# Identifying Infants and Toddlers with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

Combined vision and hearing loss is also known as deaf-blindness. The severity differs from child to child.

**Did you know that . . .**

* Most children with deaf-blindness have varying amounts of usable hearing and vision?
* More than 90% have additional disabilities or medical needs?
* Having multiple disabilities or complex health care needs often keeps deaf-blindness from being recognized or addressed in very young children?

## Importance of Early Intervention

* When both vision and hearing are affected, natural opportunities to learn and communicate can be severely limited
* Early intervention methods are different than those for children who have vision or hearing loss alone
* Starting early helps young children learn how to access residual vision and hearing
* State and national resources are available to support infants and toddlers with combined vision and hearing loss, their families, and early intervention providers

## Importance of Referral to [insert project name]?

National data indicate that children who are deaf-blind are typically identified after age three. This means that many likely miss receiving appropriate early intervention. State deaf-blind projects can help EI providers and families gain knowledge and skills to provide effective intervention during these crucial years. In addition, accurate child counts help state deaf-blind projects know where to target education, public awareness, training, and support.

Part C service coordinators can help address under-identification by . . .

* Increasing awareness of conditions that put infants and toddlers at risk for combined vision and hearing loss
* Working with families to ensure appropriate referrals and evaluations

## Risk Factors for Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

**Complications associated with prematurity**

**Hereditary syndromes/disorders**

* CHARGE syndrome
* Usher syndrome
* Down syndrome

**Prenatal/congenital complications**

* Maternal infections such as cytomegalovirus (CMV)
* Hydrocephalus
* Microcephaly
* Prenatal exposure to drugs/alcohol

**Postnatal/non-congenital**

* Asphyxia
* Neurological injuries/conditions
* Severe head injury
* Meningitis

**Multiple disabilities**

**Family history of vision and/or hearing loss**

## For More Information Contact:

(insert state project information here)

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