**Module 1 Lesson 4 Part 1 Descriptive Video Transcript**

**Narrator:** “Teaching Children Who are Deaf-Blind: Professional Development for Educators”

Module 1: The Impact of Deaf-Blindness on Learning and Development

Lesson 4: Building Relationships

**[Visual Description]** A mom bends down towards her son. They both have big smiles.

If you’ve watched any of the prior lessons in Module 1, you know how critical it can be to build strong, trusting relationships with a child who is deafblind.

In this lesson, we’ll dig a little deeper into this important topic.

Before we get started, let’s check what you know…

True or False?

1. It is nearly impossible for a non-family member to build a trusting relationship with a child who is deafblind and at a prelinguistic communication level.
2. Allowing a child who is deafblind to follow their interests should be avoided because they need continual guidance.
3. Peer relationships are important for children who are deafblind, regardless of their age and the extent of their hearing or vision loss.

We’ll revisit these questions at the end of this lesson.

Lesson 4 has 3 learning objectives. After completing the lesson, participants should be able to

1. Describe how deafblindness impacts bonding and building trust
2. Use specific strategies for building a trusting relationship with a child who is deafblind
3. Explain why it is vital that children who are deafblind build relationships with their peers

Part 1. The impact of deafblindness on bonding and building trust

**[Visual Description]** An intervener and a girl sit at a desk. The girl traces letters with a marker.

Although building trusting relationships takes time and can be highly complex, developing a trusting bond is the most important thing you can do with a child who is deafblind.

**Woman:** What letter?

**Child:** "k sound" Kangaroo

**Woman:** Kangaroo... "K sound" Kangaroo. Good job.

**[Visual Description]** Multiple people sit around a table in an office. A man at the head of the table talks to the group.

**Narrator:** Meet Chris Montgomery. He’s a deafblind education consultant for the Texas Deafblind Project at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and a nationally-known educator and speaker on deafblind education.

**[On-Screen Text]** Chris Montgomery, Deafblind Education Consultant, TSBVI Outreach Programs

**Chris Montgomery:** For me this interaction and bonding is a very important part, if not the most important part, of working with deafblind kids. Everything else flows from my bond with my student, And if we think about what allows us to form a bond with another person. One big thing that always comes up is trust. Because without trust there is no bond, there's no positive relationship. So what is it that allows us to develop a sense of trust? Is it being predictable, is it being reliable, is it being safe? It's probably all those things, right, and so looking at interaction or how you interact with another person, and that might just be a fancy way of saying having a conversation or building again that trusted relationship, there are certainly methods that we can use when talking about interaction as it pertains to a deafblind kid. Some of the main words that come to mind are those of predictability and reliability and safety.

**[Visual Description]** A man and a boy sit at a table, facing each other. They are working on an activity in which the boy reads braille with one hand and communicates with the man using tactile sign language with the other.

Children who are deafblind have unique ways of interacting with others. Each has their own strengths. For many, this involves connecting through touch. Hearing-sighted children often interact with others by reading facial expressions and body language, listening and responding to voices, asking questions, and by sharing a laugh, playing, or working together. To help children who are deafblind form connections with others and build relationships, we need to take advantage of their unique strengths and abilities.

**[Visual Description]** A baby boy wearing hearing aids sits on his mother’s lap. He holds onto her thumbs while she claps, rolls her hands, and pats his knees to play pattycake.

Building relationships relies on that “give and take” as two people communicate. For example, when we communicate with someone, we receive affirmation (through verbal or nonverbal feedback) that they’ve received our message as we intended. But many times, it can be difficult to tell whether a child who is deafblind has truly heard us or what they’re thinking.

This can be especially difficult if the child is at a prelinguistic communication level.

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

**Michelle Clyne:** One thing you can do is coach the parent to look for ways their baby is responding to them, if they don't respond in a typical way. If the baby isn't able to make eye contact, it may have to do with their vision limitations. You can coach them to look for other signals like holding their breath, changing the frequency of their breathing, doing things like patting the mom’s hair or touching daddy's beard. You can also let them know I think they smell your cologne because their breathing has changed. But the important thing is to coach the parent so that they look for it, and ask the parents to report back to you if they've noticed those things happening with baby when you're not there.

