NCDB ANNUAL SURVEY

2023 findings from the Annual NCDB Survey

National Center on Deaf-Blindness

"My job would be next to impossible without NCDB and the wonderful resources, advice and help that they share."

Executive Summary

In all, 62 professionals responded to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness evaluation survey about the time period from March 1, 2022 to April 1, 2023. The respondents work in state deaf-blind projects as educational specialists, technical assistance specialists, family engagement specialists, project coordinators, project directors, and other project staff.

- **Nearly all** State Deaf-Blind Program respondents…

  - …accessed the National Center on Deaf-Blindness website.

  - …agreed with statements that website resources addressed their needs, were useful for their work with families / educators, and were aligned with practice. Most strongly agreed.

  - …agreed that the website's "For State Projects" section provided information helpful for their TA projects, was well-organized, kept them informed, and increased their knowledge of high-quality TA practices.

  - …interacted with NCDB staff, primarily by joining NCDB webinars, asking NCDB staff specific questions related to their work, and participating peer learning communities.

  - …agreed that responses from NCDB staff were timely, that information aligned with practice, that staff addressed critical issues, and that NCDB staff provided information useful to their work with educators and families. Most strongly agreed.

- Two-thirds of the respondents (67%) accessed and used content from *Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development*, primarily as a resource for presentations and trainings, for universal technical assistance, to support families, and as a resource for child-specific technical assistance.

- About half of the respondents (53%) accessed and used content from *Understanding Access to the General Education Curriculum*, primarily to support universal TA activities, as a resource for child-specific TA, and to support families.

- The *Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules*; the immersive microsites on nationaldb.org; and *Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development* were considered the most useful resources.

NCDB Annual Survey Results

In April 2023, an email was sent from the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) to state deaf-blind project staff throughout the country, inviting them to participate in an evaluation survey. The email included a link to the online survey. The survey contained 13 questions, of which four questions gave participants an opportunity to answer open-ended questions about their experiences and needs. The goal of the survey was to measure the overall quality, relevance, and usefulness of NCDB products and services during the evaluation time period from March 1, 2022 to April 1, 2023. The following report summarizes the findings.

Respondents

A total of 62 professionals in State Deaf-Blind Projects participated in the survey. The respondents included Project Directors, Educational and Technical Assistance Specialists, Project Coordinators, Family Engagement Coordinators and Specialists, and other respondents. Most of the respondents were Project Directors and Educational Specialists / Technical Assistance Specialists.

