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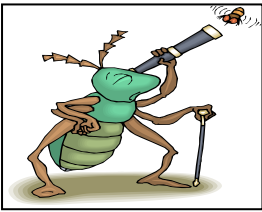
KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness
November—December 2023

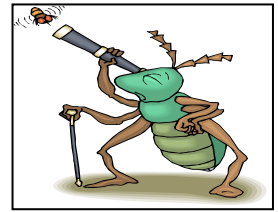


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LOW VISION NEWS



2023-2024 Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Schedule

Clinic	Clinic Date	Due Date for Paperwork	Site Coordinator
Metro LVE Clinic	February 7-9, 2024	Tuesday, January 23, 2024	Roberta Curtis

Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

By Roberta Curtis

The *Northern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic* was held November 9th and 10th at Enight Skills Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. Six students from five administrative units (Boulder County District RE1-J, Boulder County District RE-2, Centennial BOCES, Larimer County District R-1, and Larimer County District R2J) received evaluations. Eight parents and five TVIs attended the evaluation with their students. The Clinic team would like to thank the Enight Skills Center for hosting the event, Liz Wieder, Samantha Thuis, Chris Homes, Hanna Waldman, and Vicki Chinski for bringing students. Thank you also to Liz Wieder for coordinating the clinic this year. We appreciate your amazing organizational skills!

Editors' Note: We also want to thank our amazing low vision team of Dr. Kara Hanson, Karin Hensel, and Roberta Curtis. This was their second clinic of the school year and they are doing an amazing job with updating forms, reports, and our low vision inventory. Bravo!

What Does Low Vision Look Like?

Check out this video from Perkins School for the Blind in a visual story about how low vision is unique to each person with low vision. This might be a good resource to share with a teacher of student with low vision:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNmXEJ6EwJU>

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

Project Purpose and Staff: The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the Colorado Deaf-Blind Grant) is in the final year of its federally-funded five-year grant cycle. The purpose of the project, awarded to every state and US territories is to identify children and youth with deaf-blindness and provide free technical assistance (TA) to the identified children, their families, and service providers. We started the current grant award on October 15, 2018, and it will be completed on October 14, 2023. The project has been housed within the Colorado Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services Unit for over 30 years. The team worked tirelessly to prepare a new grant proposal that was submitted several days ahead of the March 13th deadline. The grant has been awarded for another five years and our review ratings were 98 out of 100! So we are off and running again as of October 1, 2023!



Key project activities are to maintain an annual Child Count process, host professional learning events, and provide tiered and customized technical assistance. The current project has three broad goals: (1) timely identification, (2) family networking, training, and TA support, and (3) professional training and TA support, and 4) intervener recruitment and training / support.

The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force. We have four CDE employees (**Tanni Anthony, Gina Herrera, Roberta Curtis, and Jessica Meisel**) and our contracted Family Engagement Specialist (**Cindy Colwell**) on board with the project. We thank our long time Deaf-Blind TA Specialist **Wendy Stoltman** for all of her work over the years. Wendy is retiring from this role and we thank her for being the VERY BEST! We are so grateful for all her contributions to kids, families, and service providers over the years—truly a career with a long lasting legacy.

For training and support documents and resources, please check out our website at:

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db>



Child Find Count of Colorado Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness: As you identify new children with deaf-blindness, please reach out to Tanni Anthony (anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or Gina Herrera (herrera_g@cde.state.co.us) to complete the Child Count Form at any time of the calendar year. The paperwork for the December 1, 2023 has just been disseminated to administrative unit contacts with a return date of March 15 (or sooner), 2024! If you did not receive this paperwork and believe you are the contact for your agency or administrative unit, please reach out to Roberta Curtis at curtis_r@cde.state.co.us Thanks for all you do to ensure our learners with deaf-blindness are identified and supported.

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project Offers Intervener Training

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the CO Deaf-Blind Project) offers intervener training and mentoring to provide support throughout the intervener certification process. Our next cohort begins in January 2024, and a second cohort will begin August 2024. Please be proactive with identifying personnel who will thrive in this important role!



This program provides a wonderful opportunity for individuals who would like to receive intervener training, and to obtain it free of charge if they are working with a student who is registered on the Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count. The program is designed to provide the background knowledge needed for working with students who are deafblind and leads to National Intervener Certification. For more information, please contact Jessica Meisel at Meisel_j@cde.co.state.us

Free Technical Assistance for Learners with Deaf-Blindness

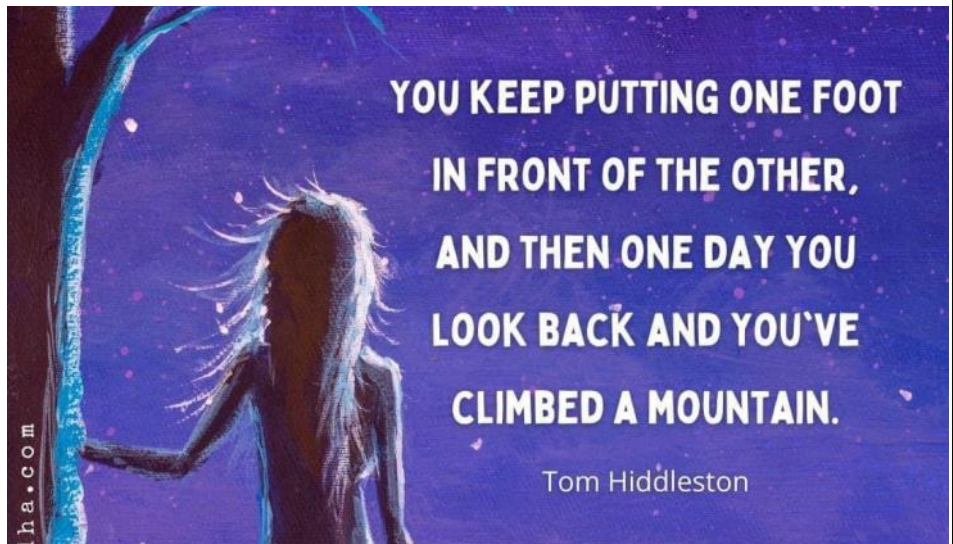
Technical assistance is the term that field uses to mean “support” or “information” for individuals providing support to children and youth (ages 0-21) with deafblindness. This might be families of children and youth who are deaf-blind, school personnel, and agencies providing services to such children and youth.

Technical assistance may also include:

- personalized on-site consultation with family members / early intervention agency staff / school staff
- in-service training customized to the team’s needs
- workshops sponsored by the project across the state
- family support service, such as Parent Retreats, coffee hours, family outings etc.

We are here to support you! **To request a school or home visit**, complete the Technical Assistance Request Form located [here: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrqst](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrqst)

Return the form by fax to 303-866-3808 or email attachment to Gina Herrera at Herrera_G@cde.state.co.us. You can also call Gina at 303-253-0451. Or fill out our new Google Form for Technical Assistance located at <https://forms.gle/FAWsSVo2itikrtLR6>



Professional Development Series for Educators & Related Service Providers

Concentration in Deafblindness & High Intensity Support Needs

Join us this Spring for **Communication Strategies** and **Life Planning for Success**. Both courses are aligned with Council for Exceptional Children Competencies.

01

Fall

An Introduction to Deafblindness

02

Spring

Deafblindness: Communication Strategies

03

Fall

Deafblindness: Assessment & Instructional Planning

04

Spring

Life Planning for Success: DeafBlind Strategies

Register [here](#). Space is limited. Deadline December 31.

