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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness
March 2024

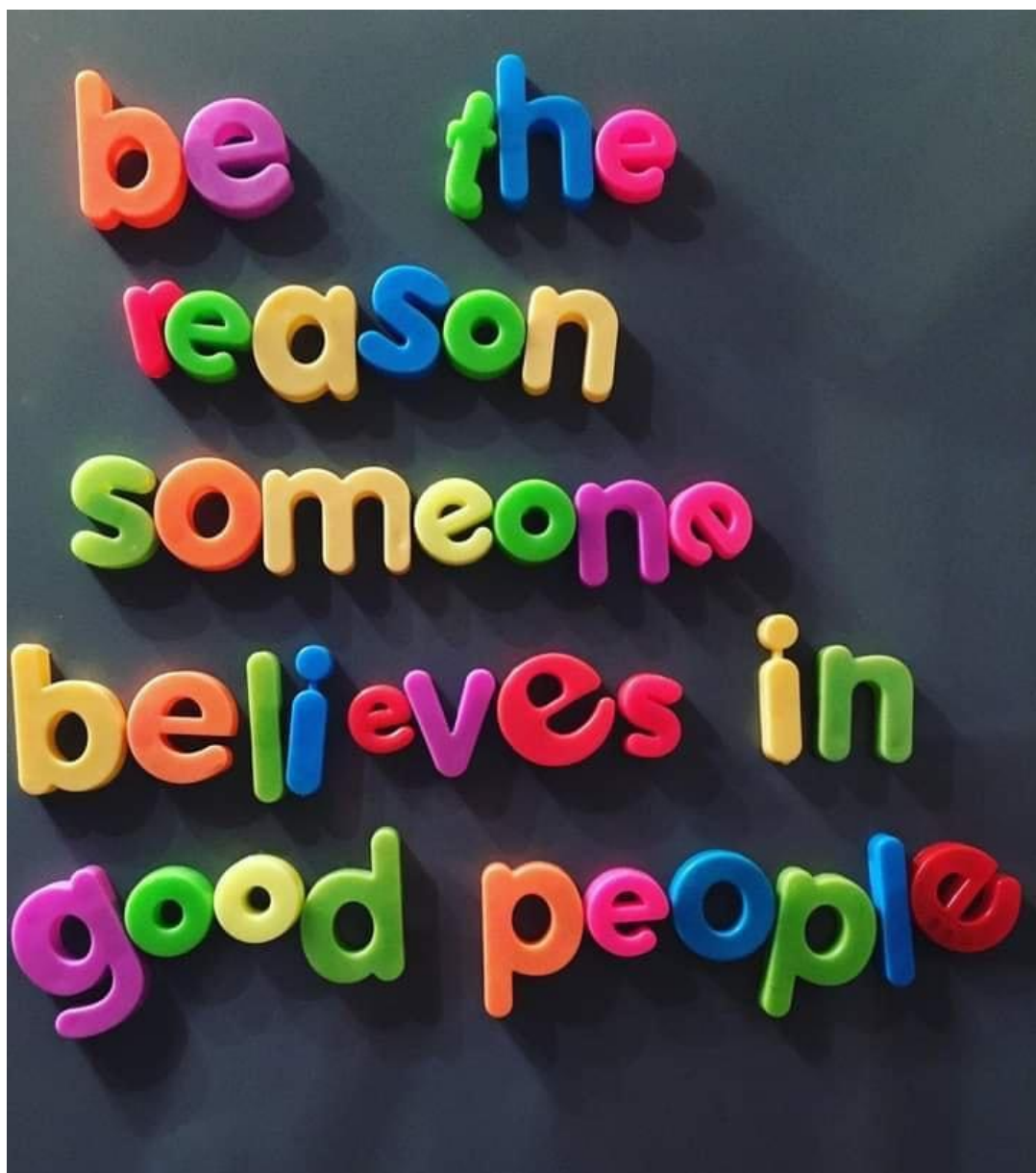
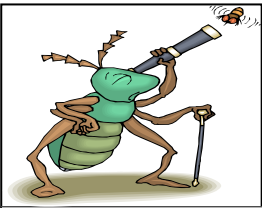


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LOW VISION NEWS



Denver Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

By Roberta Curtis

The Denver Metro Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held on February 7th — 9th at the Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver. Twelve students from eight administrative units (Adams 12, Aurora, Cherry Creek, Douglas County, Denver, JeffCo Mapleton, and Weld School Districts) received evaluations. Sixteen parents and eleven TVIs attended the evaluation with their students.

The Low Vision Evaluation Clinic team would like to thank Anchor Center for Blind Children for hosting the event and Kaitlin Lombardi, Amber Rundle-Kahn, Jeannie Lei, Deb Mendoza, Danielle Burden, Jill Bookwalter, Natalie Palmer, Sasmita Bisoi, Elsa D'Angelo, Lisa Hebbert, and Dana Downey for bringing students to the Metro Clinic.

Good News!

The regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics have been funded for school year 2024-25. We will be working to identify dates and site coordinators for the April-May KIT edition.

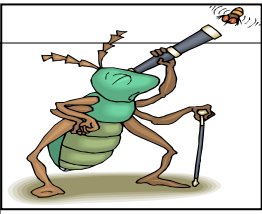
What Does Low Vision Look Like?

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:

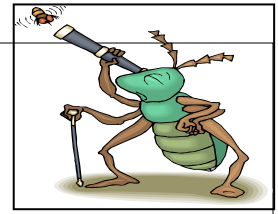
[What "low vision" looks like Video](#)

Instead of asking, 'Have I worked hard enough to deserve to rest?, I've started asking, 'Have I rested enough to do my most loving and meaningful work?'

Nicola Jane Hobbs



LOW VISION NEWS



APH ConnectCenter: Navigating Life with Low Vision

Low vision shouldn't inhibit a vibrant, fulfilling life. This Low Vision Month, explore tips and stories on establishing inclusive workplaces, home adaptations, educational strategies, and accommodated recreational activities. These resources empower individuals navigating life with low vision, offering support across various aspects of daily living.

On the Job

[Virtual Worksites: Accommodation Examples](#)

[Creating an Inclusive Workplace for People Who Are Blind or Low Vision](#)

[Bungles in the Bakery: A Look Back as a Low Vision Clerk](#)

At Home

[Lighting and Glare](#)

[Contrast and Color](#)

[Adapting Your Home for a Child Who Is Blind or Has Low Vision](#)

[What's Different About the Way Children with Blindness or Low Vision Learn?](#)

At School

[Low-Vision Assessments and Services: The Earlier Your Child Starts, The Better](#)

[Low Vision Devices: An Overview](#)

[Helpful Apps for Children Who are Blind or Low Vision](#)

[Educational Accommodations and Modifications at a Glance](#)

At Play

[Skiing for People Who Are Blind or Low Vision](#)

[Walking and Hiking](#)

[Bowling](#)

For information or referrals, call the APH ConnectCenter I&R Line toll-free (800)232-5463

Mon-Fri 8 AM—8PM Eastern Time or email connectcenter@aph.org.

At the end of the day,
the most overwhelming
key to child's success is
the positive involvement
of the parents.

Jane D. Hull



HealthyPlace.com

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. 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. 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 in Colorado 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 was disseminated to administrative unit contacts in late November 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. Our thanks for all you do to ensure our learners with deaf-blindness are identified and supported.

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 current cohort began 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

Community Intervener: A Story to Share

This special story came from one of the Community Intervenors who works with a child with deaf-blindness.

When I first met the child I work with, I was impressed by her beautiful smile and her great personality. Ten months have already passed, and we have created a great relationship of trust and a strong bond.

The child I work with and I have been working on communication and controlling her frustration. It was very difficult for her to initiate communication, especially with children her age. For example, when we went to the park for the first time, she ran up and touched everyone. She thought they were her friends and asked some adults to play with her. With time and perseverance, we created a very particular way and style of communication with her to get to the park or any social place. Now, before she approaches others, she counts 1,2,3, and takes a deep breath. This helps her be calm and regulated, so she is less inclined to touch others. Instead, we practiced her introducing herself and saying her name. This has become a much more successful social communication, and she is now happier and calmer than ever.

