing loss, please be sure to work with Tanni to register the child. All learners identified as having combined vision and hearing loss are eligible for free technical assistance. This can be child-specific consultation and customized staff training. Get ready, the forms for the December 1, 2020 Child Count will be distributed in late October.

Project Webpage: the CDE DeafBlind webpage URL is <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.as>

Project Trainings: We have four contractors ready to go for the 2020-21 Deaf-Blind Webinar Series. For more information, please be in touch with Tanni.

BVI State Funded Activities: The CDE has a strong commitment to services and supports to our students and the staff who serve them. We are pleased to offer training and TA supports to the field serving children who are blind/visually impaired.

BVI Office Hours: Tanni is offering CDE BVI Office Hours every other Wednesday from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. The purpose is to have a dedicated time for people to share how it is going in this time of remote instruction. There will also be sessions with colleagues on key topics. Attendance is optional. All participants must register ahead of each BVI Office Hours. The sessions are open to sharing ideas of what is working and problem-solving challenge areas. So far this fall, the BVI Office Hours have focused on: Self Care and Parent Engagement Strategies, Considerations for the Cognitive Assessment of Children with BVI, the CIMC, the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics and low vision needs of our students, and the role and training needs of interveners. There has been discussion about finding a better time for more people to attend. Right now, it is a static day and time, and we know that it works for some and not others. Tanni will extend the BVI Office Hours for January – May 2021. The hours will change to a 3:00 – 4:00 time slot.

Google Docs: Thanks to the help of Karin Hensel, Elsa D'Angelo, Nancy Cozart, Julie Hutchinson, and Jamie Lugo, there is one dedicated site of BVI-related resources for remote and home instruction / kid activities / etc. They can be found

at: [Remote Learning Resources for Students with B/V](#). Tanni is also using the CDE BVI webpage as a place for these resources for the broader field. They can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision>

Annual CDE O&M Seminar: It is time to plan for a virtual training. What are ideas for topics / speakers / time schedule? Tanni will check with last year's presenters that were cancelled and work to schedule it virtually.

CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: We are on hold for in-person Low Vision Evaluation clinics for this school year. It is possible that we can schedule in the Spring of 2021, so stay tuned.

Recruitment and Retention: We have one TVI / O&M Specialist opening: 1 FTE in Academy 20. School District. The JeffCo position has recently been filled with Anahit LaBarre. There may also be a need for contract work up north. CDE has an active job posting for Colorado TVI / COMS jobs with AERBVI and specific to COMS jobs with ACVREP.

Listservs: The CDE ESSU maintains three separate listservs specific to personnel working in BVI programs in Colorado school districts. One is specific to Colorado TVIs and COMSs. The second one is specific to Colorado braillists. The third is specific to Colorado TVIs and braillists. It is important to remind all users of these listservs that personally identifiable information (PII) on students and parents should never be posted in any listserv messages. If anyone has questions about the listservs, please be in touch with Tanni.

Parent Database: We currently have about 226 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,200 families across the state. The database is used to mail out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter and, on rare occasion, other mailings. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate names and addresses of families of children with visual impairment, including blindness who are currently enrolled in our Colorado early intervention or public-school programs. As children graduate or families move out of state, we need to ensure that we remove those families. As new families come into the system, please help Tanni to be proactive with getting families registered on the database. This is a voluntary process – so families need to complete and sign their registration forms.

Braille Competency: We are doing so well with addressing braille competency across Colorado! Tanni is working with veteran and new TVIs to demonstrate initial braille competency. All TVIs who are new to the field are expected to demonstrate braille competency in their first year of employment in this role. If a TVI extends this date, the administrative unit of employment is at risk for a citation of noncompliance. A Practice Test is posted on the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness website. It includes practice multiple choice items and braille samples.

BVI Coach/Mentor Project: We have two amazing veteran TVIs/O&M Specialists who can provide free technical assistance to school-based TVIs/Orientation and Mobility Specialists. They are Shelley Moats and Wendy Stoltman. We have had a few requests yet this school year. To request a coach / mentor, contact Tanni at (303) 866-6681 or anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

CDE BVI Budget for 2020-21

The following activities have been approved for the new school year ahead!