- Project Director 38%
- Educational Consultant/ TA Specialist 23%
- Project Coordinator 18%
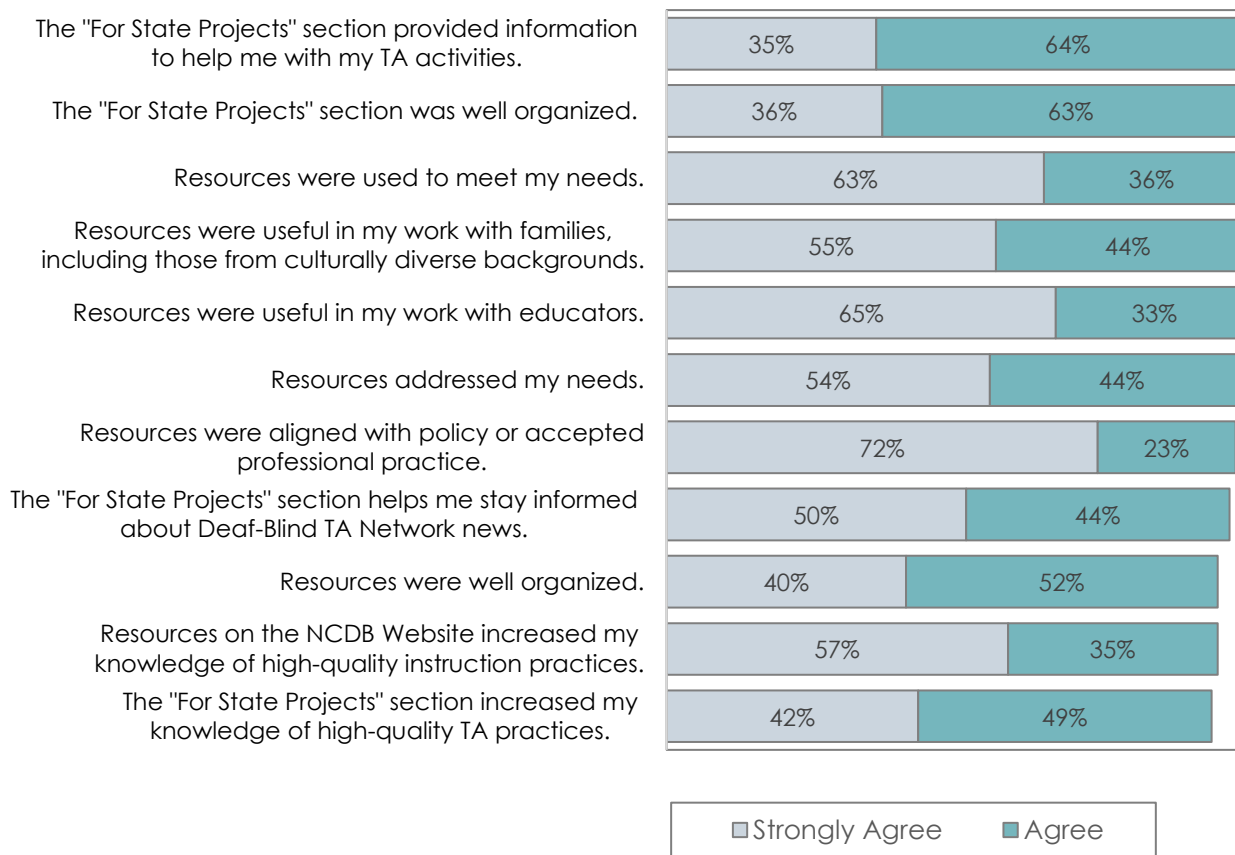- Family Engagement Coordinator/ Specialist 13%
- Other 8%
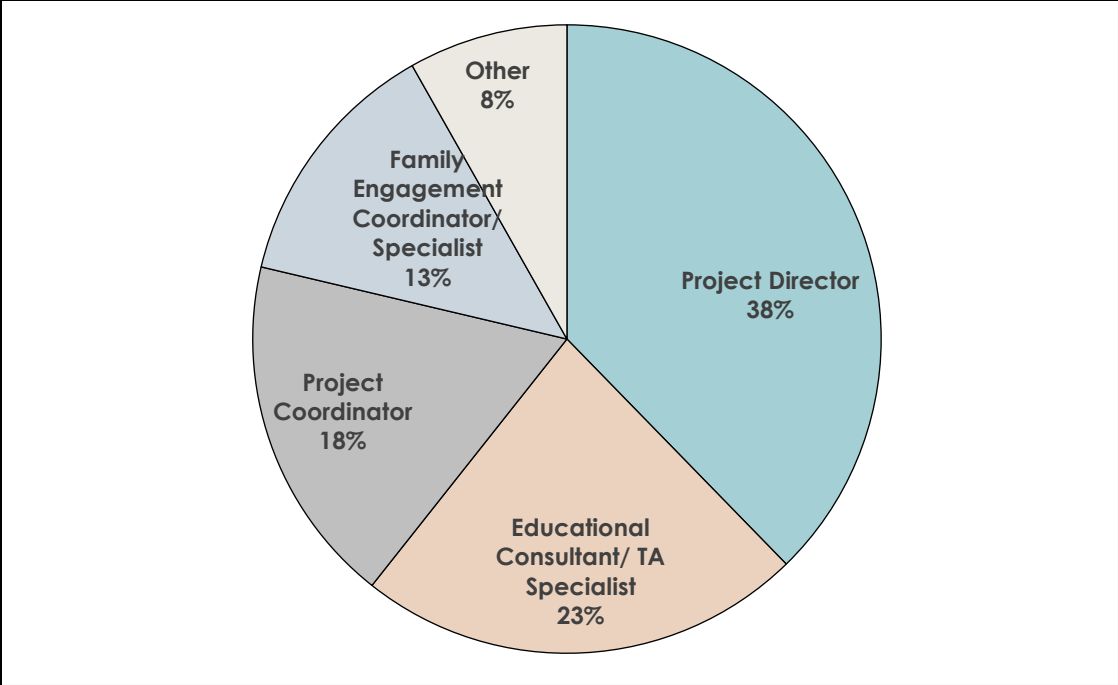
National Center on Deaf-Blindness Website

All but two respondents (97%) accessed the National Center on Deaf-Blindness website during March 1, 2022 to April 1, 2023. The other two respondents were unsure. Similar to the last three years, at least 91% agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about the website, excluding the "Not applicable" responses.