For more information about the Community Intervener Program, please contact Elli Streifer at elli@familyvoicesco.org

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

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 our e-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/FAWsSVo2itikrLR6>

Communication & The Deafblind Student, A Three-Part Series

Day 1: Exploring the Available Elements for Building a Learner’s Communication System

Content will include, but not be limited to:

- Discussion of the three major categories of communication system elements (e.g., vocal, unaided, aided).
- Examination of the differentiating features of each of these three types of communication systems.
- Survey of the primary examples of each of these three types of communication systems (e.g., UNAIDED – manual sign, gestures, tactile sign; AIDED – voice output communication devices [SGD], topic boards).
- Definition and explanation of multi-modal communication.

[REGISTER](#) for March 26, 2024, 11:00AM - 12:00PM AKST

Day 2: Determining the Specific Elements for an Individual Learner’s Communication System

Content will include, but not be limited to:

- Examination of primary processes through which assessment information might be collected to inform team decision-making.
- Discussion of various ways for meaningfully soliciting information from family members.
- Consideration of essential visual and auditory information and who should be involved.
- Consideration of essential motor information and who should be involved.

[REGISTER](#) for March 27, 2024, 11:00AM - 12:00PM AKST

Day 3: Considerations in Implementing an Individual Learner’s Communication System

- Content will include, but not be limited to:
- Examination of strategies for determining the essential content of a learner’s communication system, which should be represented through multiple modes.
- Recommendation of a specific method for tracking the modes through which specific communication content is represented for an individual learner.
- Discussion of techniques for simplified data collection in order to inform future decision-making.

[REGISTER](#) for March 28, 2024, 11:00AM - 12:00PM AKST



COLORADO
Department of Education

2024 SUMMER INSTITUTE ON DEAF-BLINDNESS & SIGNIFICANT SUPPORTS NEEDS

No Cost
ACVREP & UNC
credits will be offered

JOIN US AT
*Lowry Conference
Center*

*1061 Akron Way
Denver, CO 80230*



*Dates: June 24-25, 2024
8:30 am - 4:30 pm both days*

From Interaction to Formal Language - Becoming the Excellent Observer and Thoughtful Communicator with Children who are Congenitally Deafblind

Featured Speaker



Chris Montgomery has worked in the field of deafblind education and visual impairment over 25 years. He has been a classroom teacher working with a wide range of students who are visually impaired, blind, and deafblind, from emerging language children to those transitioning to an independent adulthood. In 2006, he began work as a Deafblind Education Consultant with the Texas Deafblind

Project, at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI). Most recently, Chris served as the Director of Education for Deafblind Programs at Perkins School for the Blind, in Watertown, MA.

Credit

The course will be offered for up to 15 CDE / ACVREP clock hours. One graduate level semester hour will be offered for those participants who attend the two full days and write an application paper. This is a two day training. All participants must attend both full days to receive the clock hour certificate.

REGISTER NOW

Questions regarding registration, please reach out to Roberta Curtis at curtis_r@cde.state.co.us

Participants will need to attend both days of the training. Priority will be given to team working with Colorado children and youth with deaf-blindness.

Registration is limited to Colorado residents.



Content:

During this 2-day, interactive conference we will explore ideas and questions for the adult interaction partner of congenitally deafblind learners with emerging language. Human interaction begins in infancy. From when baby and mother share a moment's gaze. Human interaction is the basis for social exchange, the exchange of information, of ideas, of emotions. Human Interaction is conversation, both spoken and unspoken. Human interaction is the foundation for well-being and quality of life. How do we join the person who is deafblind in sharing their world, a world experienced through touch? How do we arouse curiosity? What is the path to bonding? Why must we recognize and affirm communication before a meaningful, mutually understood language can be co-created?

We all have an inner voice of "self-talk". What is this voice if you're congenitally deafblind and cannot easily access the visual, auditory world around you? Is your experience processed and recorded as internal tactile-bodily sensations? How do images, sounds and voices exist in your mind as thought and language? What if you don't have an empathetic partner who is attuned to your tactile-bodily experience of the world? A partner who you share with. A partner who helps you to make meaning of and put language to your experiences.

Who Should Attend:

The first priority for this training will be Colorado Part C / Anchor Center for Blind Children / A Shared Vision / CHIP / CSDB EI BVI Program, a community intervener for 0-21 learners with deaf-blindness, and/ or school-based personnel who are working directly with a child with deaf-blindness. Teams are encouraged. This training is not open to out-of-state personnel or private practice providers due to limitations in space. Accepted attendees must be able to attend both days of the training.

PLEASE NOTE: It is a requirement that participants attend both full days of training.

Lodging:

We have limited funds for travel support. The registration form will query the need for travel support based on miles away from the training event. First priority will be participants coming from the farthest distances and who work for a CO school district in the capacity of a Service Providers to children who are deaf-blind. We will gather this information and confirm the availability of funding support for those requesting travel funding.

REGISTER NOW

Questions regarding content, please reach out to Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

***PLEASE NOTE: This training is not open to para-educators as the expectation is that the professionals attending the training bring content back to their districts for paraprofessional training.*

Registration will close when the training is capped or no later than May 20, 2024



Summer Programs at the Colorado Center for the Blind

This summer the Colorado Center for the blind will again offer its No Limits to Learning program for blind teens. In addition to the 4-week program we offered in 2023, we will also offer a 7-week program that will include attending the National Federation of the Blind convention in Orlando, Florida.

We believe blind people can do anything. Every day, we encourage and challenge each student—and they come to understand their potential as they build the skills and confidence to live the life they want. Because when you believe in yourself and experience a thriving community of positive blind people, nothing can hold you back from pursuing your dreams. This is what our summer programs offers – a positive community of thriving blind people that teach effective nonvisual skills and foster confidence in blind teens.

Summer for Success—7-week program: Dates: June 21 through August 9, 2024

This longer program will provide each student with additional instruction to cement their skills and confidence. Students enrolled in this seven-week program will attend the National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind held in Orlando Florida from July 3 to July 8. They will learn about techniques for airport travel, how to navigate a large hotel, a wide array of technology, meet blind people, attend meetings to learn more about the NFB and much more. To participate in this program applicants must be 16 years of age or older. They are required to submit an essay discussing why they want to attend the national convention.

No Limits to Learning—4-week program: Dates: July 12 through August 9, 2024

This program is open to applicants who are 15 years old and up. Except for attending the NFB Convention, this shorter program will cover all elements listed above, including challenge recreation activities.

The Colorado Center for the blind is located in Littleton Colorado. We place a strong emphasis on safety and security and follow the Youth protection policy established by the National Federation of the blind. All staff receive extensive training prior to the students' arrival. Students live with a counselor and will be supervised.

[Read our full Youth Participant Protection Policy.](#)

What is the process? First, students, their parents, TVI, or VR counselor completes the [Summer Youth Application](#) form. Once they have the student's application, all potential students are interviewed along with their parent by our director of Youth Services, Chaz Davis to help determine if our programs will be a good fit for that applicant. After talking with Chaz and if all agree the program and the student are a good fit, families will be asked to provide additional information, such as medications, food or other allergies, etc. Funding is typically available through vocational Rehabilitation in each state under the Pre-ETS, or transition programs. Chaz will also provide information about how to apply to VR in their state and to have VR fund their summer program. For students applying for the Summer for Success program, Chaz will ask them to submit an essay to him.



Summer Programs at the Colorado Center for the Blind (continued)

Here are the elements that have made our summer programs vibrant and life changing for so many teens

- Students receive instruction from positive blind role models.
- Students live with a counselor and a roommate in their own apartment to build their skills in all areas of cooking and cleaning.
- Each student gains belief and confidence in themselves as blind individuals.
- All students are required to use a long white cane.
- Students develop nonvisual techniques by using learning shades in all classes.
- Students take the following core classes: Cane Travel, Braille, Technology, and Home Management.
- Students learn about the world of work through job seeking skills class, job shadows, and work experiences.
- Students who will be attending college participate in a college readiness class.
- Students learn about methods that they can use to succeed in STEM fields through hands-on seminars.
- Students participate in challenge recreational activities including rock climbing, canoeing, self-defense, ice skating, rafting, and more.
- Discussion groups are held several times each week. Topics covered include taking charge of school and life as a blind person, dating, taking responsibility, educating the public, images of blindness, and more.
- A seminar held for family members provides them with support and encouragement to have high expectations for their blind teen.

What do Students gain?