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support | ✓ BVI Coach / Mentor Project |
| ✓ CIMC (Interagency Agreement with CSDB) | ✓ CDE O&M Seminar |
| ✓ Vision Coalition | ✓ UEB Math Training – on hold until face to face |
| ✓ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics | ✓ <i>Keeping in Touch</i> Newsletter |

For the 2021-22 school year, are there topics for a face-to-face or virtual state BVI Conference? Some we know are better options for face-to-face meetings. Possibilities might include Nemeth Math, Barraga Visual Efficiency Kit, reading from a BVI perspective, different assessments tools in general (e.g., cognitive assessments, ECC) – this could actually be a webinar series that focus on different tools across different assessment domains.

READ Act Requirement for the 45 Hours of Science of Reading

Information about the READ Act and the required 45 hours of training in the Science of Reading was also detailed in the August – September Keeping in Touch newsletter. This is a requirement begins this school year.

About the Training Requirements. Colorado school districts are required to ensure all kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers complete evidence-based training in teaching reading by the 2021-22 school year, as a result of changes to the [Colorado READ Act in SB 19-199](#). In subsequent years, districts will need to ensure that teachers new to teaching K – 3rd grade also meet this requirement. To meet this training requirement, State Board of Education rules require that the evidence-based training in teaching reading must:

- Consist of a minimum of 45 hours;
- Address the content of the educator preparation literacy standards referenced in the state board’s Rules for the Administration of Educator License Endorsements, 1 CCR 301-10, section 4.02(5) through 4.02(12 (effective May 30, 2019); and
- Include an end of course assessment that teachers can provide evidence of passing.

State law and State Board of Education rules allow options for teachers to meet the training requirement. CDE will provide information for teachers to submit documentation that one of these training options met the hour, content and assessment requirements. At this time, CDE anticipates that the documentation will be a part of a teachers’ license

Training Requirement Options

- Teachers need to only complete one of these options to meet the training requirement.
- Teachers need to meet this training requirement only once. The rules for the Colorado READ Act define a kindergarten through 3rd grade teacher as a "professional responsible for the literacy instruction of the student(s) and may include the main instructor for a class, an instructional coach, reading interventionist, special education teacher, Title I teacher or other personnel who are identified as effective in the teaching of reading.

Next Steps: Please take the time to be in the know of this requirement and be proactive with meeting with your special education director / building principals about the expectation (or not) to fulfill this responsibility

People can learn more about this requirement and the seven options to meet this requirement at, <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/teacher-training>

One option is specific to a free online asynchronous course that has these modules: Information about “Building a Strong Foundation: Developing Early Literacy Skills” by the Public Consulting Group, Inc. that has the following modules.

- Module 1: Introduction to the Science of Reading (PDF)
- Module 2: Oral Language and Phonology (PDF)
- Module 3: Phonics and Word Study (PDF)
- Module 4: Creating Fluent Readers (PDF)
- Module 5: Developing Vocabulary (PDF)
- Module 6: Increasing Reading Comprehension (PDF)

As the Training Pertains to Licensure / READ Act Funds

- The 45 hours of READ Act training on the Science of Reading is not tied to current licensure status or renewal status.
- This requirement does, however impact a district’s READ Act dollars as it is determined that all K-3 teachers have met this requirement.
- Districts / building principals will determine who will need to complete this requirement. CDE will evaluate for READ Act dollars.

- The statute is clear that any K-3 teacher that supports literacy instruction will need to complete this requirement.

For those persons who have a CDE general / special education (TVI) teaching license and are NOT working in a Colorado school district, you will not need to meet this requirement unless you reenter the public school work force and are involved in K-3 grades. If you are in doubt of your requirement, talk with your school district supervisor / director.

The Science of Reading is important for all teachers to understand and practice. The hope of the Vision Coalition is that TVIs will meet this requirement this year and then we will focus on reading practices unique to learners who are blind/visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities in the 2021-22 school year. This focus of BVI-specific learning will be nested within a solid understanding of the science of reading, which is critical for all learners. Questions? Reach out to Tanni and she will do her best to get answers.

0-5 Vision Screening for School Personnel

Vision screening is designed to determine whether there is a need for a child to receive further evaluation of his or her vision status. Further evaluation is completed by an eye care professional and will determine a need for possible medical treatment to mitigate a correctable vision concern and/or to diagnose a permanent vision loss condition. The latter finding may inform eligibility for early intervention or special education services and supports.

