**Module 1 Lesson 4 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 4: Building Relationships Part 2: Bonding and Building Trust

**[Visual Description]** A boy who is deafblind and a teacher sit facing each other, using tactile sign to communicate.

Building a strong bond and a trusting relationship with a child who is deafblind doesn't happen by accident. You must make a conscious effort to establish that trust and nurture the bond.

So how do you begin? Before anything else, you must help the child understand two important things: who you are and that you are trustworthy. Before any learning can occur, they must recognize you as a supportive, reliable, and dependable person.

**[Visual Description]** A mother sits on the floor with her young son on her lap. She holds a picture book in front of her son and talks with an early intervention consultant sitting nearby.

A few things to note before we move on: If you’re an early intervention provider, you’ll be encouraging the parent or other adult to use the strategies we discuss to help build a primary attachment and bond with their infant or toddler.

Let’s talk first about introductions. Doing them right can make a world of difference in building a solid foundation for a good relationship.

If you’re an early intervention provider or other educator working with a very young child at home, it’s best to have a parent or the primary caregiver introduce you to the child.

If you’re in a school-setting, ideally, have a trusted adult who the child knows well introduce you.

Have the parent or trusted adult use hand-under-hand, or other strategy the child is comfortable with, to help guide their hands to yours. Many children who are deafblind rely on touch, but use whatever sensory mode they prefer. Allow the child to explore your ring, watch, necklace, or other features, as well as become familiar with your unique personal identifier, or name cue.

If the child has hearing, have the parent or trusted adult repeat your name and say who you are and that you want to get to know them. Make sure the parent or trusted adult stays close for as long as possible during this initial introductory meeting. This will help assure the child that you are trustworthy, so they can feel relaxed and comfortable.

Always allow plenty of time – as much as they need – to learn who you are.

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

**Michelle Clyne:** It's great to get permission from the child before touching them. Not always possible, but if you can, if the child has enough sight to see the approach, see the hands or if there can be a cue with an object prior to say a diaper change, like the child can, you can move a diaper close enough to the child, so that they're in contact with the diaper before you. Begin the touch cue at the hips to start the diaper change; anything you can do to let the child know you're going to touch and then participate in the touching process. It just shows respect.

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

**Maurice Belote:** Many people who are new to deafblindness, make the assumption that if a child is deafblind, especially children who have complex medical needs, are medically fragile; that they need to be touched very lightly and gently. And actually many children who are deafblind prefer to have firm, strong touch. And it seems counterintuitive because, if a child is medically fragile people tend to interact with that child in a very gentle way, but gentle light touch can be unpleasant and overstimulating to a lot of children who are deafblind.

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

**Michelle Clyne:** So some children are pretty selective with the textures they prefer. I hate pumpkin guts with a passion, I hate the smell of pumpkin, I hate the taste, I hate everything about pumpkin. And if I knew that every day at three o'clock my IEP said that I was going to have my hands immersed in pumpkin guts, at 2:45 I would have a major tantrum. I can't imagine anything less useful in my life than being made to access pumpkin guts. So I think that when we're looking at programming for children and the textures they need to interact with, keeping preferences in mind and keeping their overall end goal in mind, is really a very important thought. If the texture isn't important for daily life, then maybe we can think about it from multiple perspectives.

**[Visual Description]** A young boy touches a soft case that holds a variety of small tactile objects.

**Narrator:** You’ll likely get a pretty good idea of a child’s tactile preferences by watching them at play or during activities. As the child becomes more accustomed to your presence, you can begin to move closer and gradually become more directly involved in what they’re doing.

Especially when you’re just beginning to interact with a child, remember to follow their interests. That is, allow the child to determine what they prefer to do. Show interest in what interests them by using your voice and/or body language. Avoid making any kind of demands on the child’s attention or focus.

**[Visual Description]** A girl sits in a wheelchair. A woman sits beside her holding something for the girl to touch.

Think of yourself as a “guide on the side.” You’re there to suggest things, to mentor, to be there if something doesn’t work out as planned. This will help the child know that you’re the kind of person they can trust to be there when they need it, but who gives them the opportunity to choose their own way.

**[Visual Description]** A boy sits on a man’s lap as they swing on a park swing. The boy is holding a stuffed animal.

Man: Whoa, whoa

You’ll want to try using one of the strategies we discussed in Lesson 3, such as mimicking, turn-taking, or another form of reciprocal interaction.

Some responses can be very subtle, so watch closely and be absolutely present with the child.

Give them an affirmation – such as verbally, through your body language, or tactually – that you “see” them and understand and are very interested in what they’re doing. These kinds of interactions help strengthen relationships and, for many children, will become the foundation for their language and communication development.

**[Visual Description]** A boy sits in a chair with a tray. A teacher sits in front of the boy and leans forward over the tray. The teacher gives the boy a high-five as they smile and laugh.

**Man:** Give me five, Give me five. Yea baby that was a burner.

**Narrator:**

Don’t forget to acknowledge a child’s negative emotions, like fear, stress, frustration, or over-stimulation. Affirm that you understand, and offer comfort in a way the child will recognize. This will help validate the child’s feelings and further strengthen your connection.

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

**Michelle Clyne**: So activities that involve joint attention are really helpful for creating and building up that relationship, even though they're not saying it out loud, kids are probably thinking “ooh here's something we both like to do, I'm really liking doing this with you.” So it's a really powerful strategy for building that relationship with the child. And then that powerful relationship can help you through doing more things that maybe aren't your favorite things.

**[Visual description]** A young boy and his teacher sit on the floor of a classroom and lean over a tiny toy piano.

**Narrator:** Another important strategy is to create greeting and leaving rituals, which will assure a child of your presence and let them know that when you leave, it’s not forever.

**[Visual Description]** A young boy who is deafblind sits in a wheelchair. There are bells on his tray table, but he is not playing with them.

Most of us feel frustrated when there’s ambiguity in our life – when we don’t know what’s going to happen next or when something will be over. This feeling is very common with children who are deafblind. For them, ambiguity can be extremely stressful.

**[Visual Description]** A teacher sits next to a student. The student’s hand is on top of the teacher’s. Together they touch tactile symbols on a calendar board.

**Man:** Obstacle course yesterday, right.

**Narrator:** To help lessen the stress of uncertainty, develop ways to create order for the child, whenever possible, by being predictable, consistent, and reliable. Develop routines and use a calendar system. When children who are deafblind know what's going to happen, it decreases their overall anxiety and helps them develop self confidence. It also increases their trust in you because you are a person who helps them avoid uncertainty and surprises.

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

**Michelle Clyne:** So children need to feel protected and need to believe that adults are in control, but with that security they're going to explore and know it's safe for them to make choices, so they're growing autonomy comes from this framework of limits that the adults impose. Interpersonal skills that they're developing will be used later in life and come from this system of choice-making within limits.

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

You learned in this lesson about following the child’s lead as a way to build trust. What does this mean? Feel free to pause the video to consider this question.

Following the child’s lead means allowing the child to go with their interests. In other words, allow the child to determine what they prefer to do. And show an interest in what they’re interested in doing.

As their comfort with you grows, you can begin to subtly suggest other things that might interest them. This will help the child know that you’re the kind of person they can trust to be there when they need it, but who gives them the opportunity to choose their own way.

**Narrator:** This ends Part 2 of Lesson 4. In Part 3, we’ll discuss the importance of building peer relationships.

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