Each course includes:

- 14-week semester (January - April)
- Approximately 3 hours of online work per week (access to high speed internet required)
- Synchronous online meetings throughout the semester
- Course must meet 12 participants minimum in order to be held

Cost: \$450 per 3-credit course

Credit Options:

- Continuing Education Hours
- Graduate Credit (additional \$40.00 per credit payable to USD)
- RID CEU's for Interpreters

SCAN ME



Center for Disabilities



The contents of this training were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education #H326T230039. However, contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

For Questions Contact:

USD Center for Disabilities

1-800-658-3080

www.usd.edu/cd

communityeducation@usd.edu

Course Descriptions

Course 1:

An Introduction to Deafblindness

Instructor: Brandy Sebera

This first course will provide foundational knowledge of deafblindness and the impact of hearing and vision loss on learning and communication, as well as key evidence-based instructional strategies for supporting those with deafblindness. This course includes content from the following NCDB Open Hands, Open Access Modules: Overview of Deafblindness, The Sensory System, the Brain and Learning, Building Trusted Relationships, Touch for Connection and Learning, Maximizing Vision and Hearing, The Role of the Intervener and Intervener Strategies.

Course 2:

Deafblindness: Communication Strategies

Instructor: Brandy Sebera

The key principle of this course is that all students communicate. This course includes content from the following NCDB Open Hands, Open Access Modules: Touch for Connection and Communication, Understanding Communication Principles, Emergent Communication, Progressing from Non-symbolic to Symbolic Communication & Complex Language, Introduction to Sign Language & Braille, Concept Development and Responsive Environments and Calendars. Here you will learn about the importance of touch in communicating with individuals with deafblindness and how to progress from non-symbolic to symbolic communication.

Course 3:

Deafblindness: Assessment and Instructional Planning

Instructor: Julie Maier

The course includes an overview of assessment strategies, assessment instruments, and the development of specific and measurable IEP goals based on authentic assessment data. In addition, the course includes content from the following NCDB Open Hands, Open Access Modules: Availability for Learning, Routines for Participation and Learning, Behavior and Environmental Supports, and Introduction to Orientation and Mobility.

Course 4:

Life Planning for Success: DeafBlind Strategies

Instructor: Maurice Belote

The course provides an overview of curricular options and instructional strategies to promote student success in school and beyond, and to ensure that all students successfully transition from school to adulthood. The course includes content from the following NCDB Open Hands, Open Access Modules: Transition to Adulthood and Community Living, Self-Determination, Social Skills and Peer Relationships, Sexuality, and Collaborative Teaming and Family Partnerships. The course focuses on fully integrating the module content above to prepare students who are deafblind to be actively engaged in communities of their choice.

While these courses are not required to be completed sequentially, it will be beneficial to have foundational knowledge in the content areas included in course 1 and 2 prior to enrolling in course 3. Courses will be held on a rotating basis from semester to semester.

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News



NCDB Important Resources—Be in the Know!

Fact Sheet in Spanish

The National Center on Deaf-Blind (NCDB) popular factsheet, "[An Overview of Deafblindness](#)," is now available in Spanish. Like the English version, it covers what deafblindness is, how many children are affected, and how children who are deafblind learn and communicate.

Please share this important resource with Spanish-speaking families and educators in your state.

[¡Ahora en español!](#)

Deaf-Blindness in the IEP

There is a new "Family Key Topic" on our website. [Including Deafblindness in the IEP](#) provides information families share with educators and administrators, about practices for identifying, assessing, and educating children who are deafblind. Please share this important resource with your families with a child who is deaf-blind.

IEP Team Discussion Guide on Intervener Services – Redesigned

[Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide](#) has been refreshed and updated to make it easier to read and use. The content remains the same except for minor wording changes.

The purpose of the guide is to help teams make informed decisions by understanding how a student's deafblindness affects their access to information, communication, social relationships, and conceptual learning.

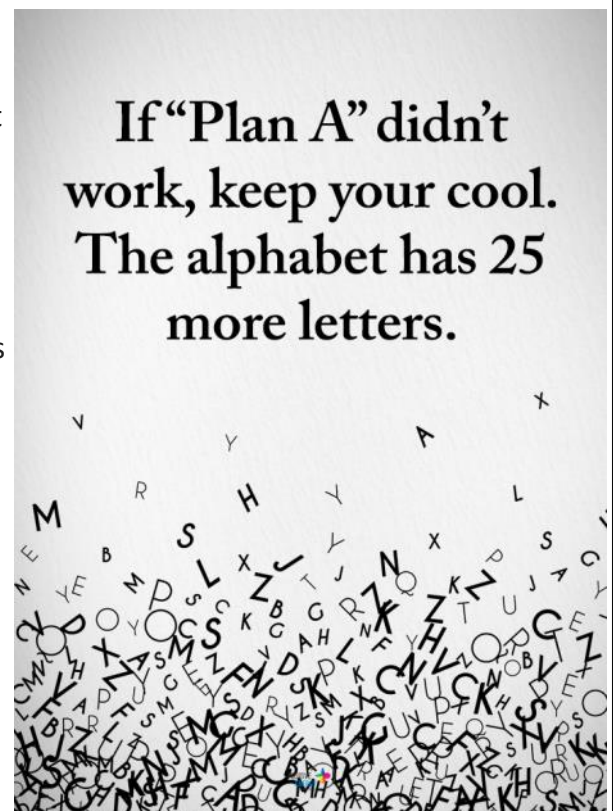
Intervener Definition – Now Available in Spanish

[Intervener Services and Interveners in Educational Settings: Definition](#) is now available in Spanish. This two-page document discusses the intervener's primary roles, how they participate as a member of a student's educational team, and essential components of intervener training.

OHOA-CEC Competencies Alignment Document - Updated

The Council for Exceptional Children's intervener competencies were updated in 2022, with the title "Initial Specialty Set: Deafblind Intervener."

A new NCDB document, [Alignment of OHOA Modules with Council for Exceptional Children 2022 Intervener Competencies](#), lists which competencies are addressed in each of the 27 OHOA modules. Thanks to the state deafblind project personnel and university faculty who helped develop the document.



**Department of Education
Immaculata University**

**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH IN DEAF-BLINDNESS AND VIRTUAL LEARNING**

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study entitled
**COVID-19 and Deaf-Blindness: Lessons Learned by Caregivers During
Virtual Learning**

To participate you must have been a primary caregiver of a school-age child with deaf-blindness during virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to: **Complete a 15–20-minute on-line survey and consider participating in a virtual interview with the primary researcher at a mutually convenient time.**

To participate in the survey, please scan the QR code below:



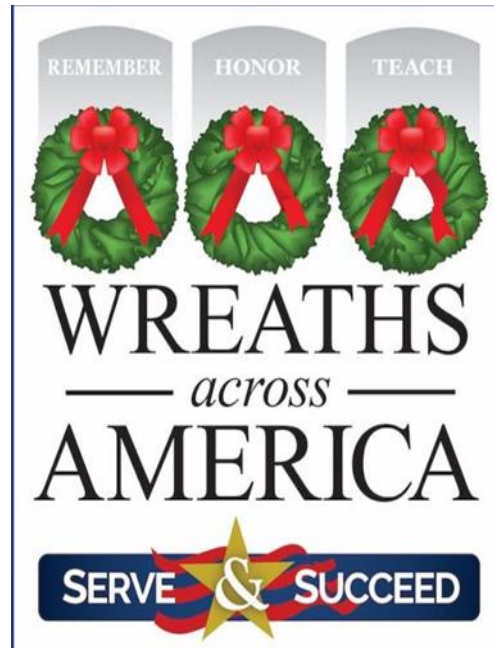
For more information about this study please contact:

Daniel C. Currie
Immaculate University Doctoral Candidate
at
484-702-2828
Email: dcurrie1@mail.immaculata.edu

**The study has been reviewed and approved by the
Research Ethics Review Board, Immaculata University.**



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



**Come join CAER in celebrating
Wreaths Across America**

Saturday, December 16, 2023

Fairmont Cemetery

430 S. Quebec Street, Denver CO

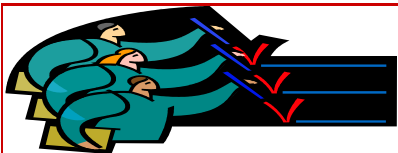
**Ceremony begins at 10:00 AM & wreath placement
immediately following ceremony.**

Questions, comments, or concerns

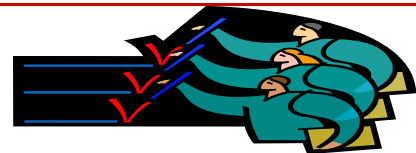
Please contact

Barb Galgano 303-918-7123

Hope to see you there!



