

NCDB ANNUAL SURVEY

2024 findings
from the
Annual NCDB
Survey



**National Center
on Deafblindness**

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Executive Summary

In all, 35 professionals responded to the National Center on Deafblindness evaluation survey about the time period of October 1, 2023 – February 29, 2024. The respondents work in State Deafblind Projects as Educational Specialists, Technical Assistance Specialists, Family Engagement Specialists, Project Coordinators, Project Directors, and other project staff.

- **All (100%)** State Deafblind Project respondents
 - ...accessed the National Center on Deafblindness website.
 - ...agreed with statements that website resources were useful for their work with educators, were aligned with accepted professional practice, met their needs, and were useful for their work with families. Most strongly agreed.
 - ...agreed that responses from NCDB staff were timely, that information from NCDB staff was aligned with accepted professional practice, and that interactions with NCDB staff were useful in their work to support families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds. Most strongly agreed.

- **At least 90%** agreed that
 - ...the website resources increased their knowledge of high-quality instructional practices and resources were well-organized.
 - ...the “For State Projects” section helped them stay informed about Deafblind TA Network news, provided information to help them with TA activities, was well-organized, and increased their knowledge of high-quality TA practices.
 - ...they interacted with NCDB staff, primarily by asking NCDB staff specific questions related to their work, joining NCDB webinars, and participating in peer learning communities.

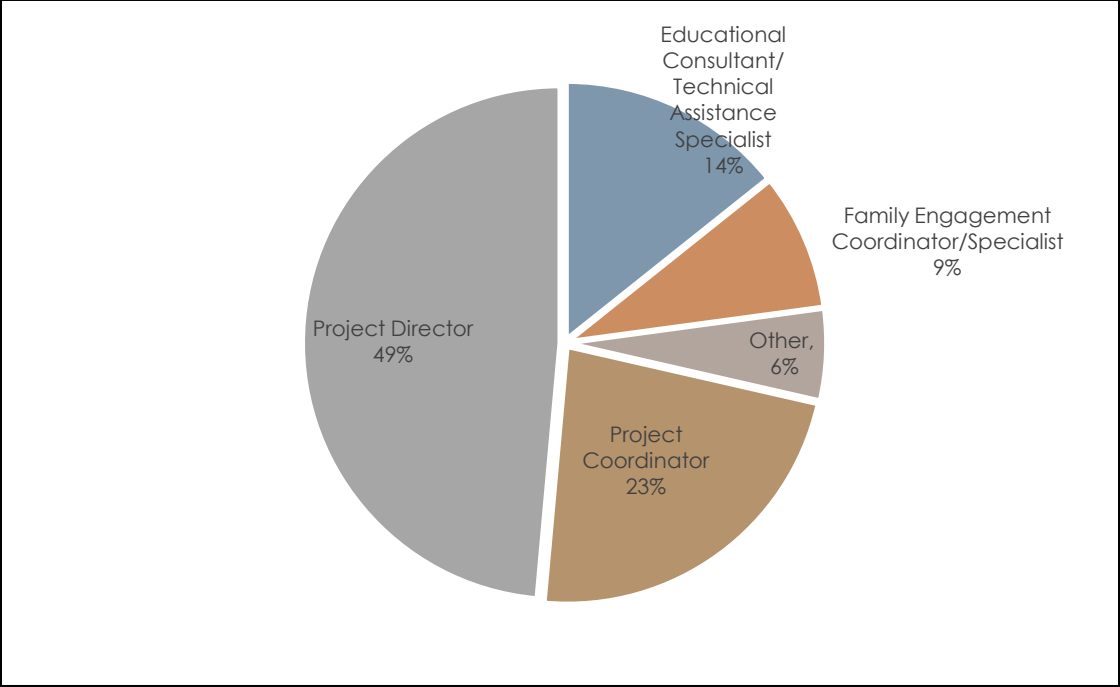
- ...agreed that responses from NCDB staff were timely, that information aligned with practice, that staff addressed critical issues, and that NCDB staff provided information useful to their work with educators and families. Most strongly agreed.
- About one-third of the respondents (34%) accessed and used content from *Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind*, primarily for child-specific technical assistance, for universal technical assistance, to inform child-specific technical assistance, and as a resource for presentations and trainings.
- Most of the respondents (60%) accessed and used content from *Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide*, primarily for child-specific technical assistance, as content for presentations and trainings, to support families, and to support universal technical assistance.
- The majority of respondents indicated that the most useful NCDB resources were modules, the *Tools to Employ and Support Intervener* webpage, and other resources.