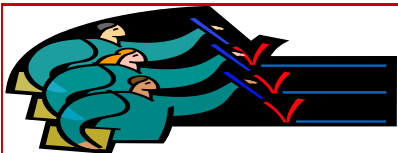
- Life-long friendships with blind peers.
- Belief in their abilities.
- Pride in being blind.
- Skills in all class areas.
- Connections with other blind people through the National Federation of the Blind in their state.
- Leadership skills.
-

About Chaz Davis, Director of Youth Programs

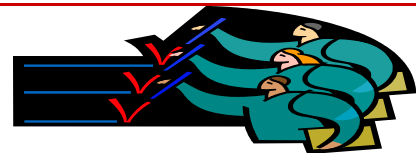
Chaz has his master's degree in social work. He is blind, a marathon runner and the father of a two-year-old. This is his third summer with the Colorado Center for the Blind.

[Complete the Summer Youth Application](#)

For more information please contact: Chaz Davis Director of Youth programs at [303-778-1130](tel:303-778-1130) or email him at cdavis@cocenter.org. Go to our website at www.cocenter.org



CHECK IT OUT!



2024 AERBVI Conference Announcement

The 2024 AER International Conference will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina. 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, APH staff are compiling the resources you need to serve students. [Learn more and sign up today!](#)

The Buzz

Calling all educators and professionals in the field of blindness and low vision! Head over to the American Printing House for the Blind Hive and check out their newest comprehensive online learning course, Unlocking the Foundations of Reading for Students with Visual Impairments. This course examines reading development for students who are blind or low vision, explores the foundation of typical reading development, illustrates instructional strategies for teaching reading, and much more! Currently available are the first 4 of 8 learning modules, with the expectancy of each month featuring a new module. Once all 8 modules are active in June, 10 hours of ACVREP credit will be available. [Enroll to The Buzz](#) now to gain the tools and knowledge needed to make an impact on the lives of your learners!

New Online Learning Course

Calling all educators and professionals in the field of blindness and low vision! Head over to the Hive and check out the American Printing House for the Blind newest comprehensive online learning course, Unlocking the Foundations of Reading for Students with Visual Impairments. This course examines reading development for students who are blind or low vision, explores the foundation of typical reading development, illustrates instructional strategies for teaching reading, and much more! Currently available are the first 4 of 8 learning modules, with the expectancy of each month featuring a new module. Once all 8 modules are active in June, 10 hours of ACVREP credit will be available. Enroll (<https://aphhive.org/#/home>) now to gain the tools and knowledge needed to make an impact on the lives of your learners!

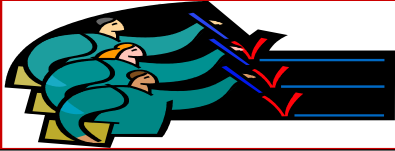
Southwest Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT) Program

CATT offers complimentary training in Assistive Technology for Teachers, parents, and students. CATT's emphasis is on the "train the trainer" approach, with a special focus on products tailored for individuals with visual impairments or blindness.

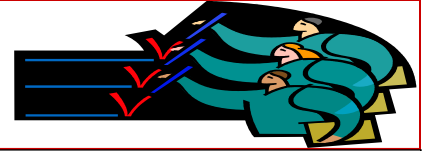
Colorado has enjoyed the following recent CATT trainings to provide examples to others who might be interested also in booking these topical trainings:

1. **JAWS/ZoomText** - CSDB
2. **JAWS** - Poudre School District
3. **Chameleon** - Douglas County Schools

For more information or to book a training, visit <https://seeitourway.org/services/catt/> or call 602-337-8243. Our regional CATT contact is Niraj Parikh.



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

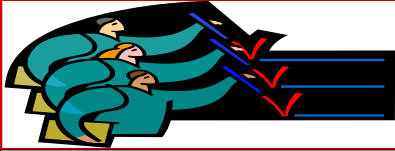
The [National AEM Center at CAST](#) has developed resources to support students who need accessible materials and technologies while learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.



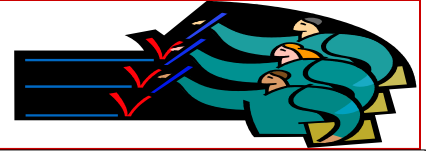
** eBooks

[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!



Amazing Training Opportunities Coming Your Way!

The 2024 Virtual Conference for Assistive Technology and Education (CATE)

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 training will be held on **June 6 - 7, 2024** and will feature 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!

No Limits to Learning—CCB Youth Programs

This is a 7-week program and will be offered June 21 through August 9 . This longer program will provide each student with additional instruction to cement their skills and confidence. Students enrolled in this seven-week program will have the opportunity to attend the National Convention of the NFB that will be held in Orlando Florida. They will learn about techniques of airport travel, how to navigate a large hotel, a wide array of technology, meet blind people, attend meetings to learn more about the NFB and much more. To participate in this program applicants must be 16 years of age or older. They are required to submit an essay discussing why they want to attend the national convention. Except for attending the National Convention, this shorter program will cover all elements listed above, including challenge recreation activities. Applicants for the 4-week program must be 15 or older. For more information, please reach out to Chaz Davis at cdavis@cocenter.org

Spring/Summer 2024: NFB STEM2U

Did you know a spectroscopist ("spek-TRAH-ska-pist") uses the James Webb Telescope to study our universe? They can study things far away like stars, galaxies, and nebulae. This year at NFB STEM2U—in fifteen locations around the country—we will become spectroscopists. We'll build models of "the Webb", learn about the Earth's atmosphere, discover why the Webb was sent to space, and explore how it studies space. We invite blind and low-vision students to [learn more and register](#).

Early Childhood Programs—The National Federation of the Blind early childhood programs provide young blind children and their families with support and guidance to master the fundamental skills of literacy and independent travel. [Learn more about our early childhood initiatives](#).

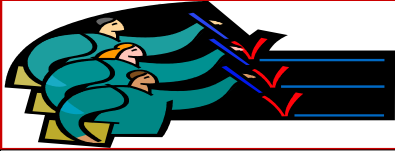
The Employment of School Mental Health Professionals in School Guidance Document

Linked is the [Employment of School Mental Health Professionals in School Guidance Document \(SB23-004\)](#), designed to assist AUs in implementing Eligible School-Based Therapists. This document aims to support Eligible School-Based Therapists to work in coordination with CDE Licensed Special Service Providers and other CDE Licensed Professionals to provide supplemental support to students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health.

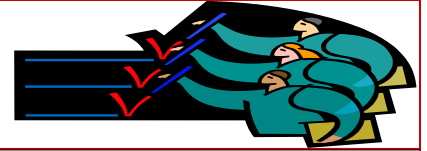
AI-Learners – Read All About It!

AI-Learners is an EdTech platform that helps students with all abilities learn early math and literacy through personalized computer games and analytics. Hundreds of students and teachers in CO are already using AI-Learners! The platform supports students with varying needs and abilities including students with CVI, autism, and other learning differences. Students can play games on desktop, iPad, and mobile devices, and with all assistive technology.

You can watch a [1-minute demo video](#) here and explore the games for free on the website: www.ai-learners.com. Reach out to the company founder now for a free one-month trial at adele@ai-learners.com



CHECK IT OUT!



Dear friends and colleagues,

We trust your pens and keyboards are busy with preparing your abstract for the ICEVI World Conference to be held in Ahmedabad, India, on 14-17 November 2024. The conference will be held at the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University campus, and speakers and delegates will include the world’s leaders in education, researchers, practitioners, technology experts, and parents who support children and young people with visual impairment.

To register for the conference, go to [Conference Registration](https://icevi2024wc.org/) Early bird (discounted) registrations close **March 31, 2024**. Full conference details are available on the dedicated conference website, <https://icevi2024wc.org/> We look forward to seeing you in the beautiful historical city of Ahmedabad in November!

Sincerely, Frances Gentle, ICEVI President,
On behalf of the Programme and Host Committees of the ICEVI 2024 World Conference



Sara Brown

Public Relations Manager

Sbrown@aph.org

APH InSights Art Submission Deadline Set for

Friday, March 29, 2024

Louisville, KY (February 29, 2024) – American Printing House for the Blind’s word renowned art program, InSights Art, is announcing its annual deadline for submissions. **Friday, March 29, 2024** is the deadline for all art submissions. Both amateur and professional artists from around the world are encouraged to enter their artwork in the juried art competition.