CHECK IT OUT!



APH Orders

If you are submitting an order for more than one student; **PLEASE** only send ONE order form, per student, per email. If you are ordering for 2 separate students, please send two separate emails. This helps us assign a number to your order and reply much more easily saving a surprising amount of time.

We appreciate you! Thank you, Jim

2024 Conference Announcement

The 2024 AER International Conference will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina and the Call for Presenters is open! Their 40th Anniversary conference will be held at the Sheraton/Le Meridien Hotel in uptown Charlotte from July 24-28, 2024.



APH Professional Development for ACVREP Credit

Please remember that if you are a Colorado COMS, you need to retain your ACVREP certification to renew your CDE O&M license. If you are looking for more educational opportunities, head over to **APH Hive**. Their FREE eLearning platform for educators and families can be accessed at any time to earn ACVREP credits from the comfort of your home and office. With a growing course catalog covering categories like Early Childhood, Expanded Core Curriculum and more, we're compiling the resources you need to serve students. [Learn more and sign up today!](#)

New TEACH Colorado PSA

The U.S. Department of Education, TEACH.org and One Million Teachers of Color launched a new public service announcement to celebrate teachers and show the impressive skills, expertise and leadership teachers use to prepare students for success in our fast-changing world. [Watch and share the PSA.](#)

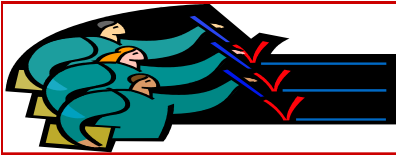
Screen Reader Simulation

This video demonstrates the use of a screen reader, and the difficulties users may have with inaccessible documents. Take some time to watch and share with others so that we all are contributing to creating accessibility documents from the ground-up. Check it out at: [Screen Reader Simulation](#)

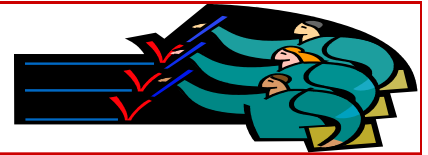
Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee openings

CSEAC has openings for new members who are interested in the quality of education received by children and youth with disabilities. CSEAC is a state-level committee mandated by federal and state law that includes parents of individuals with disabilities, educational service providers, administrators, and representatives from a variety of related agencies. The committee is statewide and representative of diverse disabilities. [Click here to view the application and current list of vacancies on the CSEAC website.](#) For more information contact Beth Donahue at donahue_b@cde.state.co.us or 720-926-1453.

SAVE THE DATE for *Getting in Touch with Literacy 2025* in Huntsville, Alabama November 5th-8th!! DVIDB is so excited to pair with Allied Instructional Services to continue this amazing conference!



CHECK IT OUT!



Grant Opportunity

\$500,000 Grant round open now! Applications will be accepted for both Disability Application Assistance and New & Innovative grants through January 31, 2024 at 11:59PM MST.

Background: Under the Laura Hershey Disability Support Act, as amended, C.R.S. § 24-30-2200 et seq., the Colorado Disability Funding Committee (the "CDFC") "shall invite nonprofit entities to submit a proposal for a program to aid persons with disabilities in accessing disability benefits" and "shall accept and review proposals to fund projects or programs that study or pilot new and innovative ideas that will lead to an improved quality of life or increased independence for persons with disabilities. "In pursuit of the CDFC mission, we encourage applicants to understand the following before submitting a grant application. To do so, please review the [CDFC Grants Overview](#). Since 2017 [CDFC has awarded \\$275,000 in grants](#) to Colorado disability organizations.

Disability Benefit Application Assistance Grants: The requirements for disability benefit application assistance grants can be found in [C.R.S. 24-30-2204](#). These grants can fund assistance in obtaining Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), as well as Colorado Medicaid benefits.

New & Innovative Grants: The Committee defines "new and innovative ideas," as that term is used in Colorado Revised Statute, [C.R.S. 24-30- 2204.5](#), to mean novel or original concepts for improving quality of life or increased independence for persons with disabilities, whether such concepts are completely new or propose changes to existing concepts, programs, projects, products, or fields.

Application Process

Applicants submit an initial [new and innovative grant proposal](#) or [disability application assistance grant proposal](#) for review.

1. CDFC staff will distribute all proposals to the Grants sub-committee. Proposals are reviewed and discussed within 10 business days of the proposal deadline.
2. CDFC Grant sub-committee will review all proposals and select finalists for further evaluation.
3. CDFC will notify the submitting organization of the Grants sub-committee's decision within 5 business days of the meeting. CDFC will invite the finalists to submit supporting documentation, including detailed project information, budget, and board membership. Applicants will have 10 business days to submit the additional grant application information requested.
4. The CDFC Grant sub-committee will make a final determination of approval or denial upon review of additional information and advance its recommendation to the full CDFC.
5. The full CDFC will vote on the recommendations from the Grant sub-committee.

Applicants will be notified of CDFC decisions. Decisions of the full CDFC committee are final.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed. Please submit any questions to the Colorado Disability Funding Committee Administrator, SOC_DFC@state.co.us.

New & Innovative Grant Documents

[Grants Overview](#) [Scoring Sheet for New & Innovative Grants](#) [W9](#)

[Grant Report Template for New & Innovative Grants](#)

[Quarterly Grant Report Template for Disability Application Assistance Grants](#)

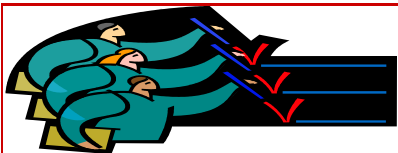
Things You Need to Know

- The CDFC is a State organization that distributes State funding, and as such has responsibility to the citizens of Colorado to make sure funds distributed are being used as they were intended. As a condition of receiving these funds, your organization is required to report to the CDFC periodically regarding their use. Using your application and Grant Agreement Summary as a guideline, please submit the reports using the forms below.

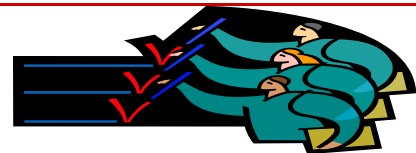
- Should the CDFC have any questions regarding your report they may ask additional questions. You may need to provide additional documentation or appear before the CDFC to provide additional information.

Organizations that are awarded a grant will be contacted with an award letter and be asked to complete the necessary documentation to process grant funds. The Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration will process your documents and disburse the funds.

Questions? Please contact the Colorado Disability Funding Committee Administrator at SOC_DFC@state.co.us.



CHECK IT OUT!



SAVE THE DATE!



The 2024 Virtual Conference for Assistive Technology and Education (CATE) will be held on June 6 - 7, 2024

The Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering (CIDE) and the Colorado Department of Education are proud to announce open registration for the 2024 Conference for Assistive Technology and Education (CATE). This 2-day virtual conference features sessions with nationally-renowned trainers addressing a wide variety of assistive technology topics related to the academic support needs of students with disabilities.

