



THE INTERVENER'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT IS AN INTERVENER?

An intervener is highly skilled at providing one-to-one support for students who are deaf-blind, helping them gain access to information and communication in the classroom and facilitating their social development and emotional well-being. An intervener is typically a paraeducator who is a member of the student's educational team, working under a classroom teacher's direction. Ideally the educational team has access to a teacher with expertise in deaf-blindness and consults with their state's deaf-blind project.

Educational systems are required by law to provide a free and appropriate education to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Intervener services are a way to help meet this requirement and the challenges of providing students who are deaf-blind with access to information they are unable to gather via vision and hearing. Interveners also can help students who are deaf-blind compensate for the difficulties with communication and concept development that occur as a result of combined vision and hearing loss.

PRIMARY ROLES IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

- Provides consistent, one-to-one access to instruction and environmental information usually gained by hearing-sighted students through vision and hearing but unavailable or incomplete to an individual who is deaf-blind
- Facilitates concept development

- Provides access to and/or assists in the development and use of receptive and expressive communication skills
- Facilitates the development and maintenance of trusting, interactive relationships that promote social and emotional well-being
- Provides support to form relationships with others and increase social connections and participation in activities

In carrying out these roles, the intervener serves as a bridge, not a barrier, between the student and their environment and other people.

ADDITIONAL ATTRIBUTES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Participates as an active member of a student's educational team
- Participates in IEP meetings
- Attends regularly scheduled planning and feedback meetings with the student's teacher and other team members
- Is actively supervised and supported by the classroom teacher and other professionals
- Receives ongoing support and training from professional educators or technical assistance providers with expertise in deaf-blindness
- Works with the teacher to prepare/adapt learning materials and activities so they are provided in ways that support the student's specific needs and preferences
- Assists the teacher in modifying instruction so it aligns with learning objectives

- Provides guidance to peers and adults on how to communicate and interact with the student
- Assists the teacher with data collection

For a comprehensive list of intervener knowledge and skill competencies, see the [Council for Exceptional Children's standards for interveners.](#)

HOW DO INTERVENERS COMPARE TO OTHER PARAEDUCATORS?

Although interveners are often considered paraeducators, their roles are different in important ways.

Other paraeducators...

- Typically do not have training in specific disabilities, including deaf-blindness
- Are usually assigned to work with groups of students (sometimes one-to-one) rather than assigned exclusively to one student
- Assist in preparing learning materials and activities for all students in a class rather than for a student with deaf-blindness
- Do not usually participate in IEP meetings
- Typically are not responsible for students' social connections and development
- Are sometimes responsible for classroom maintenance and other school duties

To learn more, visit [Tools to Employ and Support Intervenors.](#)

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