- Resources were well organized.

- Resources were aligned with policy or accepted professional practice.

- Resources addressed my needs.

- Resources were useful in my work with families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- Resources were useful in my work with educators.

- Resources were used to meet my needs.

- Resources on the NCDB Website increased my knowledge of high-quality instruction practices.

- The "For State Projects" section was well organized.

- The "For State Projects" section provided information to help me with my TA activities.

- The "For State Projects" section helps me stay informed about Deaf-Blind TA Network news.

- The "For State Projects" section increased my knowledge of high-quality TA practices.

State DB Projects find the NCDB website useful and informative.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree
The "For State Projects" section provided information to help me with my TA activities.	35%	64%
The "For State Projects" section was well organized.	36%	63%
Resources were used to meet my needs.	63%	36%
Resources were useful in my work with families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.	55%	44%
Resources were useful in my work with educators.	65%	33%
Resources addressed my needs.	54%	44%
Resources were aligned with policy or accepted professional practice.	72%	23%
The "For State Projects" section helps me stay informed about Deaf-Blind TA Network news.	50%	44%
Resources were well organized.	40%	52%
Resources on the NCDB Website increased my knowledge of high-quality instruction practices.	57%	35%
The "For State Projects" section increased my knowledge of high-quality TA practices.	42%	49%

☐ Strongly Agree ■ Agree

About two-thirds of the respondents strongly agreed that resources met their needs, were useful to their work with educators, and that resources were aligned with policy or accepted professional practice. The chart above demonstrates that most state deaf-blind project respondents find the NCDB website useful and informative.

Of the 22 comments written about the NCDB website, 14 had praise for its useful resources or organization; four comments were criticisms about the search function; and four others had recommendations. Positive comments include:

> *"I am thankful for the 'search' functions because there is so much information on the website, it would be overwhelming if I couldn't search for the specific info I need at any given time."*

"I am very grateful the Literacy site for student with vision and hearing loss was moved to the NCDB site. It is favorite of mine and the teams I serve."

"I appreciate having such a great resource. Also NCDB staff are always so helpful assisting me to address my needs."

"I know there is so much information to organize. I use the site on a daily basis. Thank you."

"I love that I can go back and find the Monthly news blast when I have time to read it more thoroughly."

"It was really helpful to get the brief tour at summit and see how the info topics are organized. Navigation on the website has not felt intuitive, and that was certainly a step in the right direction."

"The information in the website is very pertinent to my job. Much of the materials is evidence based."

"The monthly updates on the state project listserv is very helpful to keep me informed."

The four complaints pertained to the difficulty of finding resources on the website:

"I don't find the search to be very intuitive. It never seems to take me to the information I am looking for."

"I have a hard time finding things on the website. I don't think the search feature is that great. For example, just today I wanted to find info on the Common Measures. I wasn't able to find what I needed (PD Quality Component Checklist). It could be because it is only offered in basecamp? So that could be my error."

"It is sometimes hard to find what you need but I eventually get it."

"Resources on best practices are not easily accessible unless you know the name of the exact resource I am looking for."

Four respondents offered the following recommendations about the website.