**[On-Screen Text]** Chris Montgomery, Deafblind Education Consultant, TSBVI Outreach Programs

**Chris Montgomery:** I think about an experience that I had not too long ago with one of my students named Ray. And we had a great relationship, we had a good trusted relationship built. Ray left my class after a couple years and moved back home and I didn't see Ray for a number of years. And during my job and outreach then we had a referral for me to come see Ray. And when I got there he was obviously a lot older he was sort of a big guy now. And all of his teachers and his staff were kind of afraid of Ray. Nobody had built that bond with him; they didn't really know how to interact or how to talk to him. And so Ray had spent quite a while just sort of sitting on a couch in this classroom, and he was self-abusive and and just really not in a good place. One of the things that Ray and I used to do is one of our little interactions or conversations that we used to have was we would say we would greet each other in the morning and I'd say hug and Ray would sign hug back to me and then would give each other a big bear hug. Well as I as I went into this classroom and started to try to talk to Ray a crowd had sort of gathered around me and you know to kind of see what I was going to do with this guy you know because nobody else knew what to do. And as I was talking to Ray obviously he was deafblind and and so we were talking to each other tactually signing in each other's hands. And I did my normal greeting that we had done years ago and I had signed hug to him and then I had my hands out just sort of you know waiting for him to say something. And one of the people that were talking to me it was one of his teachers I had turned my head to talk to them and I heard this sort of crowd that had gathered around us gasp, and sort of weird, so I looked back at Ray and he was signing hug. And nobody there knew that he could sign or really had any expressive language. And I think it was really through that relationship and through the bond that we developed that he remembered that all those years later. And so it's things like this that I think makes this interaction this bond so important it's what everything else works off of.

**[Visual Description]** A man sits on the ground. A young boy rests his head and shoulders on the man’s lap. The man gently places a toy under the boy’s hands. He rests his hand on the boy's chest as the boy explores the toy with his hands.

**Narrator:** The benefits of a strong relationship with a trusting adult are numerous. It will create a sense of security about their world and people within it, encourage the child to become more independent and confident about exploring new people and environments, build their understanding of healthy relationships and socially-acceptable behaviors.

It’ll expand their understanding of their physical world, broaden their understanding of how they fit into and relate to others in their world, help the child know there’s order in the world, so they can anticipate and make predictions about what will happen.

It will also develop their self-image and identity, help them as they feel confident in expressing their own personality, and, help expand their social and peer relationships, create emotional connections that support the formation of memories, and provide a critical foundation for the child’s language and communication development across the years.

**[Visual Description]** An intervener stands beside a boy who is holding a bird house.

In other words, a strong relationship with a trusting adult creates a “home base” from which a child who is deafblind can grow…. expanding and enriching the child’s life and yours.

**Narrator:** Let’s take a break and check what you know.

In what ways can a hearing-sighted child build relationships, and how is this different for a child who is deafblind? Feel free to pause the video here if you need some time to consider.

Ok. Children who are hearing-sighted interact with others in many ways, such as by reading facial expressions and body language, listening and responding to language and voices, asking questions, playing or working with others, and sharing a laugh.

Because of their combined vision and hearing loss, children who are deafblind face barriers to many of these ways of interacting. To help them form connections with others and build relationships, we need to take advantage of their unique strengths, abilities, and ways of communicating.

**Narrator:** This ends Part 1 of Lesson 4. In Part 2, we’ll take a look at specific strategies you can use to develop a strong, trusting relationship with a child who is deafblind.

**[On Screen text]** National Center on Deaf-Blindness  
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Special thanks to: the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, State deaf-blind projects, families, and educators who shared their photographs and videos with us for this program.   
IDEAS that Work logo. The contents of this video program were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H326T180026. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Susan Weigert.

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