The *Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire for Children Ages Birth through Five Years* was developed as an interim tool during the COVID-19 pandemic when in-person vision screenings could not occur. The questionnaire is still in place even with some administrative units offering hybrid virtual / in-person instruction. Until Colorado special education administrative units (AU) resume regular in-person instruction without physical distancing requirements, it may not be possible to fully complete the spectrum of vision screening activities.

The goal of the questionnaire is to provide the vision screening team with a cursory tool to gather information from caregivers who know their child best. It provides information to guide a decision as to whether there are probable vision concerns that warrant an in-person vision screening when such a process is available from their AU or school district. During the COVID-19 pandemic period, the tool can also be used to determine a need for a referral to an eye care professional. Like other vision screening data collection measures, the questionnaire must not be used as a diagnostic tool. This tool will be embedded in the revised 0-5 Vision Screening Guidelines after a review process to determine what fields may need to be edited.

Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) Resources for CDE BVI Website

Tanni invited members to share information to add Expanded Core Curriculum Resources to the CDE BVI website. Those suggested included:

- Phil Hatlen's ECC article (Lori) – 2005 – the Gift of Time
- CSDB Checklist
- Links to resources – Paths to Literacy on the ECC (pretty document of nine areas)

College and Career Ready

What is not working / what are challenges? (this is not the blame game, but a realistic list of possible barriers)

- Technology skills may not be well developed for the real world / college needs
- O&M Skills may not be well developed for the real world
- Expectations for realistic career planning may not occur during the child's public-school experience
- Problem solving skills for independence are not always well developed
- Teaching, expecting, and requiring self-initiation
- Expanded Core Curriculum exposure, teaching, and embedded / explicit instruction

- Time needed to truly address the ECC needs within the requirements of the general education curriculum
- Parent education for ECC – expectations of independence and personal responsibilities, understanding what can be embedded in home and community life
- Training for special education directors / general education staff on the ECC and opportunities for embedding ECC activities throughout the school day
- DVR Process – exposing students to DVR Services to prepare for college next steps (set up with another agency after graduation from high school)
- Access to School to Work Alliance Program – does everyone have this information?
- Students with additional challenges / disabilities – how best to prepare and support them and advanced planning for signing up for post-school services (e.g., waivers, Developmental Disabilities)
- Variability on TVI personnel prep training on the ECC – new teachers coming into the field may have varied training per their training program focus
- Inservice training has not been steady on the ECC from a CDE perspective
- Summer programs may not be well attended – need to look for root cause of why kids are not attending
- Community work experiences – work to get business / communities more involved with our students

What is working? / Where Can we Build?

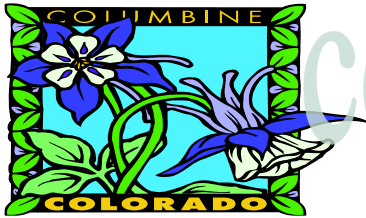
- FAST Program / CCB Youth Opportunities tied to ECC experiences
- CSDB ECC Parent Sessions
- CDE State IEP Form has ECC drop-down menu
- Role models – CCB and CSDB
- ECC – starting early with ASV, Anchor Center, and CSDB EI BVI Program
- ECC class offered for high school credit (O&M for a credit for a physical education requirement)
- ECC Virtual Training online
- Low Vision Evaluation Clinics – getting devices to kids
- DVR Trainings and Summer Opportunities
- SWAP paid work experiences
- CSDB Transition Self Competency Checklist
- CSDB Career Competency Checklist
- CATIS trained technology specialists
- Auditory processing time to prepare for college-level materials
- AFB's ECC book mailed out to all of the TVIs / school districts

Suggestions

- ECC training opportunities within state (detailing what is available online and also pursuing dedicated training)
- Beef up the CDE website with ECC resources
- Tools for parents to assist with developing IEPs
- Disseminate CSDB Transition Self Competency Checklist and CSDB Career Competency Checklist
- Beef up summer programs with a strong focus on technology, etc.
- DVR Partnerships – Paid Work experiences
- Utilize the CDE BVI Office Hours – capitalizing on a particular skill set that we have in our state
- Share the CSDB checklists specific to transition
- Tanni will reach out to Perkins – resources – to see what they did with the Co-Lab
- ECC focus continuum
- Parent focused trainings – if we do ECC, be sure we are proactive with parent involvement

