



Making a Difference: Professional Development for Early Intervention With Children Who Are Deafblind



“This [module] absolutely met and went beyond expectations. I wish everyone in the world would watch this (but especially early intervention specialists, care teams, and educational systems). My thoughts throughout exploring the module was wow, I wish my daughter’s early intervention team back in the day had seen this.”

— A mother of a child who is deafblind

A new professional development module, [*Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind*](#), is making an impact on the lives of infants and toddlers who are deafblind, their families, and their educators. The module, produced by the National Center on Deafblindness, provides a wealth of evidence-based information and strategies specifically designed for early intervention practitioners.

This engaging, informative training is easily incorporated into professional development opportunities offered by state departments of education and other agencies and organizations.

The National Center on Deafblindness

The National Center on Deafblindness (NCDB) is working with [*state deafblind projects*](#) to ensure that this module and others in the [*Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind*](#) series are included in professional development systems nationwide.

Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind provides practical information practitioners can put to use right away in their work to support families and help infants and toddlers who are deafblind

- Communicate and connect with others
- Learn and explore
- Prepare for preschool



Making an Impact

In just its first year, *Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind* has been incorporated into a number of professional development programs and received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Wrote one project manager, the module “was seamless to incorporate,” and as a result, they’re now able to provide their state’s educators with the most updated information regarding sensory disabilities.

What’s Driving the Need for This Resource?

Deafblindness limits a child’s access to both auditory and visual information and seriously impacts their ability to communicate, learn, and form relationships.

- Most educators have little to no university training or practical experience in working with children who are deafblind.
- Professional development programs often lack information on working with children who are deafblind.
- Parents often say that their children do not have educators who understand the unique needs of children with deafblindness.
- Many parents must find this information on their own and share it with their children’s educators.

The early intervention years are a critical time to lay the groundwork for a child’s communication and learning. Thoughtful and unique educational approaches and knowledgeable practitioners who understand the impact of combined hearing and vision loss are required to ensure that infants and toddlers have the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

“This module will be a critical component of our state’s training program!”

– A module reviewer



Professional Development Tailored for Early Intervention Providers

The module was informed by current literature and input from state deafblind project personnel, families, and leading scholars and practitioners in deafblindness. The project's overall design incorporates best practices in adult learning, professional development, and accessibility.

- Short, easy-to-use lessons
- An engaging mix of videos and photos
- Interviews with experts in deafblindness, early intervention providers, and parents
- Real-world examples, activities, discussion points, and reflection prompts that allow learners to apply knowledge to current and future teaching situations

“The mixed media kept the module intriguing and far from an ordinary teaching module. From the timing of keeping videos around 10 minutes to offering photographs and videos on such a diverse scale, this has been done very professionally and excellently.”

– A module reviewer

Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind is easily incorporated into existing professional development systems, and it's available free of charge on the NCDB website.

To see examples of how it's being used, visit the [North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System](#) and the [Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center](#).



What's Ahead?

In the year to come, NCDB will heighten efforts to collaborate with state deafblind projects to increase the number of professional development programs using this module in their training.

Additional modules in the *Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind* series are in production with the goal of providing even more specialized training for educators working with children who are deafblind.

To learn more about the series, visit the [NCDB module homepage](#).



NCDB's primary mission is to support state deafblind projects in their work to assist educators, agencies, and organizations in acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to help children with deafblindness.

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**National Center
on Deafblindness**

