**Module 2 Lesson 2 Part 3 Descriptive Transcript**

**Narrator:**

“Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind: Professional Development for Educators”

Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind

Lesson 2: Connecting with Others

Part 3: Concept Development

**[Visual Description]** A series of images. A mother holds a young boy as he touches a goat's foot. A young child plays with a toy steering wheel.

**Narrator:** Concept development is an integral part of communication development.

Concepts are the ideas we form about the world based on our experiences.

**[Visual Description]** A series of videos. A toddler stands in front of his mother. She moves her head back and forth and then he does the same. A baby sits in a highchair. His mom sits next to him. She plays peekaboo with a towel. She hides her face and then quickly drops the towel. The baby is startled and they both laugh.

For hearing-sighted infants and toddlers, it happens naturally as they experience through their senses what is in their environments, especially what they see and hear.

They learn that people, places, and things exist, and will continue to exist even if they’re not around.

**[Visual Description]** A young boy watches his mother blow up a balloon. He touches it as it expands. His mom releases the balloon and it flys around the room as it deflates. They both laugh.There are other inflated balloons on the floor that the boy plays with.

Take, for example, the concept of “balloon.” A child with typical hearing and vision sees and feels an uninflated balloon, then watches and listens as it fills with air and expands. If someone pokes it with a pin, it explodes, and they hear a loud bang.

The child has opportunities to observe other balloons of various colors and sizes, and soon understands the concept—the idea—of what a balloon is. They’ll also develop a mental image of a balloon. At some point in their development, the child will also connect the word “balloon” to this round, rubbery thing that can expand and grow and float and sometimes go “bang!”

**[Visual Description]** A young girl who is deafblind crawls on the floor near a deflated balloon.

Very little of that happens naturally for a child who is deafblind. They don’t have access to most of the incidental information (seeing the balloon before it inflates, watching it expand, hearing it pop).

**[Visual Description]** A young girl who is deafblind crawls on the floor. She reaches out to touch an inflated balloon.

They need to be intentionally taught the concept. This involves giving the child meaningful opportunities to fully experience all the parts (or elements) that make up what we call “balloons.”

**[Visual Description]** A mother holds her baby in the NICU.

Let’s take a look at how concept development begins. As you may know, infants gradually develop a sense of self and the ability to recognize that there are people apart from themselves who do things like hold them and feed them.

**[Visual Description]** A toddler and his mom play pat-a-cake. The toddler holds onto the mother’s thumbs as she moves her hands.

Infants who are deafblind share this self-concept development process, but it develops much more slowly. Their ability to see or hear the people around them is limited, so it takes longer to make those connections.

**[Visual Description]** An image of a toddler sitting and looking up. Overlaying the image are three circles with the words “people, “places”’ and things”.

If we imagine that a child’s self-concept is at the center, other concepts—like people, places, and things—build outwardly as the child's experiences expand to more and more people, places, and things.

So, it’s important to expose children to a wide variety of experiences. Keep in mind that these experiences should be as authentic—as real—as possible.

**[On Screen Text]** Nancy Hatfield, Early Childhood Consultant Deafblindness, Former Director of the Washington State Deaf-Blind Project

**Nancy Hatfield:** So you may be working with a child who deafblind, who has quite a bit of functional vision. And you think well, let's, let's make sure that we introduce the concept of dog. And so you think, well, let's just bring in some pictures of dogs or a book with different pictures of different dogs, and that will take care of it. But those are just two-dimensional, and even though the child has a lot of functional vision their vision still is not one hundred percent reliable. So we don't know exactly what they're getting out of that. And so you might think, well, let's bring in some stuffed dogs, or some little plastic dogs, but that also doesn't convey the concept of “dogness.” It's incomplete.

**[Visual Description]** A toddler sits on the floor, in front of him is a large dog. He pets the dog and the dog licks his face.

You want the child to be able to experience dogs–different kinds of dogs in different settings. And touch the dog's fur, and have the dog lick the child's face. And to get the concept of dogs that will have a lot more meaning for the child.

**[Visual Description]** A young boy is held by his mom. They stand in front of a microwave. His mom opens the door and puts a cup in the microwave. She starts the microwave. Together they watch the cup rotate in the microwave. When the microwave goes off, his mom removes the cup.

**Narrator:** Let’s consider the concept of a microwave oven. Hearing-sighted children know what they are because they can see and hear them and watch their parents and siblings use them. They know microwaves have a door and can be shiny. They know you put food inside them and it comes out hot. And they know that they’re typically in a kitchen.

To *just begin* *helping* a child who is deafblind grasp the concept of a microwave, consider what “parts” or “elements” you’d need to teach:

1. How it feels (the concept of smooth versus rough)
2. How big it is (large versus small)
3. It has an inside and an outside
4. It has knobs and things that move
5. It can be “on” or “off”
6. It vibrates when it’s on
7. You can smell food sometimes when it’s “on”
8. It has a door
9. It has a plug that goes to the wall
10. Food is not hot when it goes in but it is hot when it come out (the concept of hot versus cold)
11. It is used for food.
12. It is in the kitchen (what is a kitchen?)