** More information and event updates will be posted on the [CATE webpage](#) as they become available!

Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT)

The Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT) Project is a collaboration between the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB). Our mission is to provide assistive technology training to teachers of the visually impaired, utilizing a “train the trainer” model, while also providing training for students and families. Devices are provided through APH and training is provided through AIDB employed trainers serving a nine-state region: The SW CATT proudly serves a six-state region, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Our trainers travel throughout the region to meet the needs of providers. They specialize in training and educating on assistive technology for the Blind and Low Vision community. For more information, go to: <https://seeitourway.org/contact-us/>

APH Scan and Read Needs Survey

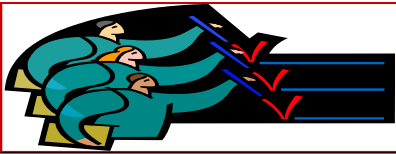
If interested, please take a needs survey about a scan and read device for the classroom! Help provide feedback on the need for a scan and read Optical Character Recognition (OCR) camera that can read educational materials aloud with quick and accurate OCR. Take the Scan and Read Needs Survey. (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WDW6NSB>)

Call for Field Testers: My Eyes My Vision

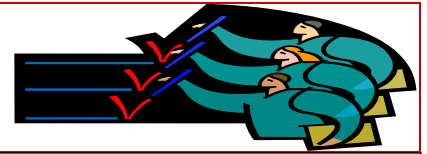
My Eyes My Vision provides a framework to build the basic concepts of the anatomy of the eye, how the visual system works, and the breakdowns in the system that lead to a visual impairment. Participants in this program will develop the communication skills necessary to raise awareness about having an eye condition and build the confidence to communicate visual needs among instructors, peers, family, medical professionals, and the general public. The materials are designed for K-12 students of all abilities and stages of vision loss, and are inclusive to sighted, low vision, and blind populations.

Field test evaluators will be asked to use the prototypes directly with their students who are blind or have low vision. Evaluators will then complete an online product evaluation form at the end of the testing period. Field test sites will be selected based on geographic location, available number of students, and type of instructional setting. The number of available field test prototypes is limited.

If you are interested in field testing this product during the Spring 2024 school year, please fill out the following My Eyes My Vision Field Test Interest Form (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/98MCTBK>) with your contact information by December 1, 2023. Field testing will begin in March 2024. Completed field evaluation forms will be due by May 30, 2024. You may also contact Justine Taylor, Product Manager, at jtaylor@aph.org if you have related questions about this field test activity.



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](#) website has a wealth of information to support educators and outcomes for children with disabilities.



** 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

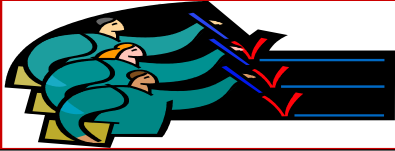
The [National AEM Center at CAST](#) has developed resources to support students who need accessible materials and technologies while learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.



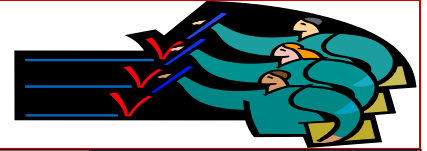
** eBooks

[Book share](#) 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.





CHECK IT OUT!



U.S. Department of Education



Commemorating the 48th Anniversary of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act

Commemorating the 48th Anniversary of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act

Happy Birthday, IDEA!! On November 29th, 48 years ago, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped (EHA) Children Act, which later became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA.

In the past year, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) under the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) continued to administer the IDEA to improve outcomes for children with disabilities, birth through 21, and their families and Raise the Bar to ensure access to fair, equitable and high-quality education and services.

[Read about guidance, policy, resources, and initiatives addressed by OSEP during the last year.](#)

The Deaf. Blind. Limitless. (DBL) Conference hosted by AIDB will take place at Sonesta hotel in Denver, Colorado, March 12-15, 2024.

This event is designed for teachers, professionals, and administrators serving students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind.

CEUs, ACVREP, and RID credits will be offered to participants accordingly.

The registration fees are waived for this conference. Successful applicants will be notified.



[DBL Conference Registration and More Information](#)

CDE and CSDB Survey of School-Based Professional

When the CSDB Program Report was completed a few years back, the CDE and CSDB DHH, BVI, and DB Outreach Programs were tasked with completing a survey to better understand the needs of professionals trained to work with these student populations. The survey is specifically for those working in Colorado public schools now or within the past five years. If you are exclusively have been working with the 0-2 population, a 3-5 nonprofit, or a 0-5 for profit agency, you should not complete the survey.



We have made a dent – there about 20 TVIs / O&M Specialists who have completed the survey thus far. Thank you! These data are important to determine what is working and where we can improve. This includes seeking funding for professional development and TA activities that address your needs as school-based TVIs and O&M Specialists.

Here is survey:: [CDE and CSDB Survey for School TVIs and COMS](#)

Last count, 10 people on the BVI side had responded. We should have about 80 or more responses. Thanks so much for your assistance! We hope you can complete it ahead of your winter break or no later than December 31, 2023!

Resources and Materials

Light Up Switches

Thanks to **Sara Noel** for sharing this resource specific to light-up switches. [Lighted adaptive switch](#) adapted toys lighted button switch Capability switch special needs. **Colors available:** Orange, Blue, Green, Purple

Blind and Beyond Radio Show

Blind and Beyond Radio Show is the only commercial radio show for the blind and visually impaired in North America with more than 1.5 million listeners each week just in the United States. There are more than 12 million blind and visually impaired people in the United States alone, and they have listeners all over the world. The format is talk/variety show with interaction from the audience, and our listeners love to call in and comment on our live guest call-in segments. Michael Golder is the dynamic host, along with co-hosts, Lynne Golder, Sheila Young, Gary Sinclair, and David Hillebrandt. All the hosts are blind with the exception of Lynne Golder. The show serves as a bridge between sighted individuals and the low vision and blind community and is intended to educate all listeners on blindness related subjects while also providing entertainment. The show airs, live, every Sunday evening from 7 to 9 p.m. Eastern on our flagship station, 1680 WOKB-AM/FM in Orlando. Blind and Beyond is also heard live on many other radio stations, AM and FM around the country. Stream online at www.wokbradio.com, tune-in radio or www.blindandbeyondradioshow.org. Just tell Alexa to pull up WOKB 1680am, and you can hear the show. Just like that!

Tune in once...and you will become a loyal listener every Sunday night! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael Golder by phone at 407-416-6018 or by email at michael@blindandbeyondradioshow.org.

APH Product – Sports Courts

Get oriented and familiarized with 16 different sports courts and fields! SPORTS COURTS provides tactile exploration across various courts and fields commonly used in sports. <https://www.aph.org/product/sports-courts/>

CSDB Video on Blind Awareness and Perspectives Video

Wow – check it out. CSDB has created a great public awareness video on Blind Awareness and Perspectives. Please take some time to check it out and share it. Here is the link to the public facing Blind Awareness & Perspectives video:

[CSDB Blind Awareness and Perspectives](#)



Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools: An Action Guide for School and District Leaders

Please take some time to review these newly released resources. They have a list of strategies to use at each tier or level of need.

[Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools: An Action Guide for School and District Leaders PDF](#)

[Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools Website](#)

Schools are prioritizing students' mental health, and there are many tools and resources to choose from. CDC created this action guide as a place to start. It can help school and district leaders build on what they are already doing to promote students' mental health and find new strategies to fill in gaps. The action guide describes six in-school **strategies** that are proven to promote and support mental health and well-being. For each strategy, the guide also describes **approaches**, or specific ways to put the strategy into action, and examples of evidence-based policies, programs, and practices.



Mountain Mobility:

Winter Camp for Visually Impaired Youth

Thursday, February 15th – Monday, February 19th

Dear Camper,

The Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte will be running a winter weekend-long snow sports camp specifically designed for youth who are blind or visually impaired. The camp will bring youth together for a weekend of skiing, snowboarding and other fun activities in the Rocky Mountains. The ASC will be providing three days of one-on-one lessons taught by professional adaptive ski/snowboard instructors. This camp will focus on building confidence and making connections with others who share similar experiences.