The art contest is open for all artists who meet the following definition of blindness: Corrected visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye (determined by a Snellen Chart); a visual field limited to 20 degrees or less, an individual who is receiving services from a school for the blind and/or recognized institute, or an individual who whose vision affects their education (IDEA). This also includes those who function at the definition of blindness due to a brain injury or dysfunction.



Original works of two-dimensional art, sculpture, and craft works are considered each year. Winners will receive prizes, experience their artwork displayed during APH’s Annual Meeting, and have a chance to travel to Louisville, Kentucky to receive their award at the annual InSights Art awards celebration.

Participants can submit their art virtually through insights@aph.org, or mail it to APH, (1839 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY 40206) with the “ATTN: InSights Art” clearly on the package.

For additional information, please visit the [InSights Art](https://insightsart.org) website. If you have any questions, please contact insights@aph.org.

RECRUITING FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Study Title: Examination of Digital Math Tools and Educational Access to Curriculum by Students with Visual Impairments



What is the Purpose of the Study? The purpose is to explore how individuals with visual impairments, both high school students in grades 9-12 and college students, use technology to participate in math learning. The technology includes both mainstream technology (e.g., tablets, computers) and specialized assistive technology for people with visual impairments (e.g., braille notetakers, video magnifiers, JAWS, VoiceOver).

Who is Conducting the Study?

- Dr. Michael Tuttle, Florida State University
- Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum, Vision for Independence / University of Arizona
- Dr. Kelly-Massoud, Perkins School for the Blind
- Dr. Tina S. Herzberg, University of South Carolina Upstate

What Will Study Participants Be Asked to Do? Participants will complete a demographic form and participate in a 90 minute focus group.

Who Can Participate in the Study?

- **High school students** with visual impairments in grades 9-12 enrolled in an academic math (e.g., algebra, geometry) who use technology at school and work with a teacher of students with visual impairments.
- **College students** with visual impairments at 2 or 4 year colleges/universities who have had a math class within the last 2 years and who use technology at college. College students may have had a visual impairment in high school or acquired it post-high school.
- **Teachers of students with visual impairments** who have 3 years or more of teaching experience and have one or more high school students who use technology in math class.
- **General education math teachers** who have a student with a visual impairment in grades 9-12 with a visual impairment in their academic math class (e.g., algebra, geometry) and who have taught math at the high school level for 3 years or more.

How Do I Sign Up for the Study? Visit https://fsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnDem4QNP6Y5GqW, consent to participate in the study/have your child participate in the study and complete the demographic form. If the participant is under 18 years of age before the focus group begins, they will be read an assent form and asked if they wish to participate in the study.

When Will I Know if I am Selected to Participate in the Study? Participants will be notified at least 1 week before the scheduled focus group. You will be notified if you are not selected to participate.

Will I be Paid for my Participation? Focus group participants will receive a \$50 Amazon gift card.

Has the Study Been Approved by an Institutional Review Board? Florida State University and University of South Carolina IRB offices approved this study. Contact the Florida State University IRB at 850-644-7900 or humansubjects@fsu.edu for more information.

Who Do I Contact for More Information? Dr. Michael Tuttle at mtuttle@fsu.edu or by 850-644-8407



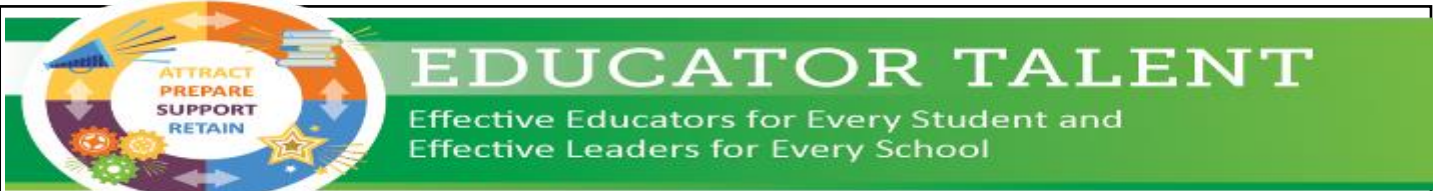
Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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>.



College Board PSAT / SAT Assessments

As of this year, College Board PSAT/SAT assessments are stage-adaptive online assessments. There are AT forms that can access screen readers and adaptive keyboards. A braille-ready option for students who need the paper-based braille form is also available. The paper-based braille form is not stage-adaptive. The paper-based assessments have not changed. Students will have the same testing experience they have had in previous years.

Educators May Add Licenses and Certifications to myColorado App

CDE has partnered with the [myColorado app](#) to provide certified educators access to digital versions of their credentials. Download the myColorado app, create an account and download certificates into the myColorado wallet. [To learn more about myColorado and the Educator Certificates, visit the myColorado FAQ page.](#)

For more information contact Colleen O'Neil at oneil_c@cde.state.co.us

Updated READ Act Requirement Chart and FAQs for Educator Preparation Programs

To further clarify understanding of requirements for the READ Act teacher training requirements that both ensure program completers earn the READ Act Teacher Training Designation as well as the licensure requirements for teachers, the Educator Preparation and Licensure teams have created [a webpage with information and updated frequently asked questions](#).

Contact the [educator preparation team](#) with questions.

Colorado Educator Loan Forgiveness Program opens March 15

Colorado educators can apply for student loan forgiveness beginning Friday, March 15. The program is designed for Colorado educators who are later in their career. Disbursement of payments will begin in July. This program is limited and not all who apply can be awarded. First preference will be given to applicants in approved rural schools/districts, followed by applicants in content-shortage area in non-rural schools/districts. Learn more about program qualifications on the [Colorado Department of Higher Education website](#).

For more information contact April Gonzalez at April.Gonzales@dhe.state.co.us.

Monthly Literacy Conversation on the Colorado Framework for Writing Instruction

[Register for monthly virtual conversations](#) on the Colorado Framework for Writing Instruction led by the reading, writing and communicating content specialist in CDE's Office of Standards and Instructional Support. Conversations will examine beliefs around writing and teaching writing. For more information contact Olivia Gillespie at gillespie_o@cde.state.co.us or 720-930-1298. For more information contact Olivia Gillespie at gillespie_o@cde.state.co.us or 720-930-1298.

Monthly Literacy conversation—Students who Remain on READ Plans Beyond Third Grade

The Reading, Writing, and Communicating Content Specialist in the Office of Standards and Instructional Support will host a monthly virtual conversation examining the guidance to support secondary students who remain on READ plans in fourth through 12th grade. The conversations will focus on writing READ plans, goal setting and progress monitoring, types of effective assessments, collecting a body of evidence to exit a student from a READ plan, multilingual students and students with disabilities. [Register for the session via Zoom](#).

For more information contact Olivia Gillespie at gillespie_o@cde.state.co.us or 720-930-1298.



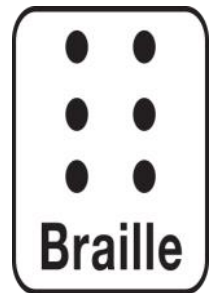
Licensure Requirements for TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists Colorado Initial Licensure in the Endorsement Area of Visual Impairment

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. This certificate expires five years from its initial issue from CDE.



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.

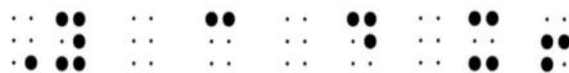
The initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate expires five years from its date of issue.

Renewal CDE Braille Competency Certificate

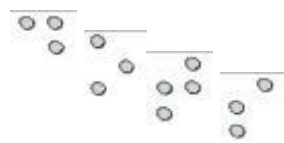
There is a one time expectation to renew the initial CDE certificate five years after its initial issue. This is accomplished by completing 15 renewal modules across the five year renewal period. These modules must be taken with one of the CDE Braille Proctors. Candidates who are in the renewal process should plan on completed three braille renewal modules during each of the five year renewal requirement.

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

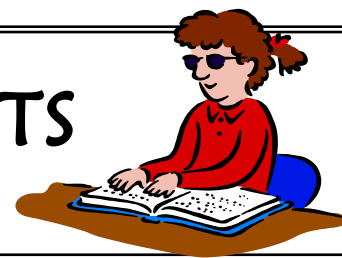
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs



You can do it !



