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

**Narrator:**

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

Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind

Lesson 3: Expanding the Child’s World

Part 2: Encouraging Mobility and Engagement with Others

**[Visual Description]** Series - A young boy dancing and laughing with an older sibling. A young girl sitting with her father. They interact through touch and signs. A young girl on the playground with an adult female. They each hold a swing and move it back and forth.

**Narrator:** In Part 2 of this lesson, we’ll add to what you’ve learned about active, self-initiated learning that expands a child’s world. Here, we’ll focus on expanding a child’s world by encouraging their mobility and engagement with others.

Keep in mind as we discuss this topic that orientation and mobility specialists are an excellent resource for information on establishing environments that consider a child’s usable hearing, vision, touch, and other senses to help them understand and safely navigate different environments.

**[Visual Description]** Series of videos and images - A young boy uses a standing chair with cushion supports for his neck, torso and legs. He reaches for objects on the tray in front of him. A young girl sits in a supportive highchair with a tray. A young girl uses a supportive standing chair that provides cushioned supports.

Whenever caregivers are encouraging their child to explore, move, or try something new, the child must be posturally secure. They should not have to work to maintain a stable position. Adaptive and supportive mobility equipment such as positioning chairs, standers, and gait trainers can provide support and help expand movement opportunities and independence for many children.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - A young girl sits on the floor in front of a wheelchair. She looks at the wheelchair. A young boy sits in a wheelchair that supports his neck and body.

**Narrator:** But make sure caregivers introduce children to equipment *very slowly.* Give them plenty of time to tactually explore, and gradually—at their own pace—let them become accustomed to its textures, parts, and shapes.

Equipment like supportive chairs and wheelchairs help expand the child’s world by changing their viewpoint-–but transition to their use carefully.

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

**Sundie Marx:** We do it because it strengthens them. It gives them a different perspective on the world. You know we can set them up higher. But it’s, it's still very alarming, you know. Even when we set them up on a couch in a corner. You know, we have to realize that's a long way for them from when we picked them up on the ground and put them, so they may be terrified. So just being really thoughtful in how slow we make those transitions to different seating

**[Visual Description]** A young girl is wearing a bike helmet. She holds a flower up to her face.

**Narrator:** Children who are deaf-blind explore their environment in many different ways.

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

**Nancy Hatfield:** It's not uncommon at all for deafblind children to sometimes prefer to explore with their feet rather than with their hands. So in one situation, the mom had noticed that her little girl would make her way over to the couch in the living room, and then put her feet up and explore the texture of the fabric with her toes and her feet, and spend quite a while exploring that. And then she moved on to exploring the bottoms of other smooth wood cabinets and so forth. But we talked about adding some objects, maybe pinning some different kinds of objects, that this little girl preferred, some of her likes, and hanging them there on the bottom of the couch for her to find, as she was exploring it with her feet. She would find something, a new thing there that she liked to explore in other places, but that hadn't been available for her feet before.

**[Visual Description]** A toddler sits on the floor near an open door between two rooms in a house. One room has a wood floor, the other linoleum, between the rooms is a raised molding. The girl explores the molding and flooring with her hands and feet.

**Narrator:** Toddlers who can crawl or move about on the floor may come in contact with new flooring textures, such as a change from carpet to wood in a doorway. This may cause some children to initially feel anxious or afraid. Assure caregivers that this is normal.

**[Visual Description]** A young girl sits on the floor at the bottom of 3 inside steps. The steps are carpeted. She explores the steps with her hands but does not go up the steps.

Have them give the child time to explore how the different flooring feels with their hands or feet (and with any usable vision and hearing). Once they become more comfortable with the new texture, they’ll gradually become more interested in exploring it.

**[Visual Description]** A toddler crawls on the floor. She starts on a plastic carpet protector, and moves onto the carpet.

As you would with any infant or toddler, encourage parents to be vigilant about preventing accidents. With a child who is deafblind, however, they’ll need to look for obstacles their child cannot see, like chairs, corners of tables, and edges of doorways.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images- An adult uses bright yellow tape to mark a white doorway. Split yellow pool noodles are put on the edges of cabinets.

Use brightly colored, high contrast tape in these areas if the child has usable vision.

Pool noodles and other materials with unique textures can also help alert a child with limited vision to obstacles and serve as tactile identifiers.

**[Visual Description]** A toddler uses a walker to move across the room.

Once the child has created a mental map of the room, encourage parents to limit changes to furniture placement and other objects as much as possible.

**[Visual Description]** Series of videos -A female adult sits on a bed with a toddler. The adult calls the child’s name and taps them on the chest. The child intentionally falls backwards on the bed. They laugh. A young girl and her father sit close together. The man hugs the girl and she hugs his arm. She wiggles happily beside him.

**Narrator:** As we have seen, the world of a child who is deafblind—everything they know and have experienced—expands as they explore new things close by and, if they're able, in spaces they can reach and move to. An equally important way their world grows is by making more and stronger connections with others.

**[Visual Description]** A female adult and a toddler sit on the floor and look at a book.

**[On Screen Text]** Do things With their child rather than To their child.

To do this, remind caregivers about avoiding the good fairy syndrome, which you learned in Part 1. Have them think about doing things *WITH* their child (and following their lead) rather than doing things *TO* their child.