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.

Writing and journaling will be a priority during the trip. Each evening campers will be writing as they recall and relive the most exciting and perhaps the most challenging moments from their day. At the end of the trip, campers will have a narrative to bring home and share with their family and friends.

Enclosed you will find the following items to help you organize:

- A packing list and high altitude tips
- An itinerary for the weekend
- Permission to transport
- Mountain Mobility registration
- ASC Release of Liability and Media Release
- Ski/Snowboard rental form

Please note: All applications must be received by Friday, November 10, 2023 and will be accepted in the order they are received. Students who are accepted to the camp will be notified at the beginning of January or earlier. There is a \$50 camper fee and payment can be made through check or credit card. Checks must be made out to Adaptive Sports Center. Credit card payment can be made over the phone, please call the Logistics Team at 970-349-2296.

Shuttle vans will be organized for transportation to Crested Butte on Thursday, February 15 from central locations once the camp roster is set. Students will also be transported back to these central locations from Crested Butte after the camp on Monday, February 19.

Please mail registration, waivers, and payment to:

Adaptive Sports Center
Attn. Logistics Team
P.O. Box 1639
Crested Butte, CO 81224

We are thrilled for you to be a part of the Mountain Mobility camp this winter!

-Adaptive Sports Center



Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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 350 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 Certified O&M Specialist certificate (for initial and renewal licenses). Do not let your ACVREP Certification expire.
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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>.

A stack of colorful books is on the left, and a yellow pencil with a pink eraser is on the right, both partially visible through a blue circular cutout. The background is a gradient of blue and black.

Comprehensive Literacy for All

3-DAY INTENSIVE WORKSHOP

COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION
FOR CONVENTIONAL LEARNERS



DAVID KOPPENHAVER



KAREN ERICKSON

Authors of

**COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY FOR ALL:
TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT
DISABILITIES TO READ AND WRITE**

**APRIL 29-MAY 1, 2024
EMBASSY SUITES
DENVER CENTRAL PARK
DENVER, CO**

DETAILS AT

www.campalec.com

Camp ALEC

AAC Literacy Education Communication



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>.

Initial CDE Braille Competency Testing Requirements

Initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate: 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 as a teacher of students with visual impairments, with a Colorado administrative unit. 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.

The initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate expires five years from its date of issue.

Renewal CDE Braille Competency Certificate

There is a one time expectation to renew the initial CDE certificate five years after its initial issue. This is accomplished by completing 15 renewal modules across the five year renewal period. These modules must be taken with one of the CDE Braille Proctors.

For more information about Colorado’s braille competency requirements, please go to:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs

Assessment Accommodations Office Hour for TVIs



A special office hour specifically for District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) and Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) will occur from 4:00-5:00 pm MT on Wednesday, January 31, focusing on assessment accommodations for students with visual impairments, including blindness. We invite you to join this special office hour where we can focus on testing and providing assessment accommodations for students with visual impairments, including blindness.

CoAlt and SWD Office Hours—Online Office Hours for DACs and TVIs

Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 4:00-5:00 pm

To join, use this link: [CoAlt and SWD Office Hour \(Special TVI Accommodations session\)](#)



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)



Welcome to

CDE's Equity Toolkit



This toolkit is designed to provide user-friendly information and resources to support school and district leaders in centering equity in their work to support positive outcomes for the students they serve. We are all in different phases of our equity journey and this toolkit can support everyone on their quest to create welcoming environments where all students and families feel a sense of belonging and all students are supported to achieve success.

This toolkit is organized into the five sections: (a) understanding self; (b) understanding others; (c) understanding context; (d) Implementation; and (e) reflection and evaluation.

Check it out at: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/equitytoolkit>

[The English Learner Family Toolkit](#)

(Available in English, Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish)

This family toolkit (from the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition) is meant to support families of English learners in the U.S. education system. It consists of 6 chapters, and each chapter contains 5 sections: an overview, family and student rights, questions to ask schools, tips, and resources.

Accessibility is being able to get in the building. Diversity is getting invited to the table. Inclusion is having a voice at the table. Belonging is having your voice heard at the table!




Calendar of Events

2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024
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January 8	Metro Region TVI/COMS meeting - virtual (3:30 to 5 p.m.) <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us or Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
January 5	CIMC First Friday —virtual <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
January 8-26	Initial Window to Order Braille Format CMAS Tests <u>Contact:</u> Work with your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
January 9	Southern Region Meeting: Host/Location: Falcon SD from 2:30—4:30 PM <u>Contact:</u> Lori Mattick at lmattick@d49.org
January 13	CO Blind Parents Group – South Metro Fired Dept. (interactive activities) <u>Contact:</u> Chaz Davis at cdavis@cocenter.org
January 22	Deaf-Blind Webinar Series —Topic to Be Determined <u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony – Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
January 24	Sound Bites — 3:30-5:00 PM—Executive Functioning Considerations for Students with BVI <u>Registration:</u> https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/3003fe0868204b739e52e195b0e9e6d6
January 31	Office Hours : CoAlt/SwD for BVI learners (4 – 5 PM) <u>Contact:</u> Arti Sachdeva at Sachdeva_a@cde.state.co.us
February 2	CIMC First Friday —virtual <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
February 7-9	Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic at the Anchor Center for Blind Children <u>Contact:</u> Roberta Curtis @ curtis_r@cde.state.co.us
February 13	Southern Region Meeting: Host/Location: Academy 20 SD from 2:30—4:30 PM <u>Contact:</u> Melissa Shular at melissa.shular@asd20.org
February 21	Sound Bites — 3:30-5:00 p.m.—College Prep Considerations for Students with BVI <u>Registration:</u> https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/3003fe0868204b739e52e195b0e9e6d6
February 22	Braille Challenge at CSDB in Colorado Springs <u>Contact:</u> Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org
February 23	Braille Challenge at the Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org




Calendar of Events

2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024

February 24	Adaptive Ski Program – Eldora Ski Resort 9ski expenses paid for – limit 8 students) Contact Chaz Davis at cdavis@cocenter.org
February 26	Deaf-Blind Webinar Series – Topic to be Determined Contact: Tanni Anthony – Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
May 1	See the Future Fund Education for Life Scholarship Applications Due Go to: https://www.seethefuture.org/efl-app-info.html
March 1	CIMC First Friday —virtual Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
March 12-15	Deaf.Blind Limitless Conference —Denver Registration: www.aidb.org/dbl
March 13	Sound Bites — 3:30-5:00 PM—Topic to be Determined Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/3003fe0868204b739e52e195b0e9e6d6
March 25	Deaf-Blind Webinar Series – Topic to be Determined Contact: Tanni Anthony – Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
April 3	Metro Region TVI/COMS meeting - virtual (3:30 to 5 pm) Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us or Jeannie Lei at jlei@cherrycreekschools.org
April 5	CIMC First Friday —virtual Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
April 10	Sound Bites — 3:30-5:00 PM—Topic to be Determined Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/3003fe0868204b739e52e195b0e9e6d6
May 3	CIMC First Friday —virtual Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
May 14	Southern Region Meeting: Host/Location: Ute Pass BOCES from 2:30—4:30 PM Contact: Chloann Woolley at cwoolley@upboces.org
June 6-7	Colorado AT Conference —virtual http://www.swaac.org/conference-for-assistive-technology-and-education-cate
July 24-28	AER Conference — Charlotte, NC Contact: www.aerbvi.org

2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025

Nov 5-8 **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference**—Huntsville, AL



Orientation & Mobility

SOMA O&M Conference October 26-29, 2024 - call for papers!

We're very excited to announce that our next conference of the Southeastern O&M Association (SOMA) will be at the beautiful Embassy Suites by Hilton in Huntsville, Alabama! Part of the pre-conference program includes an experience at NASA's Space Camp (where many of our students have gone) and a visit to the birthplace of Helen Keller and see the water pump where she learned her first word.

