**Module 1 Lesson 3 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 3: Foundational Teaching Strategies Part 2: Basic Strategies for Encouraging Interaction

**[Visual Description]** A woman sits in front of a river. She is smiling gently.

In her work on developing conversation-rich environments for children who are deafblind, Barbara Miles wrote, “The goal is to establish a genuinely mutual interaction, one in which the child becomes more and more confident in her ability to be an equal, effective conversational partner. Whether she can do this or not will depend primarily on the responsiveness and patience of her partner.”

**[Visual Description]** A mom talks with her face close to her baby’s face. The baby reaches up and touches his mom’s face.

The need to be heard is a fundamental human desire. Babies quickly learn that when they cry and a parent hears them, they will be comforted. And we’ve all experienced this need when we have something important to say, but it seems like no one is listening.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images - A teacher sits at a desk with a young man. She is showing him something on an electronic tablet. The two of them make the same sign with their hands. A small child holds a lighted toy very close to her eye, with the support of an early intervention specialist.

Children who are deafblind have the same desire to be heard and to communicate with others. But they need support to make those connections successful. How can you help a child who is deafblind learn how to make these connections? No matter the extent of a child’s disability, they’re already communicating! If you’ve spent any time in focused observation of a child who is deafblind, you’ve likely seen the child expressing herself–verbally or nonverbally–if not through words or signs, then through sounds, facial expressions, body movements, or gestures. The more you observe, the more you’ll become attuned to recognizing and interpreting a child’s unique ways of expressing feelings, needs, and thoughts. And it will become easier to know what a child’s communicative behaviors mean.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images - A young girl sits on a log, smiling. A young boy holds a hula-hoop behind his head. A boy with a big smile sits in a wheelchair in front of a video screen attached to a frame. A girl with a big smile on her face sits in front of an electronic tablet. She is holding a jingle bell in one hand.

As we consider some basic strategies to communicate and interact with a child who is deafblind, keep these general concepts in mind:

1. Always introduce yourself and greet the child using your personal identifier
2. Show respect for and use the child’s methods of communicating verbal and/or non-verbal
3. Be interested and engaged in what’s of interest to the child at the moment.
4. Never force the child to move a certain way or insist they say something
5. Be sensitive to and gentle with the child’s hands and other areas of the body that the child uses tactually
6. Make sure the child is comfortable and well supported
7. Often mutual interactions begin by simply imitating a child’s movements or sounds in a manner that the child can discern.

**[Visual Description]** A toddler girl walks unsteadily holding onto a couch for support. When she reaches her mother, she turns and grasps her mother’s hand.

**Mother:** Ma, Ma, Ma

**Girl:** [babbling] la, la, ma, ma, ma

**Narrator:** This often happens naturally between hearing-sighted babies and their parents. The baby babbles and mom or dad babbles back in the same way.

**[Video Description]** A series of videos - A young man sits in front of his younger brother, who is in a stroller. They each hold identical round objects. The man mimics the boy's actions as the boy turns, mouths, and twirls the object.

But interactions with a child who is deafblind require more thought. For example, if the child has any usable vision, consider whether they’ll be able to see you copying their movements. Are you close enough and within their visual field? If the child has usable hearing, will they be able to hear you imitate their sounds?

**[Visual Description]** A young child who is deafblind lays on a carpet. An adult places her hand on the child’s chest. The child uses both hands to touch and explore the woman’s hand as the woman gently turns her hand with palm up and then down.

If the child is completely blind and/or profoundly deaf, take advantage of their other senses, such as touch, to begin the interaction. Even children with usable vision and/or hearing may also need touch to begin an interaction.

**[Visual Description]** An intervener and a girl stand on either side of a narrow table facing each other. The intervener mimics the girl’s movements as she slaps and taps her fingers on the table.

Let’s watch how this works. Here we see an intervener is getting to know a child who is deafblind. Notice how the intervener imitates the child. Mimicking the child like this lets them know you’re having fun sharing the moment with them and you think they’re interesting. In other words, it’s the start of a real conversation!