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) 503-4647 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



I Can Lead! Summer Program for Blind and Low-Vision Children

Braille. Nonvisual Skills. Lifelong Friendships.



The National Federation of the Blind Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning® Academy (NFB BELL® Academy) empowers blind and low-vision children by developing their literacy skills. This helps them live the lives they want academically, vocationally, and otherwise.

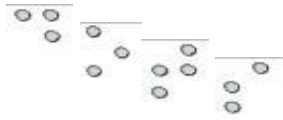
- Receive Braille and nonvisual skills instruction through fun, hands-on learning.
- Your child will connect with blind role models, other blind students, and more!
- Join us as we learn leadership, self-advocacy, and Braille skills.



The NFB BELL Academy will be offered in-person across the country throughout the summer of 2024.

For additional information and a list of participating programs, visit our website at nfb.org/bell.





CONNECTING THE DOTS



Seedlings

ATTENTION: EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS! Have you heard of our Braille for Beginners (B4B) program? Through B4B, we send free braille books to Early Intervention Programs who serve toddlers and preschoolers, ages birth to 3 with vision loss.

Hundreds of print-braille-and-picture books have been sent to Early Intervention Programs across the U.S. to share with the families they serve.

If you are an Early Intervention Program interested in receiving free braille books through B4B, please contact Kari, our B4B Program Coordinator at: (<mailto:seedlink2@ameritech.net>)

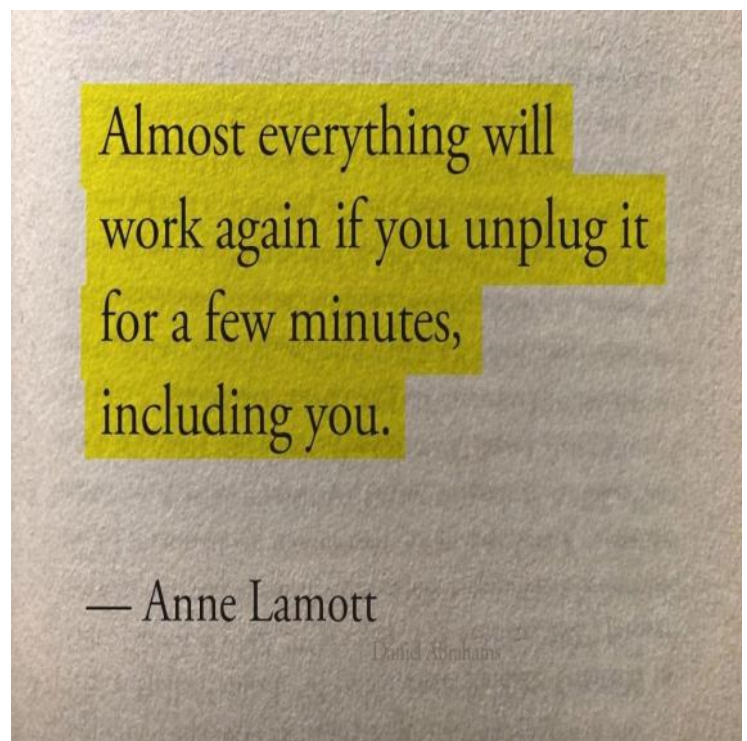
Connect the Dots

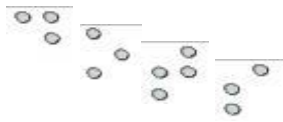
Embark on an adventure of discovery into the playful world of Connect the Dots—an educational series that turns the history and innovation of blindness and low vision into an exciting adventure for kids! They are on a mission to make learning a blast and inspire a world of inclusivity so while our building is under renovation, the PNC Foundation is helping us bring our knowledge out into the community. Over the next two years, in partnership with Louisville Free Public Library, Connect the Dots, powered by PNC Foundation, aims to inspire children through an accessibility mindset, encouraging everyone to ponder ways to create a more inclusive world. Learn More About Connect the Dots. (<https://www.aph.org/connect-the-dots/>)

Introduction to The Dot Experience

This past May, APH broke ground on The Dot Experience, a museum that will highlight APH's history and commitment to braille. We are excited to set the standard for accessibility and lead as a model museum of inclusivity and accessibility.

Set to open in 2025, they have updated APH's Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/APHMuseum/>), X (<https://twitter.com/DotExperience>), and old museum pages in preparation, which now direct visitors to the new landing page for The DOT Experience (<https://thedotexperience.org/>).





CONNECTING THE DOTS



Braille Authority of North America

Nemeth Code

★ **The Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science Notation 2022** [PDF](#) and [BRF](#)

The purpose of this revision is to modernize the code and clarify the application of pre-existing as well as newly adopted rules for transcription of mathematics and science using Nemeth within the UEB code. This document replaces the 1972 edition, as well as any updates and provisional guidance previously published by BANA.

BANA is grateful to its Nemeth Committee for their diligent work in revising and updating this document.

[Send a message to BANA's Nemeth Code Technical Committee](#)

★ **Graphing Calculator Guidelines**, Approved April 2018 [PDF](#), [BRF](#)

BANA's Nemeth Code Technical Committee has worked diligently to develop this new publication *Graphing Calculator Guidelines*. It is based on the Nemeth Code and its updates as well as on the *Guidance for Transcription Using the Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts*. BANA welcomes feedback from users of this publication. [Send a message to BANA's Nemeth Code Technical Committee](#)

★ **Provisional Guidance for Transcribing Chemistry** [PDF](#) update 05/29/2018, [BRF](#)

The BANA Chemistry Committee developed this provisional guidance for transcribing chemistry using Nemeth in UEB contexts. BANA welcomes feedback from users of this publication. [Send a message to BANA's Ad Hoc Committee on Chemistry](#)

Summer 2024: NFB BELL® Academy

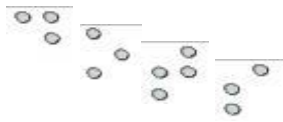
The NFB Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (NFB BELL®) Academy provides blind and low-vision children with Braille and nonvisual skills instruction through engaging activities. There is no virtual option this year—students will participate in day programs or residential settings around the country.

[Learn more about the NFB BELL Academy.](#)

Braille Study – Please Consider Taking This Survey

Three university faculty are seeking **teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs)** for a research study about the impact of the transition to UEB Math/Science and Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts. The more teachers who complete the brief (less than 10 minutes) survey, the more information we will acquire to help us understand the impact of the transition and may help us justify requesting funds to acquire or develop additional resources. Thank you in advance for your participation.

To indicate your consent to participate in this study, and to begin the survey, please click the following link: https://educationutah.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0JkOSQGM76dqHvo



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Braille Challenge 2024 at CSDB

By Amy Gunning

One of Colorado's regional competitions of the National Braille Challenge was held in the School for the Blind on Thursday, February 22. This year, there were 27 competitors across all levels of the competition. There were two apprentice groups, a freshman group, a sophomore group, and a combined junior varsity and varsity group.

To make the day meaningful for our non-competitors (our students who are just beginning their braille-learning journey and our students who are primarily print-learners), we offer "rookie" group activities. These groups participate in a variety of fun activities related to braille and tactile awareness. This year, the rookie groups rotated through the following activities:

- Music-students learned/sang jingles about shapes and braille letters
- Art-students decorated braille dots to add to a large art installation
- Literacy-students listened to stories read aloud then worked on creating sculptures with magnetic tiles and blocks
- Literacy/ILS (Independent Living Skills)-students listened to a story read aloud to them then used graham crackers, marshmallow fluff, and chocolate wafers to create the first letters of their names in braille

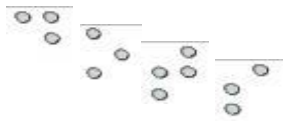


- Movement-there were two movement activities: in one, students acted out the movements as the book, *Going On A Bear Hunt*, was read aloud to them; in other movement activity, students enjoyed some free movement time in the gym with basketballs, scooters, parachutes, and more

An opening ceremony was held in the morning to kick off the event. Both Tera Spangler, CSDB Superintendent, and Jamie Lugo, School for the Blind Principal expressed their well-wishes and encouragement to the competitors and to the rookie group participants.

A workshop on braille literacy for parents was also available this year. The workshop was provided by Jenny Wheeler, Outreach Specialist from APH-American Printing House for the Blind. In this workshop, parents explored the Monarch full-page refreshable braille display device. They learned about tactile graphics and concept development with pictures being paired with information.