More details are at [our SOMA O&M Conference website](#)

We know you have ideas and information to share -- the SOMA audience is always enthusiastic and receptive, especially for folks who've never presented before! - so put your thoughts together and send them to us in the [Call for Papers](#). As usual, the program will emphasize hands-on experiences and practical information, like we had last year (see a list of the amazing activities [here](#)).

If you'd like to help organize the conference or join the Program Committee and meet / work with enthusiastic folks, let us know.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

Link: <https://forms.gle/A1ooEKaWFCTxnsiy6>

DEADLINE January 10, 2024

SOMA Team -

Karen Walker, Eileen Bischof, Dee Reckers, Dona Sauerburger

Shoutout to
people whose
Kindness isn't
a strategy but
a way of life.

Visual Impairment, including Blindness

Thank you to all of people who took time to discuss, craft, and comment on the updated eligibility criteria of Visual Impairment, Including Blindness. Thank you also to the Colorado State Board of Education for their careful view and constructive feedback on the draft version and the ultimate final version, which is effective as of June 2023.

The updated eligibility criteria can be found in the [Rules for Administration of the Exceptional Children Education Act](#).

2.08(11) A child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness has an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects the child’s educational performance and that requires specialized instruction. The term includes low vision, blindness and/or progressive vision loss.

2.08(11)(a) A determination that a child is an eligible child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness may include but not be limited to:

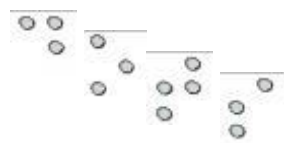
2.08(11)(a)(i) Visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;

2.08(11)(a)(ii) Visual field restriction to 20 degrees or less; and/or

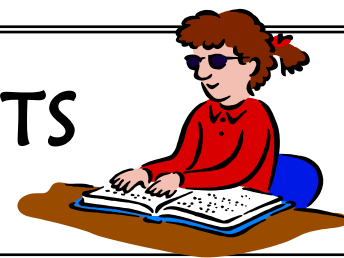
2.08(11)(a)(iii) A physical condition of visual system which cannot be medically corrected and, as such, affects visual functioning to the extent that specially designed instruction is needed.

These criteria are reserved for special situations such as, but not restricted to cortical visual impairment and/or a progressive visual loss where field and/or acuity deficits alone may not meet the aforementioned criteria.





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	Nkcozart@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
Julie Wetzstein	(303) 819-7887	Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us

Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor/mentor for initial testing and renewal modules. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor for initial testing and renewal modules. Tanni Anthony is the proctor for initial braille competency testing for the greater metro area. If there is a testing need on the western slope, please contact Tanni.

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.

Thanks for being a steward of braille competency—our students are counting on your expertise for their specially designed instruction and instructional materials.

UEB Technical Versus Nemeth Braille Codes

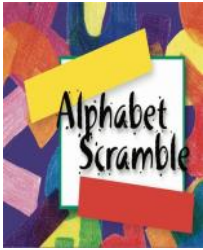
The Colorado Department of Education does not dictate a math code for students with visual impairment, including blindness. Two math codes are approved by the Braille Authority of North America. The decision about the math code is an individual student-by-student or an IEP decision. Both codes are viable for instruction and state testing. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.

Braillewriter Repair

- Kirk McCall (303) 875-4527 (phone) and email km2320@msn.com
- Mark Carpenter (719) 634-8720 (phone) and email carpdiane@yahoo.com



CONNECTING THE DOTS

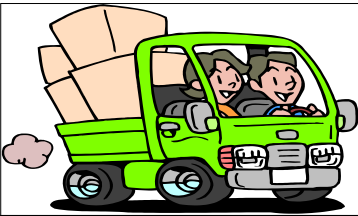


Alphabet Scramble, UEB Edition

<https://www.aph.org/product/alphabet-scramble/>

Modernized to incorporate UEB, this read-aloud storybook exposes young learners to braille and large print and encourages development of early literacy skills. This is an APH.





TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Webinar: Expect, Engage, Empower: Successful Transitions for All

ICYMI: View the webinar recording and materials from the CEEDAR November webinar! This session targets the recent OSERS initiative 3E: Expect, Engage, Empower. This initiative challenges our field to raise expectations, engage families earlier, and empower all who support students with disabilities to improve postsecondary outcomes. Staff from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACTC) shared valuable information and resources about evidence-based transition practices and predictors leading to improved student outcomes. These resources can be used by state educational agencies and educator preparation programs to ensure transition is included across the lifespan.



[View the Expect, Engage, Empower: Successful Transitions for All Webinar](#)

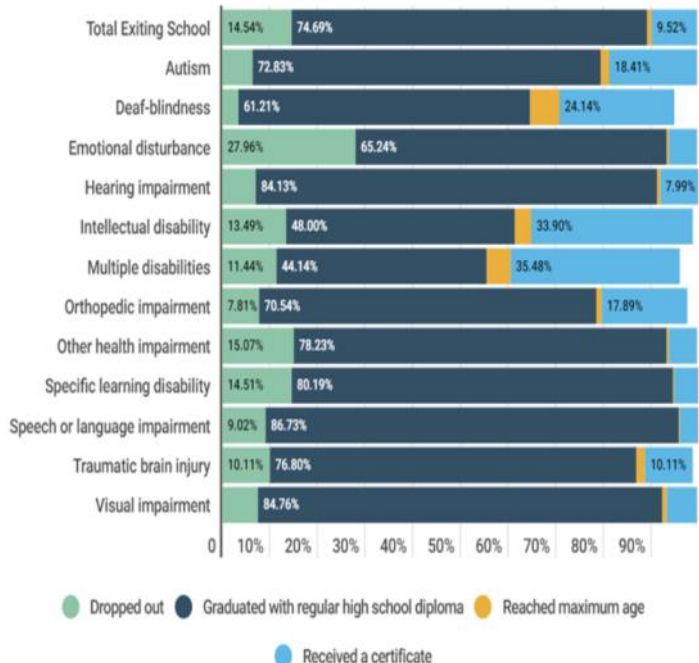
Dose of Data

Did You Know?

In school year (SY) 2020-21, the percentage of students with disabilities, ages 14-21, who left school by graduating with a regular high school diploma varied across the disabilities categories, from 44.14% for students identified with multiple disabilities to 86.73% for students identified with speech or language impairment.

To further explore this data visualization, please see [December Dose of Data — Infogram](#)

Percent of Students with Disabilities Who Exited School by Disability Category, Ages 14-21, SY 20-21



ONLINE TRAINING MODULES

Do you need help finding employment opportunities for students with the most significant support needs?

Do you need some training on supporting students with disabilities in community or job settings?

Are you wondering how to help students who are nonverbal become more self-determined?

Are you worried about taking students with aggressive behaviors out in the community or workplace?

Competitive Employment: An Important Consideration for All Students with Disabilities!

