**Module 1 Lesson 2 Part 2 Descriptive Video Transcript**

**Narrator:** Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind: Professional Development for Educators

Module 1: The Impact of Deafblindness on Learning and Development

Lesson 2: Preparing for Learning

Part 2: Observing a Child Who is Deafblind

**[Visual Description]** In a classroom, a boy who is deafblind is touching a ball that has pushable buttons and smaller wooden balls attached with strings.

**Narrator:** Remember that although the population of children who are deafblind is relatively small, there’s enormous diversity. Each child is unique, and each learning plan must be individualized.

That’s why it’s critical to collect as much information as you can about a child before you start working with them. Gathering information about a child who is deafblind is a process.

First, you can learn a lot from reviewing the child’s medical records as well as prior assessment data and other documentation. You want to find out things such as their etiology, sensory learning channels, results of functional hearing and vision tests, assistive technology needs, and their overall strengths and capabilities. You might be surprised by how much you can learn by talking with the family and others who know the child well.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images and videos - A boy, who is deafblind, sits next to his mom on a couch. The mom and dad sit in chairs next to each other. The boy runs behind them while they talk. The boy lays on the couch and plays with a toy. The boy runs to his dad and gives him a hug. The mom helps the boy put his glasses on, then helps him wave his hand. The boy jumps on a small trampoline, while holding onto the railing.

**Mother:** His vision, you know, it's been really hard to find out how much—how well he can see. His doctor thinks that he can see pretty much everything that is close to him. We don't know how far he can see.

Father: And they say he's nearsighted.

Mother: He is nearsighted. But he wears glasses. And lately he hasn't, doesn't really want to wear his glasses. But he's able to find the tiny little things on the floor. So he does use his vision really well. He does have colobomas in both eyes. I mean, it's always a concern because when a kid's got, you know, anybody that has colobomas, if there is a fall, if somebody falls or they get a big hit on the head, their retina can detach. So it's always a scary thing.

**[Visual Description]** Two girls and a boy sit in front of a Christmas tree. They are wearing pajamas and matching beanies.

**Narrator:** You also can learn about the child from siblings or other classmates…

Ava has Usher syndrome. Here’s what her younger brother and sister had to say about her.

**[Visual Description]** A boy and girl sit at a small table and take turns talking to the camera.

**Brother:** OK, she’s very special, and I help her a lot in the night time when she can’t see.

**Sister:** She has cochlear implants. She’s got devices on her ears. She can’t hear when she takes her devices off, but she can hear if she puts her devices on.

**[Visual Description]** A toddler boy sits in a high chair and turns the pages of a baby board book.

**Narrator:** An important step in the information-gathering process involves observing -- that is, watching and listening closely to the child for a good amount of time -- without interacting.

Notice what the child does when playing or being on their own.

* What sensory channels are being used?
* In what ways does the child use those senses?
* What, if anything, does the child seem to hear and see?
* How does the child tactually explore objects and materials?
* What movements do you notice the child is doing?
* Do they seem posturally secure, or do they struggle to maintain balance?
* What activities, objects, and materials does the child seem to like?

**[Visual Description]** A young girl sits on the floor surrounded by multiple toys. She shakes some bells first by one ear and then the other.

Let’s closely observe this child playing. What can we notice about how she uses her hearing?

It looks like she might be comparing how the bells sound in her right and left ears. She might have hearing loss. It would be best to refer her for an audiological evaluation.

**[Visual Description]** A boy sits looking at a tablet positioned on a slant board. On the tablet is a picture of a yellow moon and stars on a black background.

Close observation like this will allow you to get to know the child better.

Make sure to discuss what you’ve learned from your observations with others on the team who have specific expertise in sensory areas. And all of the information you gather—from prior assessments and documentation, the family, *and* from your observations—will become the foundation for choices the team makes about how to best plan, prepare, and engage *this particular child* in their learning.

**[On-Screen Text]** Michelle Clyne, Project Coordinator, Project Reach Illinois DeafBlind Services

**Michelle Clyne:** So a student I know in early intervention, her parents had requested that the IFSP goals focus on increasing her strength and playing with toys. We had an audiology report that noted that she had a mild hearing loss with hearing aids on but her parents observed that any sounds louder than about 45, 50 decibels caused her to startle quite a bit. And she had a neurological condition that meant that movement was difficult for her, and the PT report noted that all kinds of body movements were challenging for her. In addition, we had an ophthalmology report that maybe she had light perception, and we didn't notice a lot of responses to objects. So because the parents had a small apartment they didn't really want a lot of equipment in their home, so we decided to try the active learning strategy of a toy vest and that seemed to work well for all the needs and concerns and everything we had observed.

**[Visual Description]** A young child wearing a vest that has measuring spoons, pieces of felt, wrapping paper, bells, and other objects attached to it.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images - A girl in a wheelchair, which has an assistive device on a tray table. The device has a tube that comes up near her head. A busy classroom with multiple staff members working with students with varying needs.

**Narrator:** We also need to take care not to assume a child will act the same way in different environments. For example, you might observe a child in a relatively calm, quiet classroom, and they seem able to use their vision fairly well. But the child’s *functional* vision might be completely different in a busy classroom or other area that has lots of lights and activity.

**[On-Screen Text]** Maurice Belote, Former Project Coordinator, California Deafblind Services

**Maurice Belote:** Observation is hard work. When I am observing a child, I am laser focused on that child and what is happening right at that moment. And observation, good observation, is an ongoing process that happens over time. It happens in various environments, with different materials and different people, different times of the day, etc. And let me tell you a story...when I rented my very first apartment when I was a college student. I got home after agreeing to rent it and I couldn't remember where the kitchen sink was. And it turned out that the apartment literally had everything but the kitchen sink. I had rented an apartment without a kitchen sink, and I think, how much better it would have been if I'd had some kind of checklist with me to remind me of important things to look for. And there are really good checklists and observation tools that are available in our field of deafblindness so don't be afraid to use them.

**[Visual Description]** A girl is sitting at a table that has paints, paper, brushes, and a photo of a clown. She is painting a picture of the clown.

**Narrator:** Let’s review what we’ve learned: Before you begin planning your teaching strategies and interventions for a child who is deafblind, learn everything you can about them.

Consider

* What’s reported from prior assessments and medical documentation?
* What do they see and hear?
* How do they use their other senses?
* What are their needs?
* What do they like to do?

The results of this process will help inform decision-making, and ensure you create opportunities for learning using materials and activities that best match the child’s abilities and preferences.

**[Visual Description]** A boy sits in front of a large metal bowl. He is banging a smaller metal bowl on the inside of the large bowl. He turns the small bowl over and slaps his hands on the bottom. He then picks it up, drops it, slaps the bottom, laughs and listens to the noise.

Let’s check what you know about observation.

As you watch this child play, consider these questions:

1. What do you notice about his vision and hearing?
2. How does he use his other senses?
3. What can you tell he likes to do?

Let’s watch it again.

You probably noticed he seems to love the loud clang of the metal bowls! He’s tactually exploring and comparing them with his hands and body. He appears to have some hearing and enjoys rhythmically banging on the bowls. He sometimes looks away when he does this, and at one point holds the bowl closer to his ear – possibly to hear better. He may also be attracted to the shininess of the bowls. He also seems to use vision to reach for and grab them.

The next step focuses on how to effectively prepare the environment for a child’s learning. We’ll discuss that in Part 3 of this lesson.

**[On Screen text]** National Center on Deaf-Blindness.
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