NCDB Annual Survey Results

In March 2024, an email was sent from the National Center on Deafblindness (NCDB) to State Deafblind 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 thirteen questions, of which four 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 of October 1, 2023 – February 29, 2024. The following report summarizes the findings.

Respondents

A total of 35 professionals in State Deafblind 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 Project Coordinators.



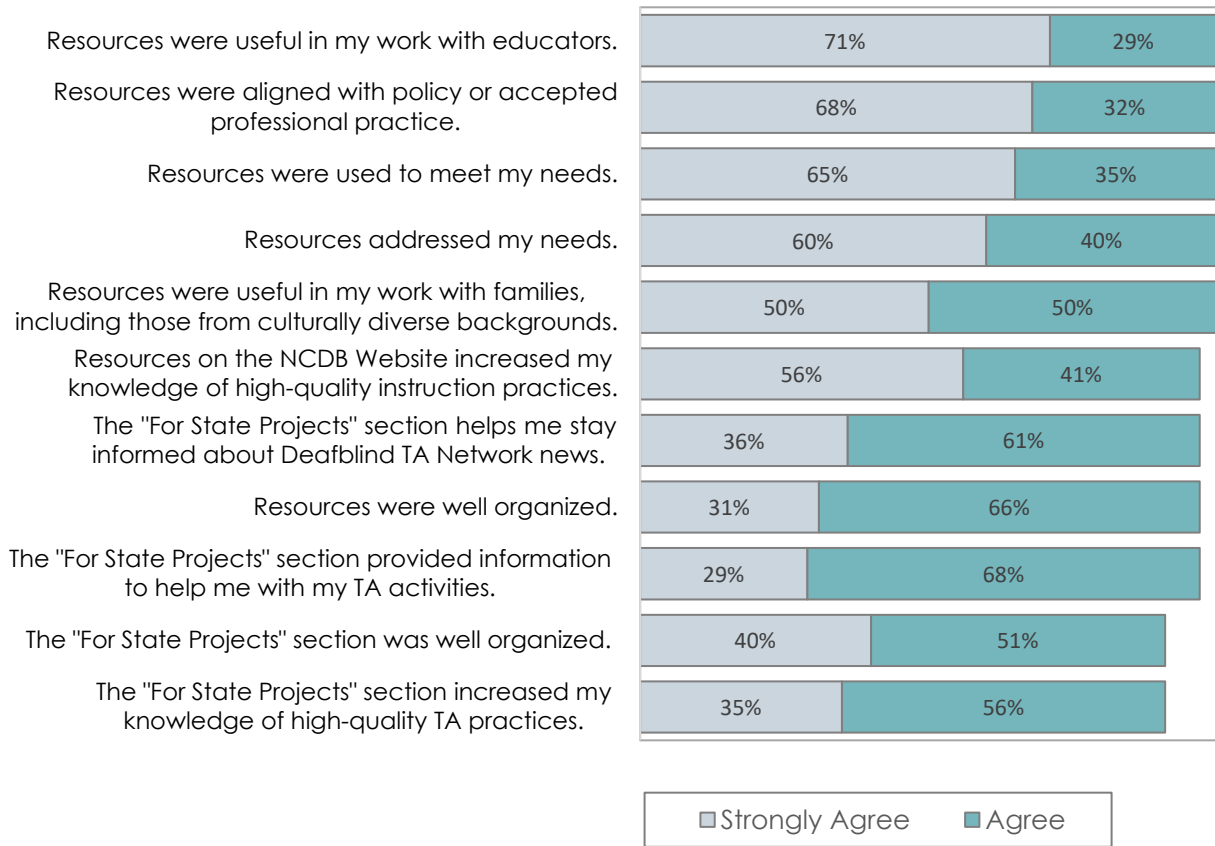
National Center on Deafblindness Website

All of the respondents (100%) accessed the National Center on Deafblindness website <https://www.nationaldb.org> during October 1, 2023 – February 29, 2024. Similar to the last four 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 Deafblind TA Network news.
- The "For State Projects" section increased my knowledge of high-quality TA practices.