[Module 1: Understanding the Importance of High Expectations for Employment](#)

After completing this module, you will have a basic understanding of Employment First, including the importance of embracing high expectations for all students with disabilities as well as the need to begin transition planning as early as possible. You will also learn about current transition efforts taking place across Colorado and you will have the opportunity to apply the Sequencing of Services Framework to your local educational agency. (45 min)

[Module 2: Employment First Training Strategies](#)

After completing this module, you will have a better understanding of customized employment and how to connect students and their families to state agencies such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Centers. You will explore several types of assessments used to help students identify their employment and will also have the opportunity to apply this information to the students that you are serving. (33 min)

[Module 3: School Staff's Role with Employment](#)

After completing this module, you will understand the importance of collaborating with district personnel, community partners, and family members when helping students with disabilities reach their employment goals. You will understand how school staff, including paraprofessionals, can support students with disabilities at job sites and during community-based instruction. As part of this module, you will have the opportunity to discuss the separate roles and responsibilities of each team member. (44 min)

[Module 4: Supporting a Student's Self Determination to Achieve Employment](#)

After completing this module, you will be able to identify the characteristics of someone who is self-determined, and you will understand the importance of teaching students with disabilities these skills. You will learn strategies to help encourage students to become more self-determined as they transition into adulthood. You will have the opportunity to discuss the ways you can help increase self-determination skills of the students you are currently serving. (21 min)

[Module 5: Strategies for Increasing Independence to Support Employment](#)

After completing this module, you will gain strategies to help support students in achieving greater independence. You will learn about various levels of prompting, how to select appropriate prompts that will increase a student's independence, and the importance and process of fading prompts. You will have the opportunity to apply what you learn to students you support. (23 min)

[Module 6: Managing Behavior in the Community to Prepare for Employment](#)

After completing this module, you will understand the different functions of behavior and how to determine these functions in order to identify effective strategies that can be used to help prevent and/or reduce the behavior while in the community or workplace. You will learn about the importance of providing support that is more proactive in nature such as creating predictability, providing choices, ensuring students have effective communication systems, and focus on building relationships. You will have the opportunity to apply what you learn to students you are currently supporting. (37 min)

[Module 7: School Staff's Roles and Responsibilities in Progress Monitoring](#)

After completing this module, you will understand why it is important to take data when working with students in work and community-based activities. You will learn the steps needed to design an effective data collection system and the role that school staff play in implementing this system. You will also have the opportunity to analyze your current progress monitoring practices and identify components that need to be put into place within your setting. (35 min)

[Module: Work-Based Learning Options for Students with Significant Support Needs](#)

After completing this module, you will understand the importance of work and high expectations for students with the most significant disabilities, the need to presume competence when supporting these students, and the need to start the transition planning process early. You will also learn about the need to ensure that transition assessments are individualized, customized, and accessible for students who have varying levels of support needs to gain information to better identify post-secondary goals and supports and services needed by these students. Furthermore, you will have the opportunity to learn what work-based learning experiences are and why they are important for students with significant support needs. You will learn different ways to develop worksites by incorporating self-determination and through working with students' family members. Finally, you will have the opportunity to analyze current worksite supports, including assistive technology and transportation, that you are providing to students you serve. (1 hours, 42 min)

[Module Resource links and resources](#)

[Additional Handouts](#)

ONLINE TRAINING MODULES

For any questions
regarding content/topics,
please reach out to:

Katie Oliver

oliver_k@cde.state.co.us

Gail Lott

lott_g@cde.state.co.us

Cheryl Carver

cheryl.carver@state.co.us

Kara Halley

halley_k@cde.state.co.us

just for PARENTS

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB)

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 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 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 their 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.

Understanding Evidence-Based Literacy Practices Prek-3: Family Edition Toolkit

This toolkit helps families learn about evidence-based literacy practices in preschool through grade three and how they can be used to support all children's literacy needs in schools.

You will learn:

- What is meant by evidence-based literacy practices
- What are examples and non-examples of evidence-based literacy practices
- How evidence-based literacy practices can support all children's literacy needs, including those with dyslexia and other disabilities

[Visit the Toolkit](#)

NCIL's TOOLS FOR PROMOTING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Coaching Steps for Families

You can coach your child's literacy learning at home. This means interacting with and guiding your child so he or she grows and succeeds.

View this infographic to learn how you can coach your child's literacy learning at home.



**Click the Infographic to download it.

just for PARENTS

Join us for a Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference in 2024!

The Exceptional Student Services Unit at CDE plans conferences throughout the year that are family-centered and designed to offer support, information, and education to parents and professionals who are Colorado residents. [view the FAQs about PEP](#) for more in-depth information.

Parents Encouraging Parents

- Parents Encouraging Parents are conferences, abbreviated as PEP, for families and parents who have children with disabilities, ages birth to 21.
- Parents include parents as couples, single parents, legal guardians, adoptive, and foster parents.
- A support person may attend and accompany a single parent. A support person is one who is helping a parent to raise a child(ren) with a disability or who is a caretaker of the child(ren) with a disability in the family (can include grandparent(s) or other relatives).
- PEP conferences are arranged in a conference setting, and parents can obtain information relating to parents, parenting, educating, and supporting a child with a disability.
- Professionals are also invited to attend to obtain information relating to educating and supporting a child with a disability and their family. Professionals must work with children and youth with disabilities (ages birth to 21) and their families.

PEP is a non-specific disability conference that focuses on commonalities, not diagnoses.

Winter PEP Conference: Friday and Saturday, January 26-27, 2024 in Aurora. The hotel venue is pending.

Spring PEP Conference: Friday and Saturday, May 3-4, 2024. Location and hotel venue are pending.

Apply at one of the links below:

In English: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/094dc81ea0b24c2ba35720813508c26e>

En español: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/0699a55e9a4e456692821deed33b850c>

Please note on the application important changes as of October 2023 to the in-person PEP conferences:

- In-person PEP conferences will now be on a Friday and Saturday, rather than on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
- Lodging will be paid for by the Colorado Department of Education if a participant's commute is more than 50 miles to the hotel traveling one way (rather than 35 miles).

Certificates will be issued for 15 hours for completing an in-person PEP conference in its entirety (rather than for 18 hours).

A Tale of Two Conversations

A Tale of Two Conversations is a two-part video series showing actors playing a parent of a child with a disability and a school administrator. The meeting was requested by the parent and takes place in the administrator's office. *Take One* shows the parent and administrator talking about the child's special education program. They are talking, but not listening. Their communication is unproductive.

Take Two shows each person using more effective communication skills. We recommend that you view the [Understanding Positions & Interests](#) video as well as Course 3: Listening and Responding and Course 4: Focusing on Interests to Reach Agreement in our [Working Together](#) suite of resources before viewing [A Tale of Two Conversations](#). A [Study Guide](#) is also available for further training purposes.

just for PARENTS



Working Together

These online courses provide families and educators with a number of strategies for working together and through conflict:

- Course 1: Intro to the Series
- Course 2: IEP Meetings & Beyond
- Course 3: Listening & Responding Skills
- Course 4: Managing & Responding to Emotions
- Course 5: Focusing on Interests to Reach Agreement

Self-directed courses!

REGISTER AT:
www.cadeworks.org



Working with groups? Use the Facilitator Guide!



Engaging Parents in Productive Partnerships

Educators contend with significant pressures resulting from insufficient resources, inadequate professional development opportunities, and an ever-changing landscape of educational initiatives and mandates. Despite such challenges, school staff partner successfully with parents in millions of meetings each year to create appropriate IEPs for students who receive special education and related services. Engaging Parents in Productive Partnerships is an easy-to-read guide of suggestions on how educators and service providers can effectively collaborate with parents including specific recommendations for IEP meetings.

[Read the Resource](#)



IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

We are facing our first real shortage for this school year for TVI s= teachers of students with visual impairments and O&M Specialists = orientation and mobility specialists.

Please keep in touch with Tanni about our 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!

If you are looking for a job, please check out the listings below and also reach out to Tanni, who will have a current list of work across the state, including TVI and O&M Specialist contract work. Together, we can fill in the needed gaps to serve all of our students.