**Woman:** You are so smart!

**[Visual Description]** A mother sits with her son in her lap. They flip through a book together.

**Narrator:** Joining *with* a child in activities they enjoy in environments that match their abilities creates numerous opportunities for them to

* Learn new things
* Strengthen their communication
* Form deeper connections with others
* And, most importantly–have fun!

**[Visual Description]** A young girl lies on the floor, an adult rolls a ball around on her body. The girl laughs.

**Woman:** Did you get a ball? Ohhhh!

**[On Screen Text]** Kari Harbath, Sloan’s Mom

**Kari Harbath:** Our house was like the mini hospital for a long time, and it was really hard at that time, because we also knew in tandem with all of the hospital stuff, we had this dealblind diagnosis, and we were afraid of what her future looked like, and we hadn't had anybody come in yet and say, “Hey, this is actually going to be fun too!” Be like “her childhood is going to be fun, and she's going to be a fun kid, and there will be some fun to be had in this.”

**[Visual Description]** Sloan and Kari with big smiles.

**[Visual Description]** A man and a young boy swing at the playground. The man stops swinging and waits for the boy to touch his hand then he immediately starts swinging again.

**Narrator:** Caregivers and other adults can turn fun activities into learning opportunities by incorporating many of the communication strategies you learned in Lesson 2, such as the pause strategy and wait time. For example, say you are working with a parent whose child loves to swing. While this activity is fun and worthwhile for its own sake, you can also encourage the parent to pause the swinging and wait to see how their child responds.

**Man:** Do you really? Okay we can do that. That was pretty cool, you are a pretty quick study.

**Narrator:** During the pause, the child will likely communicate a desire to get moving again! He might kick a foot or move side-to-side, or it might be something more subtle, like a change of expression or slight hand movement.

**[Visual Description]** The man stops swinging. The boy touches the chain of the swing and the man starts swinging.

When the caregiver acknowledges this message by starting up the activity again, the child will love it! They will be experiencing the power of communication—of *being understood* by someone else. They’ve made a stronger connection.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images and videos - A man plays a guitar next to an infant. A young boy with cochlear implants plays a piano.

Music is another way to deepen those connections between children and others. Most children who are deafblind have some hearing and wear hearing aids or have cochlear implants. And many enjoy the sounds and vibrations of music (some who are totally deaf enjoy feeling the vibrations.)

Let’s watch how this child is learning about the vibrations of a drum.

**[Visual Description]** A young girl sits on the floor near a large drum. The girl rests the side of her face on the top of the drum. An adult gently beats the drum with drumsticks. The girl lifts her head and rests her hands on the drum. The adult beats the drum near her hands. The girl smiles big and moves her hands on the top of the drum.

**[Visual Description]** A woman from the Marshall Islands sings to her baby. She moves her baby’s arms to accompany the song lyrics. The baby smiles happily.

(woman signing in Marshallese)

**Narrator:** Nearly every culture has nursery rhymes or songs with accompanying movements or gestures. They’re a fun way to get infants and toddlers who are deafblind to move and communicate.

**[Visual Description]** A series of videos - A woman plays pat-a-cake with a toddler. Together they move their hands to accompany the lyrics. A woman signs and sings Twinkle Twinkle Little Star to an attentive toddler. She pauses to give him the chance to copy her signs.

**Woman:** Twinkle twinkle little star

**Narrator:** Many of these songs teach words and concepts. Encourage adults to use language in ways the child will understand. For example, if they are deaf or hard of hearing, they might use simple signs, gestures, touch cues, or object cues to help support the child’s language development.

**Woman:** (singing) how I wonder what you are

**[Visual Description]** A woman and a toddler sit on the floor, between them is a toy medical bag. They take turns using the toy stethoscope.

**Narrator:** In Lesson 2, you learned how *imitation* encourages communication. It’s an excellent way to strengthen a child’s connection with others.

Imitation is often a part of *turn-taking,* another excellent strategy that helps a child learn about the “give and take” of interacting with others. As the name suggests, the adult and child take turns doing something.

**Woman:** Thank you. Listen… Huh! Thank you.

Yeah, oh your turn. Okay.

Ohh. My turn? [child gurgling] Thank you.

**Narrator:** This adult and child are communicating and making a stronger connection as they take turns and enjoy this shared activity.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - children and their caregivers.

Using strategies like these, an infant or toddler who is deafblind learns more about the world around them, including how to explore, communicate, and have fun interacting with others. These are foundational components of a young child’s growing independence, confidence, and future success in the preschool years ahead.

Let’s take a break and check what we’ve learned.

Suppose you are working with a toddler who is deafblind, and the early intervention team agrees that a type of assistive equipment (like a stander, positioning chair, or gait trainer) would improve the child’s mobility and provide support. What is the best way to introduce the child to the item?

Pause the video if you need time to consider.

To help the child feel comfortable and safe with the new piece of equipment, introduce it to them very slowly. Make sure they have plenty of time to tactually explore it and become accustomed to its texture and parts.

This ends Part 2 of Lesson 3. In Part 3, we’ll examine strategies for further expanding a child’s world by encouraging them to interact with others in new environments.

**[On Screen text]** National Center on Deaf-Blindness  
 Developed and produced by NCDB  
 Narrated by Shelby Morgan  
 Written by Ann Biswas  
 Edited by Brian Daigle  
 Special thanks to: State deaf-blind projects, the many young people, 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.  
 © 2023 National Center on Deaf-Blindness