"Is it possible to ask researchers to provide summaries or key take aways of research findings? Research should be informing our practice but we don't always have access to it. Even though links are provided to articles we cannot always access them. And we might not always understand what the research means for our practice. We should have research informing our practices, not just acceptable professional practices. Can we have a workgroup that tackles this?"
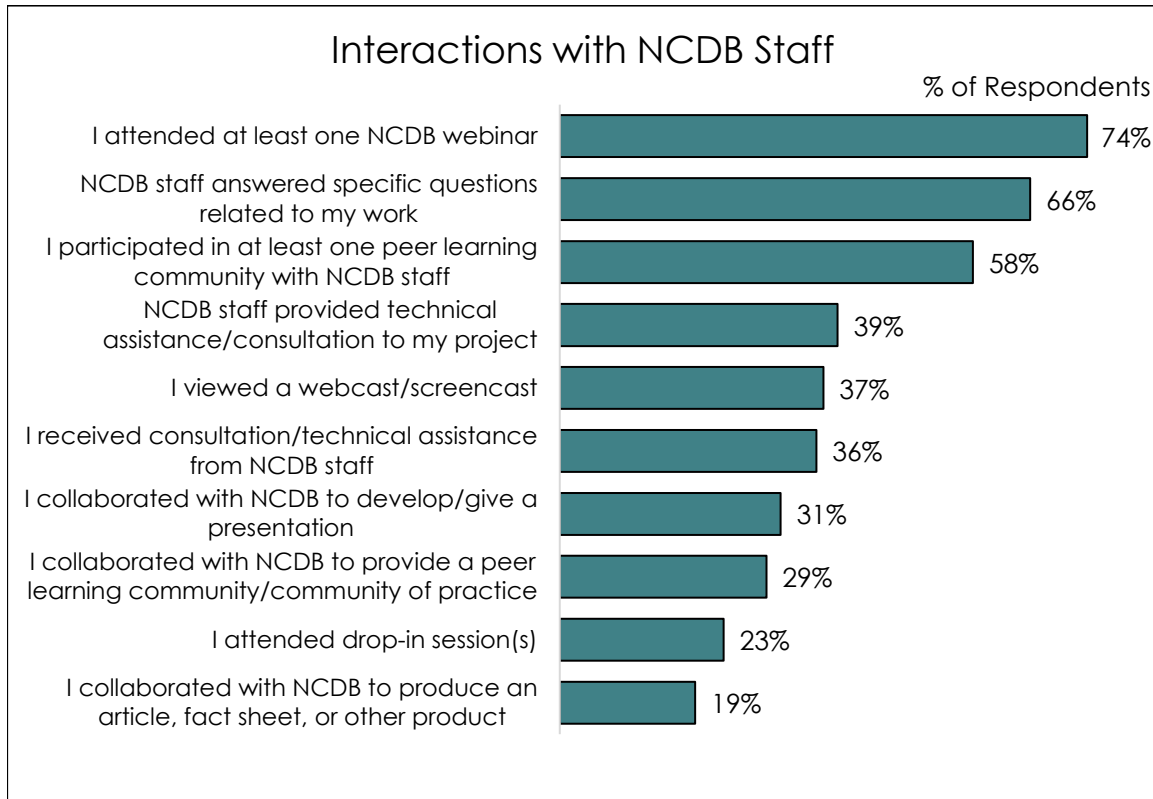
"The child count informational map was not available. This tool was able to provide child count information which was very helpful. Hope that will be available again soon."

"When the changes were made a while ago and the map of the US got moved from the home page, it made it a little more difficult to find the SDBPs by state. But adding the link at the top helps. It seems a little odd that the 'for SDBPs only' section is open to the public to access. It would be helpful to have a section labeled 'for Professionals' since there is one for families and one for SDBPs. 'Info Center' is a little unclear to the user. Perhaps Info & Resources or Resources & Literature. I LOVE the options and resources under 'Info Topics' but perhaps it should be more specific for the user, such as 'DeafBlind Related Topics.' Because it feels like you have to spend a good amount of time looking for information and resources. It would be helpful to have a very clear way to go directly to a database of archived resources/online library. 'Legacy Products' is a confusing title as it does not draw people in to find current resources."

"Having the website organized in a way that makes it easier to go directly to educational resources would be really helpful."

NCDB Staff

All but two of the respondents (97%) interacted with NCDB staff during March 1, 2022 to April 1, 2023. As shown in the chart below, most respondents asked NCDB staff specific questions related to their work and participated in webinars and peer learning communities. Nearly half (42%) were involved in all three NCDB staff interactions.

Interactions with NCDB Staff

% of Respondents

Interaction	%
I attended at least one NCDB webinar	74%
NCDB staff answered specific questions related to my work	66%
I participated in at least one peer learning community with NCDB staff	58%
NCDB staff provided technical assistance/consultation to my project	39%
I viewed a webcast/screencast	37%
I received consultation/technical assistance from NCDB staff	36%
I collaborated with NCDB to develop/give a presentation	31%
I collaborated with NCDB to provide a peer learning community/community of practice	29%
I attended drop-in session(s)	23%
I collaborated with NCDB to produce an article, fact sheet, or other product	19%

Nearly all agreed, and most strongly agreed, with the following statements:

- Overall, the responses from NCDB staff were timely.