When all the competition sessions were complete, everyone gathered together again for the closing ceremonies to wrap up the day. It was a fun time to celebrate the hard work of the competitors, recognize the rookie group participants for their work, and acknowledge the parents who were able to attend the workshop and the closing ceremonies as well. Students, staff, and parents really enjoyed musical performances by the two student bands, the Bulldog Band and the P.R.I.D.E. Band, plus a performance by the staff band, the Key of ECC. It was really a great Braille Challenge Day!



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Braille Challenge at the Colorado Center for the Blind

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) Outreach Department collaborated with the [Colorado Center for the Blind \(CCB\)](#) to host the 2024 Littleton Denver Metro regional [Braille Challenge](#) contest in person at the CCB facility in Littleton on February 23rd. Students demonstrated their braille skills in categories including Spelling, Proofreading, Reading Comprehension, Speed & Accuracy, and Charts & Graphs.

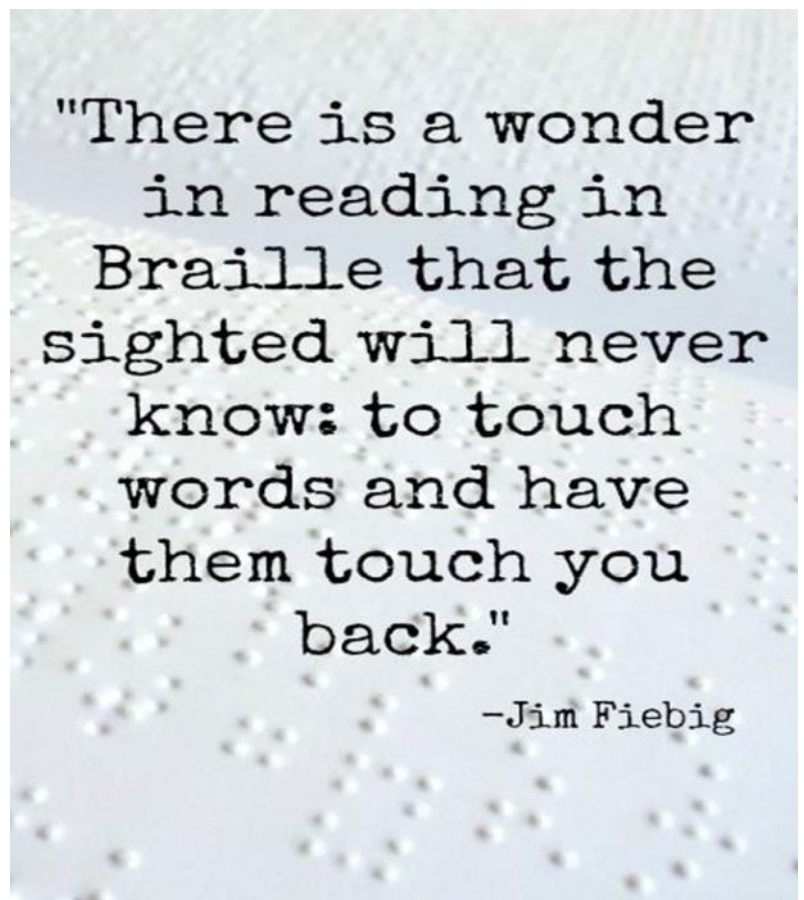
Students from the following school districts competed in-person or virtually this year: Arapahoe County School District 5 (Cherry Creek), Arapaho County School District 6 (Littleton), Denver Public Schools, El Paso County District 49 (Falcon), Mesa County Valley 51 (Grand Junction), and Weld County School District 6 (Greeley).

Thank you to the parents, grandparents, TVIs, paraprofessionals, and brailleists who participated: Jenny Appel, Elsa D'Angelo, Vicki Chinski, Abby Horner, Amber Rundle-Kahn, Lori Mattick, Melinda Russell, Alyshia Shelton, Angela Sims, Robyn Wyatt, and Tabitha Wyatt.

A special thank you to Jenny Wheeler, Outreach Specialist from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) for the six-state Southwest Region which includes California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. Jenny proctored the Freshman level contests and held a hands-on workshop for parents and TVIs to demonstrate the upcoming APH [Monarch](#) multipurpose device.

This event would not have been possible without the contributions of CSDB Outreach staff Donna Keale, Jim Olson, Danielle Steele, and Maddee Durossette; as well as CCB Executive Director Julie Deden and Chaz Davis, Director of Youth Programs. Thanks also to Wendy Stoltman for volunteer assistance. Please check the CCB website for information on their summer and year-round youth programs.

The mission of the Braille Institute's Braille Challenge is promoting braille literacy. Braille Challenge is the only academic competition of its kind held in January through March each year in North America for students who are blind or visually impaired. Braille institute developed Braille Challenge to motivate students to practice and hone their braille literacy skills, which are essential to academic and employment success.





Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

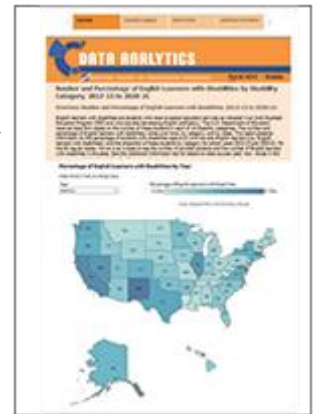


Number and Percentage of English Learners with Disabilities by Disability Category

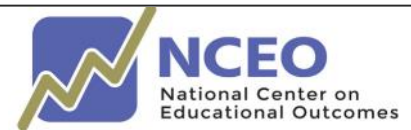
The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) recently published an interactive web-based tool, titled, [Number and Percentage of English Learners with Disabilities by Disability Category, 2012-13 to 2020-21 \(NCEO Data Analytics #18\)](#). This product presents information

on the percentage of students with disabilities ages 6-21 who are also English learners (i.e., English learners with disabilities), and the proportion of these students for each of the 13 federal disability categories. The number and percentage of English learners with disabilities

varied over time, by category, and by state. The data in this report allows users to view one or more disability categories for comparison, and provides a profile of English learners with disabilities for each state.



Guidebook on Including Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and English Learners with Disabilities in Assessments



The [Guidebook to Including Students with Disabilities and English Learners in Assessments \(NCEO Report 420\)](#) provides 10 lessons about how to ensure inclusive assessment practices for students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities. It is directed to state department of education staff and others interested in ensuring that assessments and assessment policies are inclusive of all students in the most appropriate ways possible.

The 10 lessons highlighted in the Guidebook are:

- Lesson 1. Know the student populations in your state and their characteristics.
- Lesson 2. Develop a basic understanding of how the principles of universal design apply to assessments.
- Lesson 3. Examine laws, professional standards, principles, and policies on including students with disabilities and English learners in assessments.
- Lesson 4. Gain an understanding of why it is important to include all students in assessment systems, including students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities.
- Lesson 5. Review the many lessons learned about accessible assessments.
- Lesson 6. Work with stakeholders to develop guidance for the field on making important testing decisions.
- Lesson 7. Think through intended uses of assessment results and approaches to reporting results that meet federal and professional requirements and also serve the needs of stakeholders who receive reports.
- Lesson 8. Realize that ensuring full implementation is partly the state's responsibility.
- Lesson 9. Focus on continuous improvement of the assessment system.
- Lesson 10. Learn from peers, including individuals in other states, as well as from national organizations and technical assistance partners.

A stack of books with colorful spines is on the left, and a yellow pencil with a pink eraser is on the right, both set against a blue circular background.

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




Calendar of Events

2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024

- March 25** **Deaf-Blind Webinar Series** – Conceptual Learning for Children with Deaf-Blindness: Part 2
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 6** **Metro Regional TVI/O&M Specialist Meeting**— Virtual
Contact: Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

- April 10** **Sound Bites**— 3:30-5:00 PM—Topic to be Determined
Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/3003fe0868204b739e52e195b0e9e6d6>

- April 11** **Vision Coalition**—Virtual
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

- April 15 - 26** **Spring 2024 SAT and PSAT Administration Dates**

- May 1** **See the Future Fund Education for Life Scholarship Applications Due**
Go to: <https://www.seethefuture.org/efl-app-info.html>

- May 2-3** **CDE O&M Seminar**—Adams 12 Conference Center
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

- 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@upbooces.org



2024 SEMINAR ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

📍 Adams 12 Conference Center
1500 E. 128th Avenue
Thornton, CO 80241



Date: May 2-3, 2024
Time: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Registration is limited to Colorado O&M Specialist or O&M Specialist-in-university training who reside in Colorado.