About two-thirds of the respondents strongly agreed that resources were useful to their work with educators, that resources were aligned with policy or accepted professional practice, and that resources met their needs. The following chart demonstrates that most State DB project respondents found that the NCDB website was useful, informative, and met their needs.

State DB Projects find the NCDB website useful and informative.



Two respondents observed:

"I am still, after several years, getting used to where to find things on the website. I can only imagine how difficult it must be to organize a site with so many rich resources for various audiences."

"It's important [to] continue [to] include Spanish information."

Another respondent expressed appreciation for the website and NCDB staff:

"We find the website to be well organized. We use and share resources for the website on weekly basis. The information on

the site is up-to-date and we find it meets most of our TA needs and if we cannot locate a resource, NCDB staff are quick to assist us in locating the resource."

Other respondents expressed concerns about the search functions and difficulty navigating the website:

"Earlier iterations of the website seemed much easier to navigate."

"It's very difficult to find things you've looked at or used before. I spend a lot of time clicking around trying to find things."

"Sometimes the NCDB website is overwhelming."

"The website often has broken links."

"When you choose a topic, it will give you a brief description, and then a whole list of other items is listed, and it's not always clear or user-friendly that the list goes with the topic."

"The search engine is not great. When searching for topics it seems to never take you the resources you are looking for."

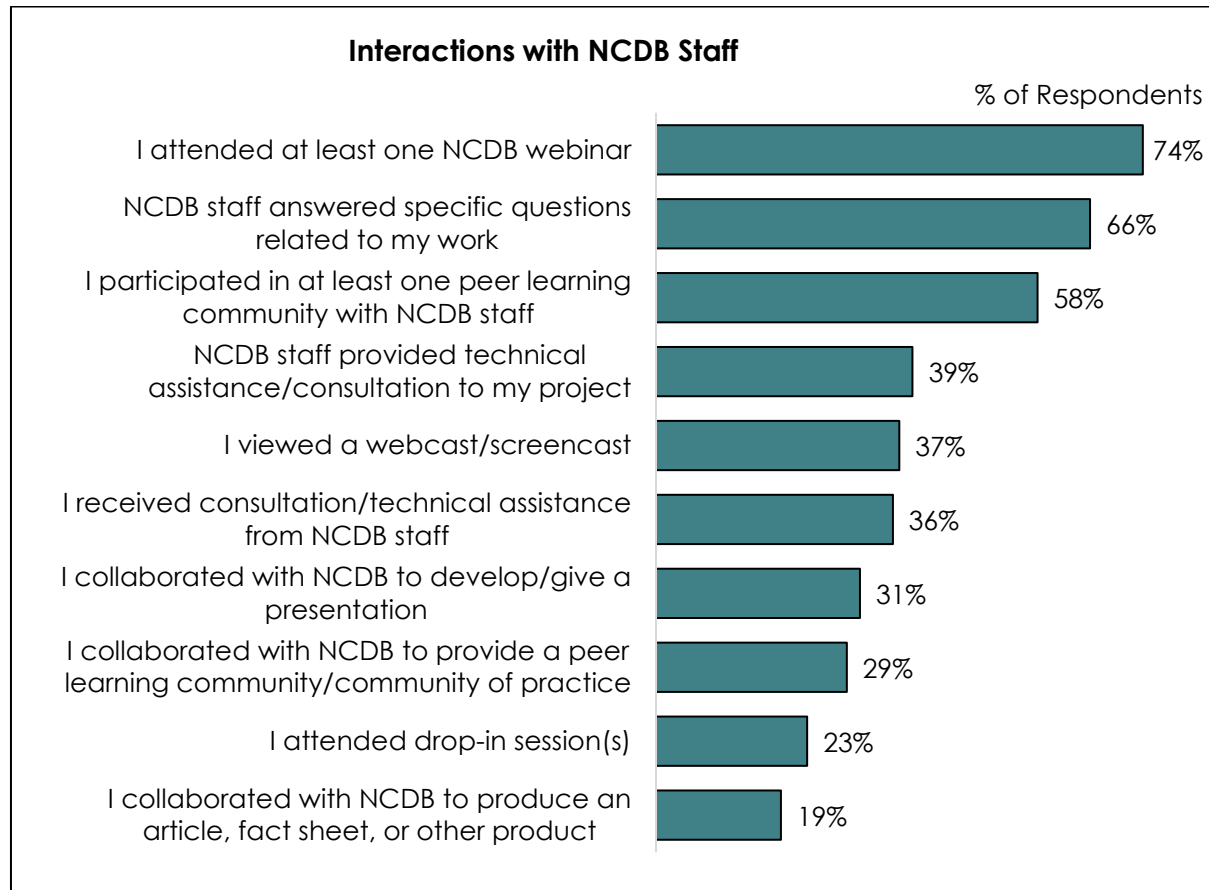
Two respondents offered the following recommendations about the website.