- NCDB staff addressed problems or issues critical to my work.

- Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support educators.

- Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- Interactions (including information) with NCDB staff proved useful in my work in systems change.

- Information I received from NCDB was delivered in a way that was easily understood.

- Information I received from NCDB staff was aligned with policy or accepted professional practice.

As shown in the chart below, at least half of the respondents strongly agreed with these statements, and 5% or fewer disagreed. Ratings did not differ significantly based on role.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Overall, the responses from NCDB staff were timely	81%	18%	2%
Information I received from NCDB staff was aligned with policy or accepted professional practice	80%	15%	5%
NCDB staff addressed problems or issues critical to my work	78%	20%	2%
Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support educators	73%	27%	0%
Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds	68%	30%	2%
Information I received from NCDB was delivered in a way that was easily understood	64%	36%	0%
Interactions (including information) with NCDB staff proved useful in my work in systems change	55%	40%	4%

Comments about NCDB Staff

Survey respondents were also asked to share any additional comments about NCDB staff.

"I have always received timely and profession feedback to my questions for NCDB staff. Thank you all!"

"Staff are knowledgeable and great to work with."

"NCDB staff are amazing!"

"Every single staff member I encountered was exemplary in terms of knowledge, professionalism, listening and understanding, ability to convey ideas, compassion, diligence, and just plain nice people. Working with this community has been the epitome of my career."

"Staff are SO HELPFUL, and explain things clearly. Lead me to what I need, and offer options when appropriate."

"Working with the NCDB staff virtually and at workshops/conferences is by far one of the best parts of my experience as state DB project staff."

While none of the respondents wrote criticisms about the NCDB staff, one individual included the following observation and recommendation.

"The timeliness from NCDB staff varies on the person. It would be good to have NCDB staff keep their respective Basecamp sections up to date. Some are very thorough and up-to-date (Transition) and others have missing information or seem very dated and don't include recent information."

Words most commonly used to describe the information services provided by NCDB staff are:

• Knowledgeable   • Helpful   • Supportive   • Informative
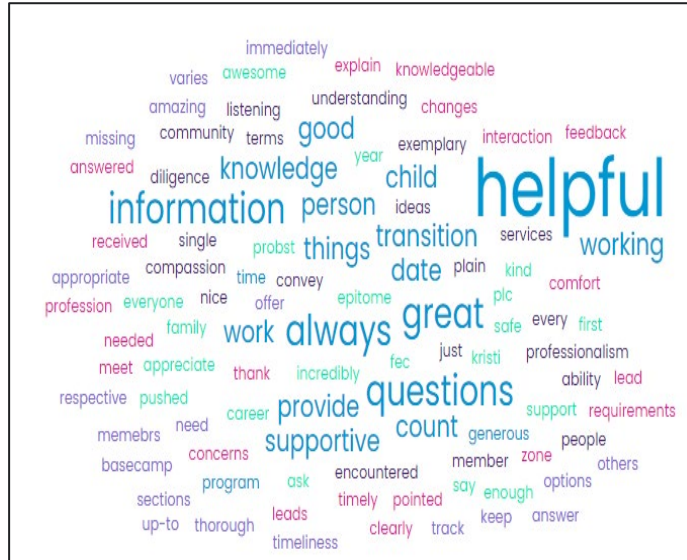
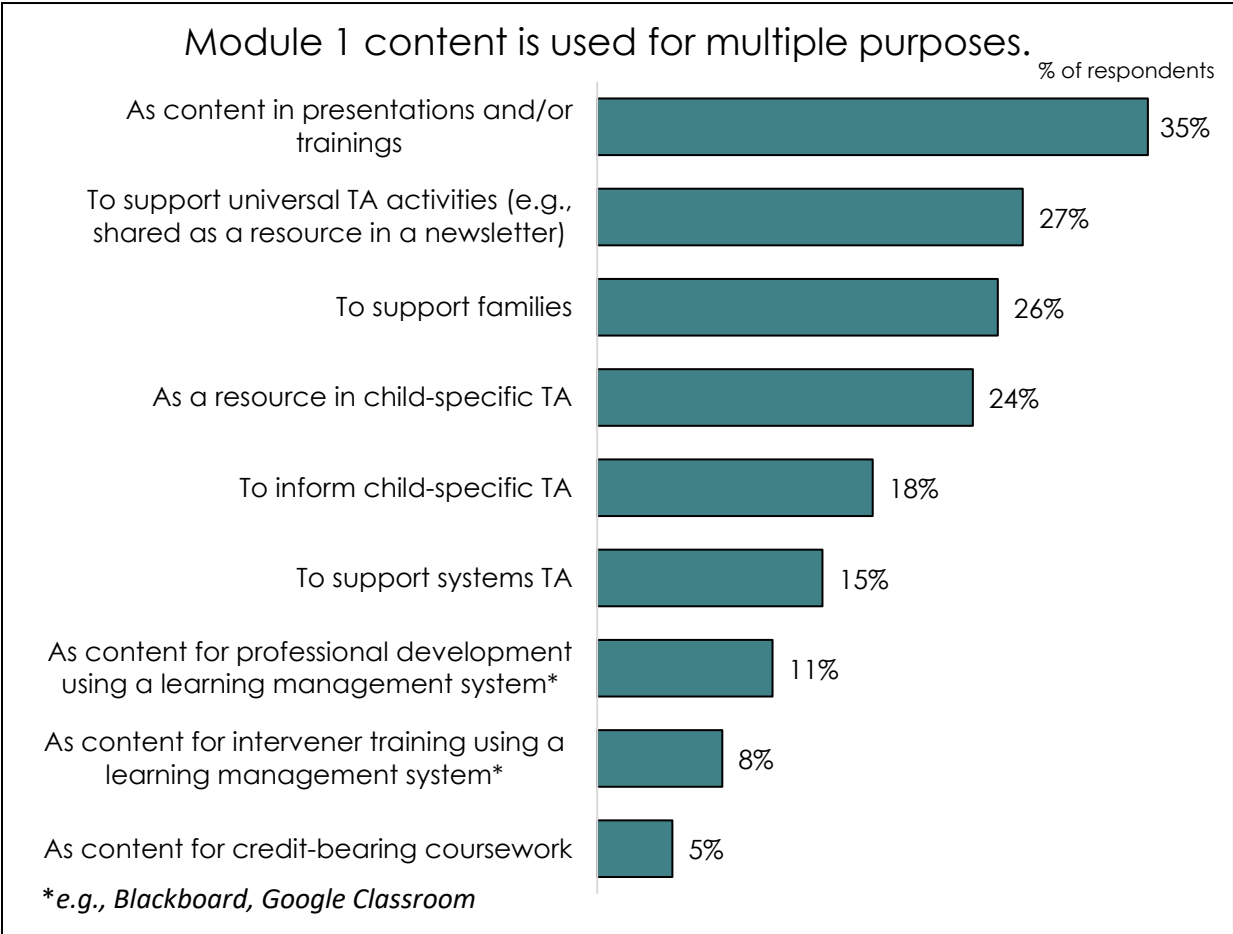## *Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development*

"Module 1 provides need-to-know, practical information that teachers and early intervention providers can put to use right away in their classrooms and other settings, with children birth through 21. Participants will get a solid foundational understanding of deaf-blindness that will be built upon in subsequent modules. It includes four 30-minute lessons that cover an introduction to deafblindness, preparing for learning, foundational teaching strategies, and building relationships."

https://www.nationaldb.org/products/modules/pd/module-1/

In response to the survey question "*In what ways have you used Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development between March 1, 2022 and April 1, 2023?*," 67% of respondents identified at least one way. About two-thirds used Module 1 content for multiple purposes. Respondents in all roles accessed and utilized the Module.

As shown in the following chart, respondents typically used Module 1 as a resource for presentations and training, for universal technical assistance, to support families, and as a resource for child-specific technical assistance. Module 1 was used less frequently for professional development and intervener training through learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard and Google Classroom) or for credited coursework content.

Module 1 content is used for multiple purposes.

% of respondents

Purpose	%
As content in presentations and/or trainings	35%
To support universal TA activities (e.g., shared as a resource in a newsletter)	27%
To support families	26%
As a resource in child-specific TA	24%
To inform child-specific TA	18%
To support systems TA	15%
As content for professional development using a learning management system*	11%
As content for intervener training using a learning management system*	8%
As content for credit-bearing coursework	5%

e.g., Blackboard, Google Classroom

Others use Module 1 for personal professional development and to share with colleagues. Comments about *Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development* reflect enthusiastic support for having the resource, as well as showing a variety of ways the content is utilized.

