**Module 2 Lesson 4 Part 1 Descriptive Transcript**

**Narrator:**

Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind: Professional Development for Educators

Module 2: Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind

Lesson 4: Preparing for Transition to Preschool

Part 1: Preparing the Family for Transition to Preschool

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

**Kari Harbath:** I was worried that people wouldn't be able to read her like I can or understand what's going on. I was, I, you know we've become so comfortable, you become so comfortable with people in your home. You're in your own home, your own temperature. Someone can be naked half the time, like, it's just very comfortable. And I was worried about Sloan being uncomfortable in a new environment. I was worried about her. I just had so many unnecessary fears, but fears of, like, her being treated, ignored, treated in a way that she, that was unfair to her. Not being heard visually, you know, like through her body language, not being respected. Those were all things that I was really concerned about.

**[Visual Description]** A caregiver sits with a toddler in her lap. She holds a light up toy in front of the toddler.

**Narrator:** For families with an infant or toddler who is deafblind, the transition from early intervention to preschool can feel overwhelming.

As an early intervention provider, you play a major role in easing their stress by helping caregivers know

* What to expect
* How services for their child will change,
* And how they can best prepare for this important life change.

But before we begin, let’s check what you know…

True or False? …

1. Because the transition to preschool is particularly challenging for parents of children who are deafblind, wait to discuss it with them until six months before the child's third birthday.
2. Nearly all receiving preschool teams will be familiar with the services and accommodations a child who is deafblind needs to fully participate in lessons and activities.
3. To help ease the transition to preschool, caregivers should expose their child to new environments and increase their experience with a variety of communication partners.

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

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

1. Demonstrate strategies to support caregivers of children who are deafblind during the transition from early intervention to preschool
2. Provide detailed information to a receiving preschool team about a child who is deafblind that will help them meet the child’s unique educational needs
3. Describe specific strategies caregivers can use to make the transition to preschool as smooth and enjoyable for the child as possible

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - young children who are deafblind in a school setting.

As we’ve seen, a child who is deafblind has unique needs and abilities. Planning for the transition from early intervention to preschool must be done thoughtfully and with sensitivity.

Although you’ve probably seen many transitions to preschool in your time as an early intervention provider, this will likely be the first time for the parents of a child who is deafblind.

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

**Sundie Marx:** It's a huge transition, I think primarily because of just the age of the child and the needs of the child. So not only do the parents feel like, “I'm giving my, you know, my baby’s going to school. But then also, “my baby, who can't communicate, who's on a ventilator, who needs fed.” So all those other things make it way more complex in their mind to think, “Well, who's going to do all this for my child?”

**[Visual Description]** An empty school hallway.

**Narrator:** Under Part C regulations, a transition meeting with the Part C lead agency, the family, and the school district must be held at leastnine months before the child’s third birthday. For children who are deafblind and their families, planning for the transition must begin well before this.

**Sundie Marx:** And so I've just found that the earlier you talk about it, and not an overwhelming conversation every visit, but kind of little bits and pieces. They're able to better understand kind of what it's going to look like, what the processes look like, what the procedures will look like when they actually come.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - young children who are deafblind in learning environments with caregivers or service providers.

**Narrator:** An important part of your work is to help the family visualize the changes and realize that, with the right planning, collaboration, and support systems in place, their child can be successful in preschool. Explain to them that in preschool, just as in early intervention, their child will have a number of providers who collaborate to support the child and make decisions about their educational program.

This transdisciplinary team could include

* A teacher of the visually impaired
* A teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing
* A speech-language pathologist
* An occupational therapist
* A physical therapist
* An orientation and mobility instructor
* A nurse
* A behavior specialist
* Their special education preschool teacher
* A teacher of the deafblind or deafblind consultant
* And an intervener

**[Visual Description]** A young girl sits at a school desk with an intervener. Together they are reading the word “mud” on a piece of paper.

Interveners are typically paraeducators who’ve received specialized training in deafblindness. Their role is to provide the child with access to information and communication, and facilitate the development of their social and emotional well-being. The term “intevener” isn’t used in all states.

**[Visual Description]** Series of videos - parents of young children who are deafblind meeting with education specialists in school settings.

Keep in mind that, unless parents have been through this with another child, they’ll need to learn about Individualized Education Plans and IEP teams. Assure them that they will be an important member of the team and will be highly involved in decision making regarding their child’s educational plans and services.

A number of tools are available that not only help parents better understand the preschool transition, but also help them prepare to talk about and advocate for their child with the preschool staff.