Topic: **Orientation and Mobility Strategies and Communication Techniques When Working with Students Who Are Deaf-Blind**

We have two amazing colleagues who truly understand the specially design instruction required for learners with deaf-blindness. This is time of great evolution in the intersecting fields of deaf-blindness and orientation and mobility.

Carolina Gonzalez has been an orientation and mobility specialist with the Texas School for the Blind/Visually Impaired since 1990 and with the Texas School for the Deaf since 2007. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in special education with an emphasis in visual disorders from the University of Chile, Santiago in 1979. Carolina earned her master's degree in Peripatology from Boston College in Boston Massachusetts in 1981. She has been a frequent presenter on the topic of communication / O&M strategies for learners with deaf-blindness.

Heather Withrow of Austin, Texas, is a mother of three children, one of whom is DeafBlind, one of whom is Deaf, and one of whom is a CODA*. She received a Bachelor of Arts in graphic design from Gallaudet University, a Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Orientation and Mobility as well as a graduate certificate in Deafblindness from Texas Tech University. In addition to serving as a mother and an advocate for Deaf and DeafBlind Texans, she works as a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) and is a member of the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) Governing Board.

Requirements to Receive Credit

- Must attend both days of training
- Write a graduate-level application paper.

Fifteen (15) CDE contact hours and
One (1) UNC grad semester hour will be offered

For more information or questions about
the seminar contact Tanni Anthony at
anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

REGISTER HERE

Questions regarding registration, please contact
Roberta Curtis, curtis_r@cde.state.co.us



Registration is open until April 15, 2024




Calendar of Events

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

- June 6-7** **Colorado AT Conference—virtual**
<http://www.swaaac.org/conference-for-assistive-technology-and-education-cate>
- June 17-21** **STEM Exploration Lab / 3D Printing and Astronomy Camp – CCB**
 Registration: https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e9idPoolE587702
- June 21- Aug 9** **No Limits Learning**
 Contact: Chaz Davis at cdavis@cocenter.org
- July 24-28** **AER Conference— Charlotte, NC**
 Contact: www.aerbvi.org
- October 2-4** **APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY**
 Contact: www.APH.org
- November 5-8** **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference—Huntsville, AL**
- November 14-17** **ICEVI World Conference—Ahmedabad, India**
- December 14** **CAER Wreaths Across America – Fairmount Cemetery, Denver**

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

- Sept 23-24** **Western Regional Early Intervention Conference – Albuquerque, NM**
 For more information: <http://www.wreic.org/>
- October 15-17** **APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY**
 Contact: www.APH.org

2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026

- October 7-9** **APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY**
 Contact: www.APH.org

AFTER A THREE-YEAR PAUSE...IT IS BACK!
THE 7TH ANNUAL

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUMMIT

JUNE 5-7, 2024
BRECKENRIDGE, COLORADO

Fostering Dignity and Equality for Every Child: Strategies for Inclusive Placements, Curricula, and Instruction in Early Childhood Programs Presented by Erin E. Barton, PhD, BCBA-D

Join us as Dr. Barton guides participants through what it means to know that respecting the dignity and worth of all children is a fundamental commitment that goes beyond ethical considerations. It is a recognition of the inherent value and rights of every child, regardless of their abilities, background, or circumstances. However, many of our systems are not designed to do so. Dr. Barton will provide specific strategies for supporting the dignity of children with disabilities or children who might have disabilities and their families within early childhood programs; birth through kindergarten entry. Dr. Barton will provide a rationale for the equal worth of every child through inclusive placements, curricula, and instruction while describing what that looks like in practice using specific indicators. Participants will engage in group discussions and activities that will be used to foster learning. Participants will work in teams to create an action plan to improve services in their early childhood settings.

Dr. Barton's overarching goal will be to empower participants with actionable insights and strategies, fostering a more inclusive, respectful, and dignified environment for every child in early childhood programs. Over this two-day event, participants will explore key topics that focus on:

- Naturally Occurring Inclusive Placements
- Designing Inclusive Curricula
- Evidence-based Strategies
- Professionalism

Registration

- Begins March 1, 2024 and ends by May 1, 2024
- Sessions: half-day on the 5th, full-day on the 6th, and half-day on the 7th
- Includes: breakfast & lunch on June 6th, breakfast on June 7th, and internet access each day
- Full Summit registration - \$150.00*

*You may receive one graduate credit from the University of Northern Colorado for full Summit participation for an additional charge.



Beaver Run Resort and Conference Center

Each participant will reserve and pay for their own lodging. A block of rooms is available at a reduced rate for participants (cost starts from \$146).

Let us know about your interest in participating by completing this brief survey:

https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9uEZVl5wFhPWz9s

Direct content questions to: hasan.zaghlawan@unco.edu

Sponsored by Bresnahan-Halstead Center at the University of Northern Colorado and the National Partnerships and Head Start Collaboration Office and organized in partnership with Early Intervention Colorado at CDEC and The Early Childhood Special Education Team in the Exceptional Student Services Unit at CDE.



STEM Career Exploration Lab 2024 3D Printing and Astronomy Camp



Calling all High School Students and Graduating Seniors!
Thinking about planning your education and career journey?
Interested in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)?

Join a research study to help improve STEM for students with visual impairments



Funded by the National Science Foundation



Principal Investigator Dr. Thomas Madura of San José State University

As part of this study, use tactile models, sound, and hands-on activities designed for the visually impaired to:

- *Build a 3D printer and make objects using 3D printers*
- *Learn about the universe from actual scientists*
- *Learn about Moon phases and the inside of the Sun*
- *Hear the Sun and use sound to understand light and waves*
- *Build a constellation in 3D and trace the life cycles of stars*
- *Discover the shape and structure of star clusters and galaxies*
- *Learn about the Big Bang and the structure of the universe*



Complete surveys and interviews about your experience to help us improve the activities

Meet and talk to STEM professionals with blindness/visual impairments like:

- *Kenneth Silberman of NASA, an Engineer, Programmer, and Patent Attorney*
- *Nicolas Bonne, an Astronomer and Project Lead for the Tactile Universe*

Go on free field trips to local museums and STEM businesses!

Room and Board for participating students with visual impairments*

Twenty-four hour safety and supervision: camp assistants, social activities, and new friendships

**Only for students with visual impairments*



Space is limited, apply now!



When: June 17th through 21st 2024

Where: Colorado Center for the Blind, Littleton, CO

For Parental Consent Forms, Details, and to Register Visit:

https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e9idPoolE587702



Save the Date!!



♥♥ ~ Many People, One Heart ~ ♥♥

Western Regional Early Intervention Conference

Held At The
Sheraton Uptown Hotel
In

☀️ *Albuquerque, New Mexico* ☀️

Pre-conference: September 22, 2025
Conference: September 23-24, 2025

For more details:

- Please watch for updates at the Western Regional Early Intervention Conference website: <http://www.wreic.org>
- Or contact the New Mexico School for the Deaf or the New Mexico School for the Blind at: joanne.corwin@nmsd.k12.nm.us or luannestordahl@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us



Hope To See You There!!



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 was 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.

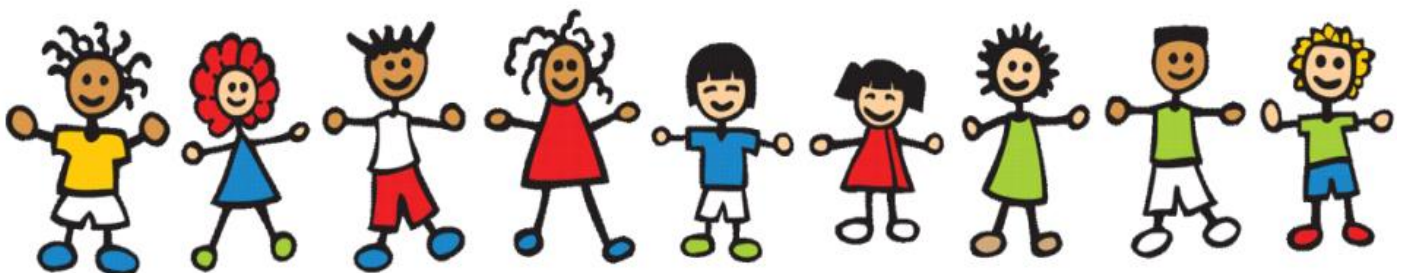
2.08(11)(a) A determination that a child is an eligible child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness may include but not be limited to:

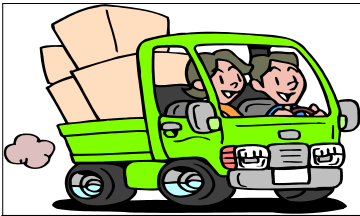
2.08(11)(a)(i) Visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;

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.





TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Perkins School for the Blind College Readiness Resource Center

The leap from the K-12 system to college and life is a big one – and starting early is key, especially for students who are blind/visually impaired. The College Readiness Resources Center is designed to help the many people involved in supporting the student to prepare for college, and life in general.

Check out the resources at:

<https://www.perkins.org/transition-center/>

<https://www.perkins.org/transition-center/college-success/>

Student End-of-Year Webinar for Postsecondary Programs

Program staff and data respondents for schools and districts that will have students participating in [ASCENT](#), [TREP](#) or [P-TECH](#) in 2024-2025 are invited to [register for a collaborative webinar](#) at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6. Topics include:

- Postsecondary programs and program eligibility
- Tools for data respondents and program staff to use when collaborating to support students planning to attend a postsecondary program
- Student End of Year coding for students who will participate in ASCENT, P-TECH Years 5-6 or TREP in 2024-2025
- Student End of Year coding for students who participated in postsecondary programs in 2023-2024

For more information contact Erica Ryan at ryan_e@cde.state.co.us or 720-576-4288.

APH CareerConnect on the Blind Abilities Podcast:

Richard Rueda, who serves as the Assistant Director of the APH ConnectCenter, along with Lori Scharff, the Lead Contractor at CareerConnect, collaborated with Jeff Thompson in the Blind Abilities Studio to share the latest updates and developments from CareerConnect. They also share how to get involved, including upcoming internship possibilities. [Listen to the podcast about CareerConnect here.](#)

Career Conversations: Interview with a Senior Software Engineer at Apple

Thursday, April 4, 2024, 6:00 – 7:00 PM EST

Join the team at APH ConnectCenter for our very popular Career Conversations Series. APH ConnectCenter staff will welcome, Andres Gonzalez, Senior Software Engineer at Apple. Andres will discuss his journey to become a blind Senior Software Engineer. The interview will begin with a discussion on how our featured professional started out and ended up in their career, including how confidence, determination and self-advocacy played a role throughout their successful employment journey.

[Register Here for Career Conversations: Interview with a Senior Software Engineer at Apple](#)

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.

May 30-June 2: Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Advocacy Academy

Do you want to learn more about IEPs and become an IEP advocate? At the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) IEP Advocacy Academy, you'll gain an understanding of education law, learn how to develop a thorough and robust IEP, acquire advocacy strategies to empower parents to advocate for students and families, assist in and create the strongest possible IEP's for blind students, and learn to train other advocates in their respective state. The deadline to apply is March 21. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Teachers of Tomorrow Program

Teachers of Tomorrow is an immersive professional development program connecting teachers of blind and low-vision students with the lived experiences of blind people. This National Federation for the Blind Program equips participants with knowledge about the skills and attitudes that help blind students thrive academically and beyond. Applications for the 2024-2025 cohort are opening soon! [Learn more here.](#)

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.

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).

ParentConnect: A family support Group offered in partnership with the Virtual Parent Support Group Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind - Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 7:30 – 8:30 PM EST

APH FamilyConnect and the Chicago Lighthouse are pleased to offer this virtual support group for parents and families of children who are blind or visually impaired. These monthly sessions are for families to connect with and learn from each other about the joys, challenges, and adventures of raising children with visual impairments and blindness.

These sessions are open to families. No ACVREP or professional development credits will be available.

[Register Here for ParentConnect](#)



IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

We are facing our first real shortage for Colorado 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
- ◆ **1 PTE TVI Contract Work**—Widefield School District 3 for SY 2024-2025. For more information, contact Rachel Lake at lakerachel@wsd3.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.
- ◆ **.5 – 1. FTE for a TVI / COMS** in Ridgeway. Contact principal Heidi Hanssen at hhanssen@ridgeway.k12.co.us
- ◆ **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

◆ Congratulations to **Liz Wieder** from St. Vrain School District and **Melissa French** from Poudre School District for earning their CDE Braille Competency Renewal Certificates! Also, hats off to **Jennifer Holt, Michael Wright, Sam Thuis, and Julie Harrison** for earning renewal clock hours. Thanks for our CDE braille competency team for their proctoring and mentoring work: **Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, and Brenda Shepard.**

Professional Development

- ◆ A big thank you to **Dr. Penny Rosenblum** for her February 21 *Sounds Bites on College Prep for Students with Blindness/Visual Impairment*. Good content, questions, comments, and discussion! Thanks to all who attended!
- ◆ Also thanks to **Linda Alsop** for her February 26th DB Webinar Series training on *Conceptual Framework for Students with Deaf-Blindness: Part 1*. We had a great turn out and it was a great foundation for our March follow-up Part two training on this topic.

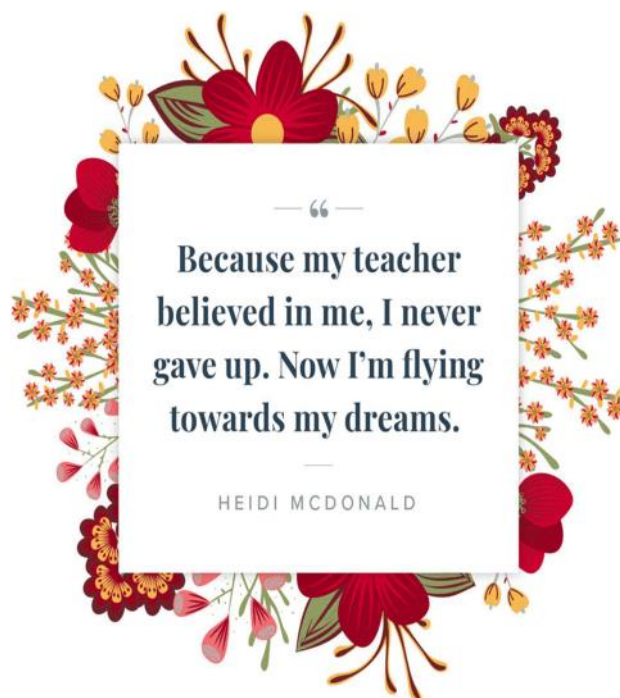
CSDB Superintendent Selected

On January 29, 2024, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Board of Trustees voted to offer the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Superintendent position to Tera Spangler.

Tera Spangler, born and raised in a small Iowa farming town, became Deaf at age 10. Graduating in 2000 with a double major in Elementary Education and Deaf Education from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, she initially taught preschool in Omaha. Relocating to Colorado Springs, she spent five years in Falcon School District 49 as an Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf before earning her Masters in Deaf Education from the University of Northern Colorado.

In 2006, Tera joined the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, embarking on a multifaceted journey. She held various roles, including Elementary Teacher, Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator, Principal, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and presently serves as the Interim Superintendent. Alongside her professional roles, she pursued an Educational Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from Oakland University.

Tera's commitment to advocating for Deaf, Blind, and Deafblind students remains unwavering. Her leadership strives for language access and equitable opportunities, endeavoring to create educational environments where students have equal access to language and visual information.





COLORADO
Department of Education

FROM: Colorado Department of Education
Exceptional Student Services
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202

MAIL TO:

25-38B-3401

State of Colorado Department of Education

Commissioner: Susana Córdova

Colorado State Board of Education Members

Stephen Varela
3rd Congressional District

Rebecca McClellan
6th Congressional District

Angelika Schroeder
2nd Congressional District

Kathy Plomer
At Large

Steve Durham
5th Congressional District

Lisa Escarcega
1st Congressional District

Karla Esser
7th Congressional District

Debora Scheffel
4th Congressional District

Rhonda Solis
8th Congressional District

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