"I appreciate having resources such as the modules."

"We are going to work to build this into credit-bearing coursework in the next year."

"Module 1 is awesome! I look forward to the next modules."

"This information was shared with the family group."

"This module has been and will continue to be very useful in initial TA with school teams."

"10 minute videos are fantastic! Can't wait for the next module!"

"Nice resource! would love to hear how other states are using this resource too."

"We are excited to integrate into an LMS and attach a way for teachers to earn CEUs as a motivator. The offering of CC and sign language interpretation is great! Keep doing that."

"We will be using the content in the same ways, and in new ways, if the project is refunded. Looking forward to more modules!"

A few respondents offered the following suggestions about the module.

"Design a pre-post assessment that can be used by professionals and for SDBPs to gather change of knowledge data."

"The module should address cultural and language diversity."

"Consider hiring certified Deaf interpreters for any interpreted information in future modules."

Understanding Access to the General Education Curriculum

Understanding Access to the General Education Curriculum, is a PDF article located on the NCDB website, on the Access to the General Education Curriculum webpage, at https://www.nationaldb.org/for-state-deaf-blind-projects/access-gec/
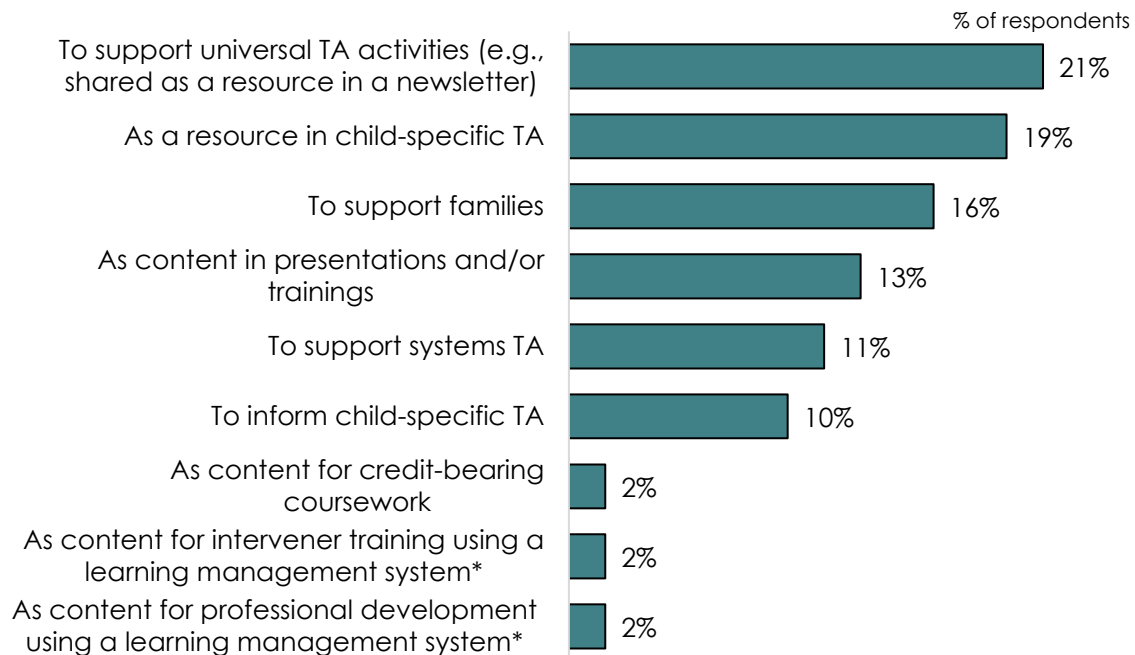
Topics include:

- Providing Meaningful, Equal Access
- What the Laws Say
- Standards and Assessments
- Standards-Based Individualized Education Programs
- Additional Goals Beyond the Academic Content
- The Role of State Deaf-Blind Projects
- The Challenges of Providing Access to the GEC

In response to the survey question "*In what ways have you used the article Understanding Access to the General Education Curriculum, found on NCDB's Access to the General Education Curriculum webpage, between March 1, 2022 and April 1, 2023?,*" 53% of respondents identified at least one. Over half of the users (58%) incorporated content for two or more purposes. Respondents in all roles read and utilized content from the article.