**[Visual Description]** A teacher and a boy kneel on the floor taking turns tapping on a small toy piano.

A somewhat higher-level interaction is called turn-taking. As the name suggests, you encourage the child to take turns with you doing something, like making a certain movement or sound. Turn-taking, sometimes called “reciprocal interaction,” involves taking at least three turns. For example,

You do something, the child responds, and then you respond to the child.

OR

The child does something, you respond, and then the child responds.

**[Visual Description]** A mother sits with her young son in front of her. Her arms are on either side of the boy’s arms. They both touch a counting device with wooden beads arranged in rows.

Sometimes this can involve taking turns doing something with an object. This is a type of “joint attention.”

**[Visual Description]** A mother has her face very close to her infant daughter. The daughter has her hand on the mother’s mouth as the mother moves her mouth and makes sounds. The daughter suddenly smiles.

Sometimes a child’s response is very subtle -- it could be just an eye movement, a shake or nod of the head, or a slight movement of the hand. So watch very closely. Once you see a response, immediately affirm it by enthusiastically imitating the child’s sound or movement…and then take your turn. Your actions will acknowledge and reinforce that you’ve heard them. Take as many turns as you like until the child disengages.

A child who is deafblind is too often the recipient of one-way directives. Turn-taking teaches them that conversations are about “give and take,” where everyone can have a say.

**[Visual Description]** A mother and her small daughter sit next to each other on the floor playing with a pop-up toy. The daughter pushes a flap to make an elephant disappear inside the toy while her mother waits patiently.

**Mother:** Do you see the elephant? More okay!

**[Visual Description]** A man sits in a swing with a boy in his lap. He swings, then stops and waits for the child to react. The child indicates he wants to swing some more by touching the man’s hand.

**Man:** Do you really? Okay we can do that again. That was pretty cool. Pretty quick study here pal.

**Narrator:** Wait time allows the child the opportunity to process information. You’ll want to decide what the appropriate wait time should be. Have patience. Make sure, during this time, to attentively and closely observe the child.

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

**Maurice Belote**: Wait time is a really important idea and one that's hard to do in the hustle and bustle of a busy classroom. When we're interacting with children who are deafblind, when we're turn-taking and doing activities with children, many of these children need quite a bit of time, wait time, in order to process the information. And 30, 45 seconds is not unusual in terms of how long a child needs in order to process the information. And that can seem like a long time to a lot of teachers, because they expect a child to respond much more quickly.

**[Visual Description]** A boy with a cochlear implant and an eye patch sits in a chair with an attached tray. His teacher sits in front of him leaning close, his hands on the tray. The teacher guides the boy’s hand to his head and together they rub the teacher’s head, then drop their hands. The boy then touches the teacher’s head three times on his own and the teacher rubs the child’s head. They smile and laugh together.

**Intervener**: Chris’s head, Chris’s head, Chris’s head. What about Nolan’s head? Nolan’s head, Nolan’s head.

**Narrator:** Both turn-taking and wait time, or pausing, help develop trust between a child and practitioner or other adult. The child learns that they need to direct their behavior and communication toward another person. And, importantly, they begin to realize that what they have to communicate can be understood by another person.

Let’s review what we’ve learned.

True or False?

Some children who are deafblind may take extra time to respond during turn-taking.

True! Particularly for children with visual or auditory processing disorders, the time it takes to “hear” or “see” something, have the brain process that information, and develop a response to it can be a long time. Have patience!

Mimicking the child’s sounds and movements lets them know you have heard them, you’re having fun, and you think they’re interesting.  
  
True! That’s one reason why engaging in mutual interactions with a child who is deafblind can be so rewarding for all involved.

This ends Part 2 of Lesson 3. In Part 3, we’ll learn an important technique for working with children who are deafblind: Hand-Under-Hand.

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