**[Visual Description]** HomeTalk Logo

For example, “HomeTalk” is an excellent assessment tool developed for families of children who are deafblind.

**[Visual Description]** Series of images - young children who are deafblind engaging in learning activities.

Included are questions about the child’s health, communication skills, and hearing and vision, as well as their interests, talents, habits, routines, and behaviors.

Answers to the HomeTalk questions will provide the preschool team with a more complete “picture” of the child and will greatly inform the development of IEP goals later on.

**[Visual Description]** Screenshots of the National Center on Deaf-Blindness website.

**[On Screen Text]** Nationaldb.org

You’ll find a link to this free online resource and many others on the National Center on Deaf-Blindness website.

Prior to the transition, encourage the family and the team to contact their state's deaf-blind project, if they have not already done so. It can connect them to a wealth of information.

**[Visual Description]** A mother looks at a homemade book with her daughter.

Families can also create simple portfolios about their child that help others get a fuller picture of who they are as an individual.

In addition to basic information about the child and family, these might include pictures and descriptions of

* The child’s favorite foods, toys, and activities
* The child learning about the world, such as playing at the park, visiting a museum or zoo, or looking at books
* The child trying something new or achieving a goal
* The child’s artwork or things the child has made

Some parents even include videos of their child.

**[Visual Description]** A care provider sits on the floor and supports a toddler who stands in front of her.

**Narrator:** At some point, parents may want to visit possible preschools. This can be especially helpful for those who are having a hard time imagining their child who is deafblind in a school setting.

**[On-Screen Text]** Madeline Cheney, Kimball’s Mom

**Madeline Cheney:** I was like, I need to like see other kids with similar losses, and see them thriving and see like the cute little environment he'll be in. Because it was hard to picture him ever being three, like I was like, we're just, we're just so, you know, hyper-focused on where he was right then as a baby. So we went and toured the preschool, and it did make a huge difference. I was like, “Oh, my gosh! Look at these cute little kids! Look at their hearing aids,” you know, and like, “Look how great these classrooms are. Look how awesome these teachers are!” And I was able to ask our provider all the questions about it, and how it worked, and she explained tons of stuff that like I probably didn't need to know right then, but it made me feel like I had some kind of goal to work towards. Okay. We want to get into that school and help him have, like self-help skills and communication, to help him thrive there.

**[Visual Description]** A caregiver sits on the ground in front of a young girl. The caregiver holds a book with pictures of items. The girl flips through the book and looks at the options.

**Narrator:** When talking with the family about what the child might do in preschool, emphasize how the skills they’re working on at home now will be transferable to preschool. Some parents, when hearing this, are even more excited about working on the child’s IFSP outcomes because they’re able to see how those skills directly impact their child’s success in preschool and beyond.

**[Visual Description]** A service provider kneels in front of a mother and a child. The provider holds up a string of bells for the child to interact with.

Help the family understand that before the first IEP meeting, the child will be assessed by a number of specialists to determine eligibility and educational needs.

And, of course, help prepare them ahead of time for what to expect at that IEP meeting

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

**Sundie Marx:** And then but before even the IEP meeting, I really do. I have really frank conversations with the parents to say, you know, what it’s going to look like, and how you need to prepare yourself. Because especially with our IEP meetings, there's a ton of people because you have every service provider there, right? Because that child's receiving PT, OT, speech language, O and M, and deafblind vision here. I mean, it's a room full of people! So the parents are usually sitting, you know, like right at the head, and then they're just looking out over these, I mean, There's 20 of us, you know, just staring right at them. So I just make sure they're really comfortable with this is what it's going to look like.

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

**Nancy Hatfield:** In spite of the number of people that are going to be in that room when the parent walks in, you need to let them know that they have an equal voice on that team. And they may have questions that they want to raise. They may have something to add that's different from what the professionals are saying, and it can be intimidating when you've got speech language therapists and psychologists, and all of these professionals. And, but you have an equal voice, the parent has an equal voice, and they need to feel confident about that.

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

A portfolio about their child is a useful tool for parents to put together and share with the preschool team. What kinds of information can be a part of the portfolio?

Pause the video if you need time to think.

Portfolios can include any information that will help the preschool better understand the child and their personality—descriptions, pictures, and videos showing what they like to do, how they communicate, places they’ve visited, and so on.

This ends Part 1 of Lesson 4. In Part 2, we’ll learn how you can best prepare the preschool receiving team for a child who is deafblind.

**[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.
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