Metro Region

- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Adams 12 School District. For more information, please contact Heater Greicius at gre008602@adams12.org
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI (or part time)** TVI at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please reach out to Tammy Miller at tmiller@anchorcenter.org
- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI/O&M Specialist** in Cherry Creek School District. Please contact Amy Barr at abarr2@cherrycreekschools.org
- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Denver Public Schools. Please contact Michelle Chacon at michelle_chacon@dpsk12.net
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist Position** in Littleton School District. Please contact Jennifer Templeton at jtempleton@lps.k12.co.us

Northern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE or part-time TVI / O&M Specialist**—Windsor School District. For more information, please contact Jennifer Sedaghat at Jennifer.sedaghat@weldre4.org
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist** in Thompson School District for this school year. Please contact Maddie Karanevichas for more information at maddie.karanevich@tsd.org





IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Southern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE TVI Position**—Colorado Springs District 11. For more information, please contact Nancy Melo Maresh at nancy.mereshmelo@d11.org or (719) 520-2158.
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI Position**—El Paso County District 49. For more information, please contact Rhonda May at rhonda.may@d49.org or (719) 491-4630.
- ◆ **1 FTE** for a Secondary Social Studies teacher at CSDB. Please contact Jamie Lugo for more information at jlugo@csdb.org
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI** for a preschool /BVI position at the School for the Blind at CSDB. For more information, contact Jennifer Thompson at jthompson@csdb.org

Western Region

- ◆ **1 TVI / O&M Position** in the Colorado River BOCES. For more information, please contact Julie Goldberg at Julie Goldberg at goldberg@crboces.org
- ◆ **1 PTE TVI/O&M Specialist**—Northwest BOCES. For more information, please contact Courtney Lincoln at Courtney.Lincoln@nwboces.org
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI/O&M Specialist** with Mountain BOCES and Summit School District. Please contact Susan Udenberg at sudenberg@mtnboces.org or Ellen Clark at ellen.clark@summitk12.org.
- ◆ **Contract Work TVI and O&M Specialist** in Rio Blanco BOCES. For more information, please contact Bradley Bauer at brad.bauer@meeker.k12.co.us.

Across Metro, Northern, and Western Regions

- ◆ **Contract Work with Flexible Hours**—A Shared Vision. For more information about working in many areas of the state with the 0-2 population, please contact Steve Lindauer at slindauer@asharedvision.org.

TVIs and O&M Specialists—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE TVI and/or O&M licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing 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. If you want to be on the CDE's TVI and/or O&M Specialist contractor list, please be in touch with Tanni at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.



colorado connections

Braille Competency News



- ◆ Woo hoo to **Robyn Wyatt**, a brailist with Greeley School District 6 for earning her initial CDE Certificate of Braille Competency. Hats off to **Jill Bookwalter**, a TVI in Weld County RE-5J School District, and **Dana Downey** and **Brenna Moser**, TVIs in Douglas County School District for earning their CDE Renewal Certificates of Braille Competency. Also, congratulations to **Susan Smith**, a brailist with Douglas County School District, for also earning her CDE Renewal Certificate. So proud of each of you! Thank you to proctors **Brenda Shepard**, **Nancy Cozart**, **Chris Maynard**, and **Julie Wetzstein** for all of their great work to support braille competency certification.
- ◆ A big shout out to **Anitha Muthukumaran**, **Kyle Berns**, and **Marty Rahn** who participated in the CMAS Braille / Tactile Graphic Review for the Spring 2024 assessments. They met with the test publisher, braille vendor, and CDE Assessment Unit Personnel on December 6-8 to review the tests.

Professional Development

- Over 32 people showed up for the December 13 Sound Bites with **Dr. Penny Rosenblum**, who shared information on *Strategies for Developing Graphic Literacy Skills of Braille Students, Beginning in 2nd Grade*.
- Colorado was well represented at the December Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference held in St. Pete's, Florida! In attendance were **Deb Andrews**, **Michelle Chacon**, **Lucia Hasty**, **Amy Gunning**, **Jeannie Lei**, **Bryan Moles**, **Sara Noel**, **Ruthie Osborne**, **Trina Boyd Pratt**, **Melissa Shular**, and **Cathy Smyth**.
- Woo hoo for **Dr. Anitha Muthukumaran**, who was our December 8 Sound Bite presenter. She presented on *Experiences Middle School Students with Visual Impairments Accessing Technologies in Inclusive Classrooms*, which was the topic of her dissertation study. We had 35 participants, and it was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about her qualitative study and findings.
- **Tanni Anthony** had the opportunity to be a presenter and team member of the November 7-9 Early Intervention for infants and Toddlers with Deaf-Blindness intensive training in Charlotte, NC. This training brought together EI providers from across southeast USA and was a marvelous opportunity to pull together a team effort across DB Projects from Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Florida. This may well be something to “replicate” in Colorado – stay tuned!

Personnel News

- **Ashley Renslow** is the new interim Director of Outreach at CSDB. This is effective as of December 1. Ashley has been the Program Coordinator of the Colorado Home Intervention Program. We thank **Cheryl Austin** for her past work in this role. Cheryl is now the Dean of Students with the School for the Blind. **Hanna Waldman** will leave her Thompson School District position and begin with the St. Vrain School District as of January 2024. **Taylor Leinbach** will be leaving her role with the CIMC this month. We thank Taylor for her service and wish her all the best ahead. We say farewell to **Chris Holmes**, a TVI and O&M Specialist in St. Vrain School District. Chris is retiring and returning to England. We thank Chris for his many contributions and service years. Best wishes to you!

Personal News

- ◆ Happy Forever After to **Lisa VanDam** and **Scott Oliphant** who were married on September 2023 at Venetucci Farm in Colorado Springs. Lisa is a COMS with CSDB School for the Blind.



colorado connections

In Gratitude and Tribute

Depending on your arrival and longevity in our great field of educating children and youth who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind, you will learn firsthand who carved the paths, paved the way, and gave us what we know today to be our profession. We have many years of history in our profession and it is every changing thanks to the contributions of so many. If you are fortunate, you may meet the greats along the way. In October we lost two such people, whose contributions made our field a better place.



Our field lost a giant on October 14, 2024 with the passing of **Dr. Kathleen (Kathy) Huebner**. Kathy was retired, but still active with nurturing relationships and ideas to support personnel working with students with blindness/visual impairment and deaf-blindness. Dr. Huebner was a Professor Emerita at Salus University. She earned her doctoral degree in 1980 from the University of Pittsburgh, and accepted a position as National Consultant in Education for the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), where she worked from 1983-1993 impacting many national initiatives.

From 1993 to 2012, Kathy prepared teachers of students with visual impairments and O&M Specialists at Salus University. Her career culminated in two groundbreaking, collaborative, national consortia of universities to increase leadership through preparation of doctoral students in visual impairment, deafblindness, and deaf and hard of hearing — the National Center for Leadership in Visual Impairment (NCLVI) and the National Leadership Center for Sensory Disabilities (NLCSD). Her leadership, publication and field work has been recognized by both of her alma maters and by the field of blindness. She was the recipient of the Migel Medal (2012) from AFB and the Josephine L. Taylor (2010), Ambrose Shotwell (2008), Mary K. Bauman (2004), and Warren C. Bledsoe (1996) Awards from AERBVI. She contributed significantly to our journals and book publications. She had a smile for everyone, high expectations, and was a champion for our kids, families, teachers, service providers, and profession. We are forever grateful.



Bob Brasher, who contributed greatly to the field of blindness/visual impairment, died on October 15th. Bob embarked on his career in the field of blindness in 1970 when he began working at the Arkansas School for the Blind. His dedication and passion for the field were evident from the very beginning. Over the years, he served as an APH Ex Officio Trustee for the Arkansas Department of Education for 16 years, solidifying his commitment to improving educational opportunities for blind and visually impaired individuals. In 1998, he joined the American Printing House for the Blind (APH), where he continued his tireless efforts. He led the APH Department of Educational Research, putting him in direct contact with the entire field and significantly contributing to advancements in blindness education. His vision and leadership were instrumental in driving positive change within the industry. He was the founding curator for the APH Hall of Fame.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Bob was a true gentleman and a great friend to all who had the privilege of meeting him. His legacy will continue to inspire and guide future generations as they work to provide better educational opportunities for those who are blind or visually impaired. Bob Brasher will be dearly missed, but his contributions will forever be cherished.



COLORADO
Department of Education

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