Next Meeting Dates for School Year 2020-21

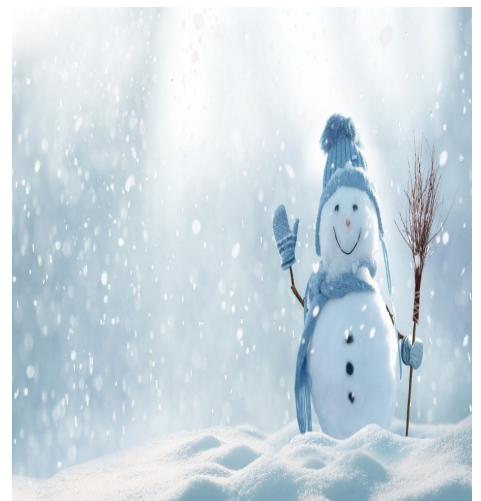
- February 18 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Agenda items: ECC on the CDE BVI Website; Summer Plan with options for kids; Training Plan for SY 2021-22



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STAFF CHANGES IN THE FIELD

- ◆ We thank **Tina Martin** for her many contributions to Colorado’s children with blindness/visual impairments and their families. She has retired from her most recent work with A Shared Vision after retiring from her work as a TVI and O&M Specialist in Poudre School District. Thank you, Tina, and all the best with new adventures ahead!
- ◆ We say, “thanks and all the best” to **Linda Campbell**, who has retired from many years of Colorado service as a teacher of students with visual impairments in El Paso School District in Colorado Springs. We wish her the best in her new residence in Florida! Many thanks to **Karen Woods** who has returned to part-time teaching to assist **Morgan Turner** in El Paso 11 School District.
- ◆ We say farewell to **Julie Hutchinson**, who is leaving midyear to take a TVI / O&M Specialist position in Oregon. We will miss Julie and thank her for her time with us in St. Vrain School District and on the Vision Coalition. **Liz Weider** will increase her role with St. Vrain to a full FTE and the district now has a .5 vacancy. Thank you, Liz!!
- ◆ We welcome **Anahit LaBarre** as a new TVI in Jefferson County School District and thank her this wonderful bio: “I am originally from Armenia. I grew up with very low vision but, thanks to strong family support, I was able to receive great education. While growing up, my family made sure I was challenged to the maximum and that I got opportunities to participate in all the activities with my friends. We went on family vacations. I took part in school-based activities. But the academic work took a lot of effort. There were no accommodations whatsoever for blind or low vision students. My sister was my reader all throughout grade and graduate school. Thankfully, I enjoyed schoolwork tremendously. I loved reading, chemistry and math. As the years went by, I realized that culturally, I was not in a position to succeed in my country. Despite my family’s unwavering support, I did not feel like the society had high expectations of people with disabilities. The opportunities were not there and I wanted to live my life independently and not have to be a burden to my family. After some research, much networking and a lot of perseverance, I found support to attend the Colorado Center for the Blind and traveled to the United States where I only knew one family. I will forever be grateful to the National Federation of the Blind and the Colorado Center for the Blind for their belief in me as a blind individual. I learned blindness skills, while realizing that no dream was too big, including having a family of my own. I met a wonderful young man and we created a beautiful family. We are now parents to two high-schoolers. I spent a few years raising the kids and took some time off work. Once the kids were of grade-school age, I started working at the Colorado Center for the Blind. I absolutely loved my job there. Ten years were spent working with older adults, teaching some technology, assisting with support groups, organizing social events, fundraisers etc. It was so rewarding to be a part of the family at the center and to give back to the community. As the time went by, I was searching for what I wanted to do for many years to come and where I could make the biggest difference. After much soul searching, I decided to pursue a degree in Special Education with the emphases in Visual Impairment. A full time job, a family and graduate school for two years made my days filled to the maximum. A lot of tea, coffee and good chocolate somehow make it all work. Not to mention the incredible support I received from my family and the Colorado Center for the Blind. Here I am, just wrapping up my first month as a TVI with the Jeffco Public Schools. I cannot possibly tell you what it means to me to be able to support kids in schools. I was never given the tools and accommodations, but I had high expectations to meet and the love and believe in me from my family. It is an honor to be in this position right now. I am thankful for the opportunity and hope to make a difference in my students’ lives.”