"It would be helpful to have more resources available in 'plain language.' "

"More examples helping teachers create goals for young (PK) children and those with multiple impairments."

NCDB Staff

All but one respondent (97%) interacted with NCDB staff during October 1, 2023 – February 29, 2024. 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. Ten respondents (29%) were involved in all three of those NCDB staff interactions.

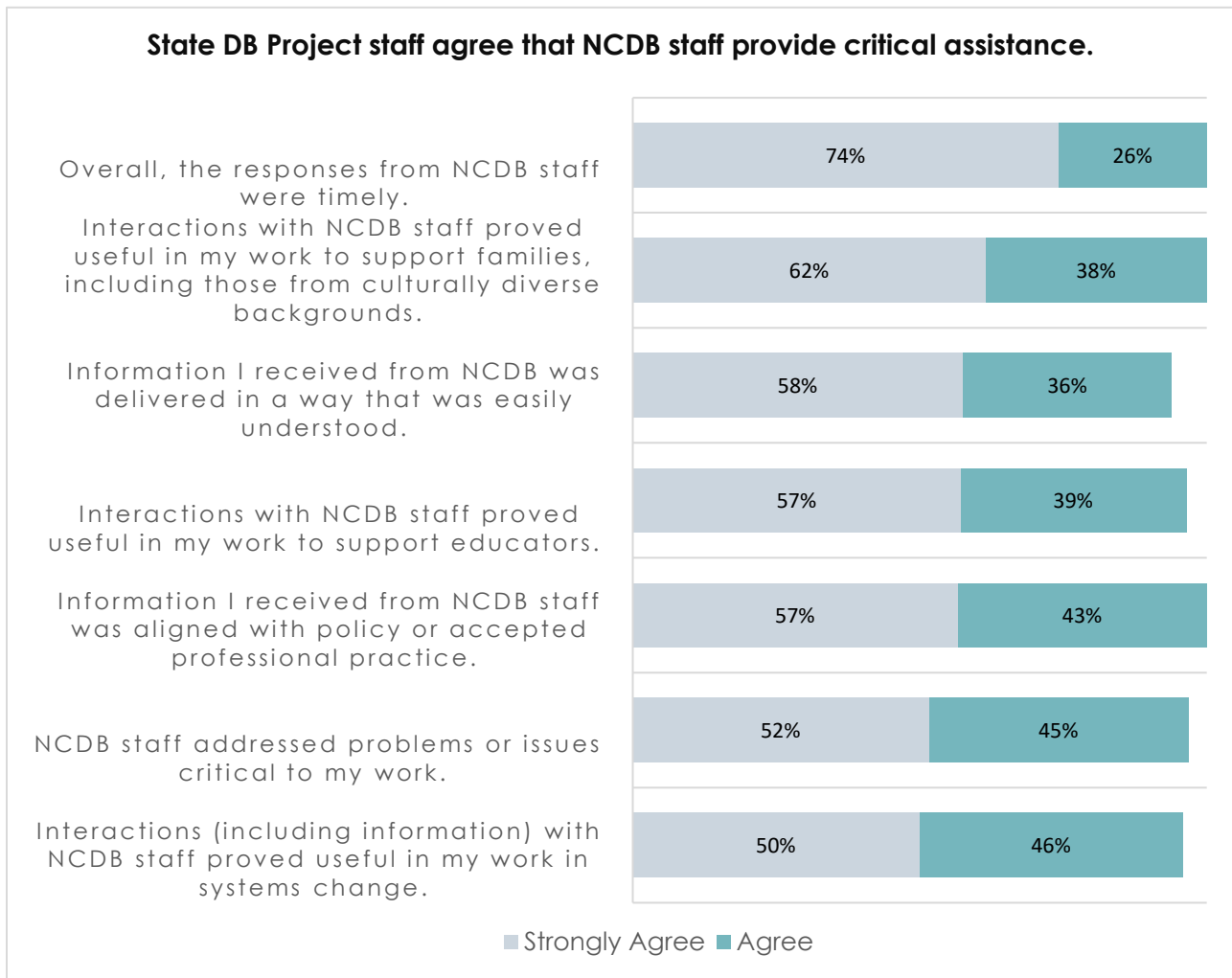


Nearly all agreed, and most strongly agreed, with the following statements:

- 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. Ratings did not differ significantly based on role.