As shown in the following chart, those who used the *Understanding Access to the General Education Curriculum* article typically used it to support universal TA activities (e.g., shared as a resource in a newsletter), as a resource for child-specific TA, and to support families. Few respondents used the article for course content or for professional development / intervener training through learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard and Google Classroom). Other uses include staff professional development, grant writing, and "to increase my knowledge of accessing GEC so I am more knowledgeable in understanding our state systems and practices."

The *Understanding Access to the General Education Curriculum* article serves many purposes.

% of respondents

Purpose	%
To support universal TA activities (e.g., shared as a resource in a newsletter)	21%
As a resource in child-specific TA	19%
To support families	16%
As content in presentations and/or trainings	13%
To support systems TA	11%
To inform child-specific TA	10%
As content for credit-bearing coursework	2%
As content for intervener training using a learning management system*	2%
As content for professional development using a learning management system*	2%

e.g., Blackboard, Google Classroom

A few respondents provided the following recommendations.

"Host webinars to share content in the document."

"My experience is that teams need assistance with the DeafBlind specific access issues, and guides/assessments like the Intervener Guide provide teams with the DeafBlind perspective they are often seeking."

"There are universal aspects in accessing the GEC. As well, there are specifics that apply to specific states or districts [that should be examined.]"

"I need some examples, including videos and photos, of DB individuals across the ages accessing GEC; I also need considerations for child-specific TA that aligns with the needs of Gen Ed and SPED teachers (language around goals/objectives, assessments, teaching strategies, etc.)

Most Useful NCDB Resources

Of the 62 survey respondents, 35 (56%) commented in response to the survey question "*What was the most useful NCDB product, tool, or resource that you used between March 1, 2022 and April 1, 2023?*" The majority of respondents indicated that the most useful NCDB resources were those that explored interveners, literacy, TA, and the child count; the *Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules (OHOA)*; and *Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development*.

NCDB resources that were most useful included

- *Intervener Training Resources for State Deaf-Blind Projects (n=4)*

- *Literacy for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (n=3)*

- *Providing Technical Assistance to Families: A Guide for State Deaf-Blind Projects (n=2)*

- *Tools to Employ and Support Interveners (n=2)*

- *Child Count (n=2)*

- *The Sooner the Better: A Framework for Training Early Intervention Practitioners on Deaf-Blindness*

- *Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules (OHOA)* modules *(n=9)*

- *Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development (n=5)*

- Practice Guides *(n=2)*

- *An Overview of Deafblindness* factsheet

- *Understanding Access to The General Education Curriculum*

- NCDB staff *(n=3)*

- NCDB website in general *(n=2)*

- Other online resources (Basecamp, news) *(n=2)*

"Each time I go to NCDB site I learn something more useful than I did the time before."

Additional Comments

The evaluation survey found that the National Center on Deaf-Blindness is an invaluable support for state deaf-blind project staff, particularly NCDB staff and website resources. State deaf-blind project staff utilize the staff and the website frequently and rely on the resources for accurate and useful information. Other comments and recommendations from survey respondents include the following.

Positive comments:

"As this is my first time doing the child count for our state, it was a bit confusing when I started and was not sure what to do but the video regarding the child count and the answers to my question by the NCDB staff was very helpful and provided clarity to my work."

"I have used all 27 modules this year."

"My job would be next to impossible without NCDB and the wonderful resources, advice and help that they share."

"NCDB staff are always helpful. They quickly answer questions and provide numerous resources."

Suggestions include developing new resources and addressing the various spelling and meaning variations of "Deaf-Blind."

"Could you consider changing your spelling of Deaf-Blind to DeafBlind just like HKNC?"

"Is there a section on the website that addresses/guides language choice for deaf-blind vs. deafblind vs DeafBlind? This might be helpful to share if not."

"Our Project Officer comments frequently on Communication systems. Is there a way to collaborate with SLPS who have experience with DB individuals who use robust vocabulary AAC systems?"

"I would love something like the intervener team discussion guide that is an access rubric assessment. Even students with interveners can still have access needs and it can be helpful to document the when/where/what/why/ how of access breakdowns and the multiple ways access can be provided."

"More generalized forms and procedures for state projects."

"Develop a series of checklists or QPIs for systems work and possibly team consultation."

"More practical information for literacy / emergent literacy for young children with complex learning needs who do not access print or braille."

National Center on Deafblindness, 2023

nationaldb.org