**[Visual Description]** A young girl plays outside. She sees her shadow. She waves and moves her hands as she watches her shadow.

As you might imagine, coming up with ways of doing this can be challenging! Encourage caregivers to be purposeful about providing their child with experiences that will help them create meaningful concepts–especially those that involve their child’s preferred sensory modalities and any usable hearing and vision.

**[Visual Description]** A young boy sits in a chair. A sensory blanket with rough and smooth textures.is draped across him. He explores the textures on the blanket.

A number of tools and techniques provide children who are deafblind with sensory experiences. For example, to help teach the concepts of smooth and rough, have the child explore a sensory blanket with fabrics and objects of different textures attached.

As the child feels and explores the materials, watch to see what kinds of textures they prefer.

**[Visual Description]** A young child sits in a chair. On the tray in front of her are object cues for play, pumpkin and Sloan.

The use of object cues during daily routines also supports concept development. The repetition of steps in a routine provides a context for learning concepts such as spoon, diaper, and washcloth because they link the cues for these items to their purposes.

**[Visual Description]** A provider sits with a toddler in front of her. The child’s arms rests on the providers’ as she shakes some bells.

Using the hand-under-hand technique and tactually pointing to objects can encourage a child to interact with them. Object cues must be carefully selected to ensure they are meaningful to the child.

**[Visual Description]** A blue plastic sippy cup on a table.

Pictures are sometimes used for children with usable vision but as with objects make sure they represent concepts in a meaningful way.

**[Visual Description]** A child’s hands hold a blue plastic sippy cup.

**[On Screen Text]** Sundie Marx, Teacher of the Deaf-Blind, Utah Schools of the Deaf and the Blind

**Sundie Marx:** Instead of using clip a clip art picture, for example, of a sippy cup. It's better to use an actual picture of their sippy cup, because that is a correlation and connection that they will have with that picture. And what we know is that that connection will be made much quicker if it's the actual object that they interact with during those routines.

The same goes with an object cue such as a bus. So, rather than, you know, giving them a miniature bus, you would want to see what they interact with on, while riding the bus. If that is the seat belt, that the only thing that they feel is that seat belt? Then you would want to use a piece of that seat belt.

**[Visual Description]** A toddler laying down in the grass. A box with dangling items is above her.

**Narrator:** Many opportunities for a child to experience a concept, or part of one, can pop up unexpectedly.

**[On Screen Text]** Nancy Hatfield, Early Childhood Consultant Deafblindness, Former Director of the Washington State Deaf-Blind Project

**Nancy Hatfield:** One time I was doing a home visit with the family, and we were outside with the, with the child on the grass. And while we were sitting there watching her interact with some toys and things, somebody started up a lawnmower. And the child stopped moving and just paused. And we wondered, “is she hearing that lawnmower?” We weren't, sure, but this opportunity had come up, so we we picked her up and took her over to the lawnmower and let her get close enough to hear it better. And she could touch the handle and just get that whole experience of a lawnmower and the source of the noise, to build on in the future.

**[Visual Description]** Video series. A young boy sits in a highchair and looks at a picture book. A young child looks at the image of a bear on a tablet.

**Narrator:** Because concept development is so closely linked to communication development, it’s an important foundation for emerging literacy. In other words, before you can assign a word or a symbol or a sign to a concept, you need to to understand it.

**Child:** “Bear, bear”

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

What is the main difference between concept development for an infant or toddler who is deafblind and a one who has typical hearing and vision?

Pause the video if you need time to think.

An infant or toddler who has typical hearing and vision will have multiple opportunities to use these senses to learn about and develop a concept. They can create a “mental image” of the concept and will eventually attach a word or name to it. Infants and toddlers who are deafblind won’t naturally understand concepts in the same way. They need to be exposed to all the parts or elements of a concept during numerous meaningful and authentic opportunities.

**Narrator:** Now, let’s review our pre-lesson questions:

True or False?

1. Infants and toddlers who are deafblind need to be intentionally taught the words, expressions, gestures, sounds, and signs that typical hearing-sighted children learn incidentally.

TRUE! Because children who are deafblind have limited access to incidental information, they will need to be taught most of the things that typical hearing-sighted children learn naturally.

2. Because children who are deafblind are easily distracted by sensory information, it is important to limit the amount of time you give them to respond during learning activities.

FALSE! Children who are deafblind often need considerable time to process information and then to respond. Patience is key!

3. You should instruct the caregiver of a child who is deafblind to limit the child’s exposure to authentic experiences outside the home until they have developed accurate concepts of their home environment.

FALSE! Infants and toddlers who are deafblind should be exposed to a wide variety of authentic and meaningful experiences. This will support both their concept and communication development.

This is the end of Module 2, Lesson 2. In Lesson 3, we’ll look at how to best create responsive environments and encourage a child’s movement.

**[On Screen text]** National Center on Deaf-Blindness  
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 Narrated by Shelby Morgan  
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 Edited by Brian Daigle  
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