Comments about NCDB staff were universally positive, including

“NCDB staff are true gems. No matter what I ask, someone at NCDB seems to know the answer or can direct me to the person who does. They are knowledgeable, professional kind, friendly, encouraging, energetic.... Huge kudos!”

“My questions are always answered and the staff is helpful.”

“I love NCDB staff!”

“The staff are responsive and knowledgeable. We appreciate the specialty areas of expertise the different staff members hold. The staff are committed to supporting our project's TA and Training work.”

“NCDB staff members are always helpful and knowledgeable.”

Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind

“[Module 2](#) explores the foundations of early intervention with children who are deafblind and how providers can best encourage their communication and concept development. Lessons include ways of expanding a child’s world to more people, places, and things as well as important strategies for supporting the transition to preschool. Included in this module are four 30-minute lessons that provide practical, need-to-know information and strategies for working with infants and toddlers who are deafblind.”

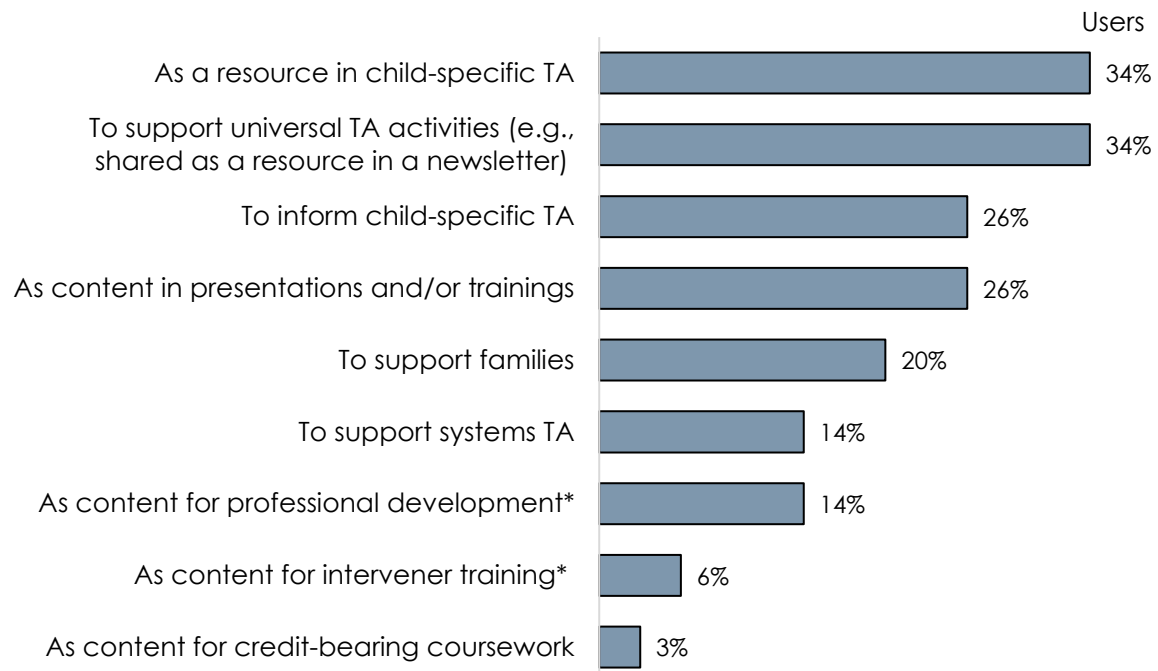
In response to the survey question “*In what ways have you used ‘Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind’ between October 1, 2023 and February 29, 2024,?*” 34% of respondents identified at least one way they used content and 66% have not used Module 2. Over three-fourths (83%) applied the Module 2 content for multiple purposes. Respondents in all roles accessed and utilized Module 2.



