**Module 2 Lesson 3 Part 3 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 3: Expanding Their World to More People and Places

**[On Screen Text]** Mary Erlenmeyer, Millie’s Mom

**Mary Erlenmeyer:** Starting out when we brought her home, she didn’t like any sounds, it had to be quiet and dark, and now it’s like she loves colors, she loves music, and she’s not irritable or upset when there’s a lot of noise going on. And also when she was little we didn’t take her very many places because it was overstimulating, and she would go into meltdown mode kind of. And now she loves being around people. We can take her to grocery stores, we can take her to the mall or to the fair, or to Quileute days with our tribe, and she tolerates this, and she actually likes it. And around people she’s content.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - children who are deafblind exploring and interacting with their world.

**Narrator:** As a child who is deafblind becomes more confident with each new learning opportunity, a time will come when they’ll benefit from even broader experiences: Opportunities to explore environments outside the home, meet new people, and interact with peers.

**[Visual Description]** A man pulls two children in a wagon through a grassy area.

A world of opportunities is available to help expand the world of a child who is deafblind. As an early intervention provider, you’ll want to make sure parents are aware of what’s available in your community and encourage them to take advantage of environments and activities that give their child access to new sensory experiences and learning.

Something as simple as taking the child for a walk in a new area can be of great benefit.

**[Visual Description]** A young girl and her mom look at fish in a fish tank at a pet store. The same young girl and mom look at fish in jars at a pet store.

**Woman 1:** Oh they are big that's probably why.

**Woman 2:** Yup look at her, she is so excited she can see them.  
This is a red fish, it doesn’t look so good.

**[Visual Description]** At home, the girl and her mom look at a homemade book about the fish they saw at the pet store.

**Narrator:** Collect items along the way or take pictures as the child experiences new places and things. Later, create an “experience book” that the child can look at and touch later on as they recall their journey.

**[Visual Description]** A girl and her sister sitting at the top of a slide.

Other places that expand a child’s access to new experiences and learning include

* Toddler groups and similar activities, which give them a chance to learn about other children,
* Places like their own backyard and
* Out in the community, such as to parks, playgrounds, and zoos
* As well as community groups.

**[Visual description]** A boy lays down in a wide flat circular swing.

* In addition, many communities have spaces with adaptive equipment for children with special needs
* And family activities and other programs are typically offered by the state deafblind projects.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images- A boy with a white cane stands in front of a shark tank. Two boys sit in a kiddie pool.

New environments like these can offer a host of engaging sensory information that will help expand what a child already knows and increase their curiosity to learn more.

When do you know when the child is developmentally ready to engage in these new experiences? Sometimes it can be simply trial and error.

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

**Sundie Marx:** But I do set my families up like “Don't expect that, you know, it's going to be the best experience of your life the first time you do it,” because I don't want them to do it and their child has a meltdown, and then they never do it again, because that's typical of any of our kids. So, it's kind of setting the expectation not too high, but also high enough that they're allowing their kid to learn also, and perhaps struggle the first time.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - A boy kneels on the ground and plays with large legos. A boy sits in the sand with beach toys in front of him.

**Narrator:** One way to know it’s time for a new challenge: Once the child has become comfortable with or has mastered a skill close at home, consider having them use that skill in a new environment.

**[Visual Description]** A mother holds her child.

**Narrator:** Don’t be surprised if caregivers are somewhat fearful about exposing their child who is deafblind to new places and things. Always acknowledge and honor their feelings, and give them support and encouragement.

Talk to them about the tremendous benefits of peer interactions and exposure to new places and things. And emphasize how these experiences build confidence that will be important, such as when it’s time for preschool.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images - Children who are deafblind playing at parks together.

**Narrator:** Playgroups with toddlers (either in the home or at another child’s home or a nearby park) can create excellent opportunities for learning. Groups can be made up of children who are deafblind, hearing-sighted, or a mix of both. The results of getting little ones together with their peers can often be remarkable.