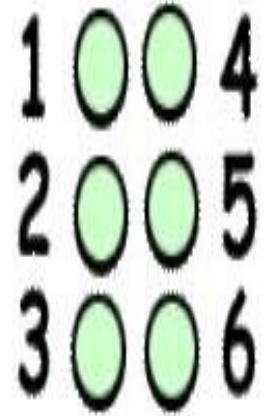




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◆ Braille News!

- ◆ Hats off to the following people who have completed braille renewal modules: **Julie Hutchinson, Dana McMullen, and Erin Noe**. Also many thanks to proctors **Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard** and **Sarah Sonnier** for both proctoring and mentoring time. Everyone's time and commitment is most appreciated during this wild time of the pandemic.
- ◆ Belated congratulations to **Lori Mattick** for earning her CDE Renewal Braille Competency Certificate.
- ◆ Thanks to many of you who have been patiently waiting for your CDE Braille Competency Certificates. It has been a challenge to get everything mailed out with limited CDE office time. If you are expecting any certificates from Tanni, please do not hesitate to be in touch to clarify what still may need to be mailed out to you!



BVI Office Hours Super Stars!

- ◆ Many thanks to the wonderful people who have contributed to the September—December BVI Office Hours. We thank **Bill Brown** for his session on Self Care and Parent Engagement; **Jim Olson** on APH Updates; **Cara Johnson** on Considerations of Cognitive Testing for Students with BVI; **Debbie Haberkorn, Jim Olson, Wendy Stoltman** and **Dr. Tom Theune** for their session on low vision information; **Gina Herrera** on the topic of interveners; and **Jim Olson** and **Dr. Tom Theune** on the importance of obtaining eye reports and tips for interpreting their content for students. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

A new slate of BVI Office Hours will be offered from January—May 2021. The day will still be the same (Wednesday), but we have changed the time from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Check out the Calendar of Events for the scheduled dates and the required registration link.

In Memoriam and with Gratitude

We recently lost two very special people in our community of personnel serving learners who are blind/visually impaired.

We are sad to share that **Cathy McCaskill Kearny** passed away on October 2, 2020 in Colorado Springs. Many of us remember Cathy as a long time Orientation and Mobility Specialist at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. She retired several years ago, but came back on a few occasions to support vacancies. We send our condolences to her family and will remember her as an important contributor to so many children's lives.

We also say farewell to **Kathy Lynn Bristol** who died November 2, 2020 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Kathy retired last spring after twelve years as an administrative assistant for the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. We offer our condolences to her husband Jim Bristol, also an employee with CSDB, their family.

Our condolences especially to the staff of CSDB. Our thoughts are with you all.





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- The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (Colorado Deaf-Blind) Project is so pleased to announce the addition of a second Family Specialist. Providing support, training, and networking opportunities to families of Colorado children with deaf-blindness is paramount to the project.

Here is information about our new Family Specialist, **Cindy Colwell!**

“My name is Cindy Colwell. I am very excited to join the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project as one of the Family Specialists. I have had many roles over the last several years. These roles have centered around supporting families and community members who work with and care for children and adults with different abilities. Over the past 13 years I have served on several community advisory boards to give input and suggestions from a parent’s view of navigating the sometimes complex world of parenting a child with a disability. I have worked in the area around improving communication between home, school and supporting agencies in creating plans and supports for children to have access and support for meaningful participation in their school and community. I enjoy sharing what I have learned along my own parenting journey with other families.

I live in Colorado Springs with my two sons Wyatt and Evan. They are seniors this year. My daughter Gabby lives close by with her husband and son Dimitri who is 9 months old. My son Wyatt introduced me to the disability world, with all the celebrations and challenges, when he was born. I knew Wyatt was going to have some obstacles from the beginning. Wyatt was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, cortical visual impairment, and a seizure disorder within his first year. I have met so many wonderful people along this journey. I look forward to sharing my knowledge, resources and experience while working with more wonderful families and the people who support them.”



Happy 4th Birthday to A Shared Vision!

ASV recently celebrated their 4th year of providing home-based vision services for Colorado's youngest children with blindness/ visual impairment!

MAIL TO:

25-43E-3401

Katy Anthes
Commissioner of Education



COLORADO
Department of Education

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