As shown in the following chart, users¹ typically used Module 2 as a resource for child-specific technical assistance, for universal technical assistance, to inform child-specific technical assistance, and as a resource for presentations and trainings. Module 2 was used less frequently as content for intervener training through learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard and Google Classroom,) or credit-bearing coursework.

¹ Note: the chart is based on only those who actually accessed and used Module 2, not all respondents.

Module 2 is used for multiple purposes.



*Training/professional development using a learning management system (e.g., Blackboard, Google Classroom)

Three respondents indicated that they also used *Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind* to:

“Share with our birth to 3 agency.”

“Help staff create goals for children aged PK and early elementary.”

“Support our materials center for the blind by facilitating it for them.”

A couple of respondents provided context to explain why they do not use Module 2:

“I primarily work with school-age students, so I have not used Module 2 as much as Module 1. I use Module 1 all the time for a variety of activities.”

"I do use the Impact of Deafblindness module and intend to use Module 2 but have not yet. We downloaded Module 1 into our university system and have offered it three times for continuing education. I look forward to offering Module 2 in late Year 1 or Year 2."

In response to the survey question, *"Please share any comments, experiences, outcomes, or needs that you would like us to consider in our evaluation of Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind,"* comments were repeatedly very positive, with no suggestions for improvement. Comments include:

"NCDB's learning modules are excellent resources. Please keep them coming!"

"It's excellent! I will be using it a lot more in the future!"

"This module is very well-aligned with early intervention principles. I am planning on using more of this content soon!"

"Well organized and presented. Loved the parent perspectives. The quality of the module is exceptional and the content is so comprehensive and clearly presented. The content experts were very good instructors for this module. We will be using this resource a lot more in the upcoming year."

"It was information pertinent for young children with DB for use in our federal CHANGE grant."

Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide

[Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide](#), is a PDF publication located on the NCDB website. A Spanish version is also available. Topics include:

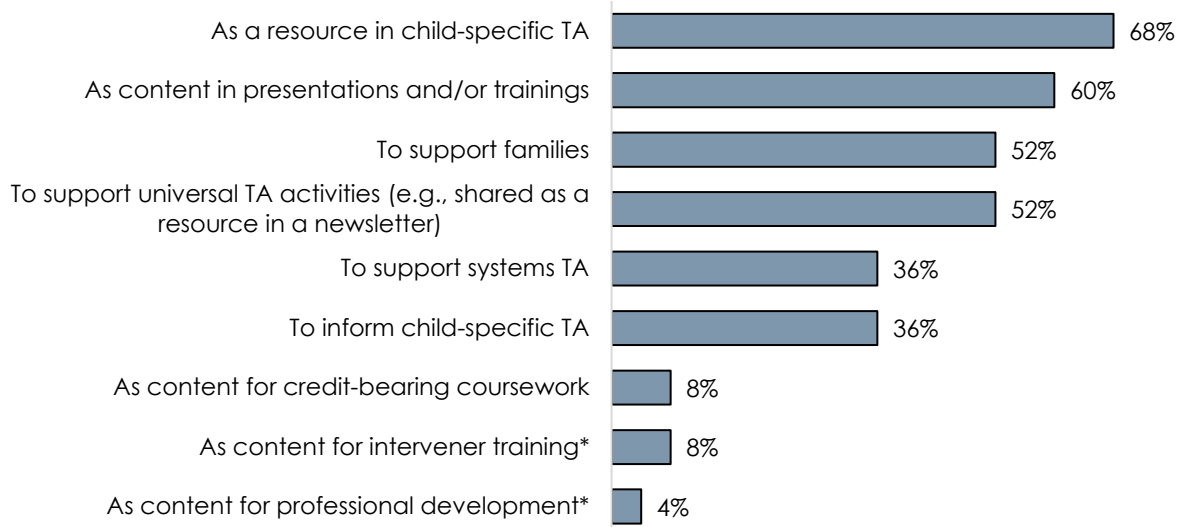
- Use of Residual Vision
- Use of Residual Hearing
- Access to Information
- Access to Communication
- Access to Trusting Relationships and Social Interactions
- Access to Conceptual Learning

In response to the survey question "*In what ways have you used the publication "Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide" between October 1, 2023 and February 29, 2024?*," 60% of respondents identified at least one way they used content and 40% have not used the content. Over three-fourths (88%) of the users applied the IEP Discussion Guide content for multiple purposes. Respondents in all roles accessed and utilized it.