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

**Sundie Marx:** Especially with a toddler group. It's amazing, because at first they're, you know, like “No, they won't,” even, they assume their child won’t even acknowledge another child. But it's amazing. And I always say, children sense children. They learn so much more through peer interaction, even if at age two. We can be working on a skill, like the whole switch thing, right, the “I want more of something,” and all of a sudden, they're in an environment where their peer does it. Then they're motivated. And they do it, like, usually in toddler group, and we're like, “we've been working on that for six months!” and they show up twice for toddler group! And, kids sense kids, I swear, and they learn so much better and easier through their own peers.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - children who are deafblind interacting with other children in various environments.

**Narrator:** Toddler groups and other peer activities challenge a child who is deafblind by exposing them to new textures, sights, sounds, smells, behaviors, and much more. Importantly, new opportunities create the need to find new ways to communicate with others.

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

**Sundie Marx:** As caregivers, we already kind of anticipate what our child needs, so we don't always offer them the most rich language environment. Because we know that's going to set them off. So we make sure that, you know, everything goes as planned. Well, in that expanding environment, life happens, and we don't have as much control over it. And so sometimes that's when we see our children flourish the most and communicate the most, because we are not already anticipating what they, you know, what they want or what they need.

**[Visual Description]** Two young boys play together in their backyard in a pool with a small slide. One boy is deafblind and the other is not. They both play and slide down the slide.

**Narrator**: Be aware that some parents may become discouraged when they compare their child who is deafblind to other children who seem to be far ahead developmentally, socially, and emotionally.

**Woman:** Benbe gentle. Go Liam go!

**Narrator:** Be sensitive with parents who think that “every child can do more than mine.” Assure them that every child makes progress at their own pace and in their own way.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - A mom and dad in a kayak with their daughter. A boy pushes his brother in a wheelchair. A boy in an accessible swing.

Activities in the community also benefit *the family* in a number of ways:

* They can be a welcome relief from the isolation many families feel that have a child who is deafblind
* It’s good for the family and extended family to experience “typical” fun family activities, like playing at the park or going to a museum and getting together with friends.
* Siblings benefit from having fun interacting with their brother or sister who is deafblind in a new way (especially if a child feels their sibling who is deafblind gets a lot of attention!)
* And finally, it gives everyone in the family the opportunity to see their child, brother, or sister who is deafblind through a different lens–And that with the right adaptations, such as adapted bikes, swings, and more, the child can experience and engage with the world.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images- Children with deafblind and their caregivers at the park.

Last but not least, the *community* benefits when a child who is deafblind becomes a part of the community.

Community members can see what is possible for a child with sensory disabilities, especially given certain adaptations

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

**Sundie Marx:** So this is huge. We really believe that the more we can involve our children in the community, the more the community accepts them and sees these adaptations is not, you know, a pain in the butt to do, but rather like. No, this is what we want to do!

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

We’ve seen how helpful it can be to have children who are deafblind experience new environments and people, through activities like toddler groups, playground visits, and community events. But how might just taking a walk (or stroller ride) be used to expand a child’s world?

Pause the video if you need time to think.

Even simple activities like taking a walk can provide a host of opportunities for learning by allowing a child to explore new textures, sights, and sounds along the way. Encourage parents to take advantage of any opportunity to give their child access to new sensory experiences and learning.

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

True or False?

1. It is best for caregivers to direct an infant or toddler who is deafblind to new objects and textures rather than having the child accidentally bump into things. FALSE

In fact, it’s just the opposite. Caregivers must intentionally create opportunities that motivate a child to want to learn—making *deliberate* choices about what will heighten their curiosity and encourage self-initiated learning.

1. Joining with an infant or toddler who is deafblind in activities they enjoy creates numerous opportunities to strengthen their communication and form deeper connections with others.

ABSOLUTELY TRUE.

*And* it will help them discover new things and learn to have fun with others!

1. Children who are deafblind are not fully ready for activities outside the home until around age 2.

FALSE.

There is no “magic age” when children who are deafblind are ready for activities like this, which can offer a host of engaging sensory information and opportunities to expand communication. Many times, it’s just trial and error. It can be helpful to remind parents that things might not go perfectly the first time their child interacts with peers.

This is the end of Module 2, Lesson 3. In Lesson 4, we’ll focus on what’s involved when preparing for the preschool years.

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