As shown in the following chart, users² typically used IEP Discussion Guide as a resource for child-specific technical assistance, as content for presentations and trainings, to support families, and to support universal technical assistance. The IEP Discussion Guide was used less frequently as content for intervener training or professional development through learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard and Google Classroom).

² Note: the chart is based on only those who actually accessed and used the IEP Discussion Guide, not all respondents.

Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide serves many purposes.



A couple of respondents indicated that they also used the IEP Discussion Guide as “supports for advocates” and for “personal knowledge.” Another respondent explained:

“Our state does not recognize Interveners. Before I started with the project, staff adapted the older version of this document to use with 1:1 paras, and I still use that.”

A respondent was concerned about states that do not recognize interveners and noted:

“Why don't we first get states to understand and then recognize interveners before we discuss if they are appropriate?”

In response to the survey question, “Please share any comments, experiences, outcomes, or needs that you would like us to consider in our evaluation of ‘Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide’,” comments reflected the usefulness of the IEP Discussion Guide. Comments include:

“We use intervener resource to help others understand what an intervener does and how [we support] the development of intervener-like competencies.”

“This tool has been essential with our state's development of intervener services! Please continue to make it available! The new fillable PDF format is wonderful!”

“Love the updated form!”

“I regularly offer this to teams and have had them use it to make decisions about whether or not to adopt the intervener model or to add another intervener to the district staff to support a new student.”

“We like the new update. The form is easy to follow and use. We anticipate as more professionals and families learn about intervener services that a we will be using and sharing it more with our TA and training.”

Most Useful NCDB Resources

Of the 35 survey respondents, 22 (63%) commented in response to the survey question "What was the most useful NCDB product, tool, or resource that you used between October 1, 2023 and February 29, 2024?" The majority of respondents indicated that the most useful NCDB resources were modules, the *Tools to Employ and Support Interveners* in the *National Initiatives* webpage, and other resources.

NCDB resources that are most useful include:

1. NCDB modules:

- All modules (n=4)
- *Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules (OHOA) modules (n=3)*
- *Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development (n=2)*
- *Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind (n=2)*

2. Tools to Employ and Support Interveners

- *Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide (n=4)*
- *Tools to Employ and Support Interveners webpage (n=2)*

3. Online tools and documents:

- *Practice Guides (n=4)*
- *An Overview of Deafblindness (n=1)*

4. NCDB staff page (n=2)

5. Other:

- Peer Learning Communities
- “The Importance of having the disability of ‘deaf-blindness’ checked in the IEP”
- *The Sooner the Better*
- *Literacy for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss*
- Calendar/Schedule System

Updates to *Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules (OHOA) modules*

The annual survey asked State Deafblind staff, “NCDB is planning to update a number of the OHOA Modules over the next several years. Let us know which ones you think are the most important to update for the purposes of intervener training (not for other training uses). List up to five.”

The most frequent responses were as follows:

- Routines for Participation and Learning (5 respondents)
- Calendars (4 respondents)
- Intervener Strategies (4 respondents)
- The Role of the Intervener (2 respondents)

The following modules were selected by one respondent each:

- Accessing the Curriculum
- An Introduction to Sign Language and Braille
- Building Trusted Relationships
- Concept Development and Responsive Environments
- Emergent Communication
- Maximizing Vision and Hearing
- Overview of Deaf-Blindness
- Progressing from Non-symbolic to Symbolic Communication and Complex Language
- Self-Determination
- Sensory System, the Brain, and Learning
- Touch for Connection and Communication

Additional Comments

The final question of the survey asked, *“Please share any additional comments, experiences, outcomes, or needs that you would like us to consider in our evaluation of any other products or services provided by NCDB between October 1, 2023 and February 29, 2024.”* Only a few State Project staff replied. One noted:

“Our entire staff met and completed this survey together, so you are hearing from multiple perspectives.”

Three respondents added recommendations:

“Anything that can help guide new project staff. More standardized forms and processes. NCDB should definitely support new projects, the Newbie Group should be supported.”

“I would love to see more resources or information on the importance of Deafblindness on the IEP. Maybe an infographic or one pager.”

The final response, though, seemed to sum up the quality of NCDB staff assistance and online resources:

“Keep up the great work!”

National Center on Deafblindness, June 2024

nationaldb.org

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