

Minnesota DeafBlind Project

Parent Resource Guide



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Deafblindness explained

Sometimes infants and children who have been identified as having a hearing loss through newborn hearing screening and diagnostic testing also have a vision loss that cannot be fully corrected with eyeglasses. When that happens, the word “DeafBlind“ might come up. You may be thinking, “My child can’t hear very well, but they can still see-- they are not “blind.“ Children who are identified as DeafBlind have varying types and degrees of hearing and vision loss. For example, a child might have cortical visual impairment (CVI) and a hearing loss. Very few children are totally deaf and totally blind.

Children who are DeafBlind may also have additional physical, cognitive, or medical needs. You may also come across terms such as “deaf-blind, dual sensory loss, and combined hearing and vision loss.” All of these phrases and terms help parents and service providers understand that the infant or child who is DeafBlind has very unique needs and requires specialized support to help them communicate and learn.

Deafblindness describes any combined hearing and vision loss that is significant enough to require special modifications or supports. Deaf children rely on their vision to compensate for what they don’t hear. Similarly, children with low vision or blindness use their hearing to make up for what they can’t see. However, when a child has a combined hearing and vision loss, they cannot compensate for missing access in the same way. There are different strategies and approaches that can be used to help provide access to the world around them.

Interveners defined

An intervener is a paraprofessional who is trained to work one-on-one with a child who is DeafBlind to provide critical connections to other people and the environment. The intervener opens channels of communication between the child and others, provides access to information, and facilitates opportunities for learning and development.

In collaboration with the Minnesota Low Incidence Projects, the Minnesota DeafBlind Project (MNDBP) offers an extensive foundational training workshop series for interveners who work one-on-one in an educational setting with students who are DeafBlind.

Connect with the MN DeafBlind Project

The Minnesota DeafBlind Project works with families and educators to support infants, children and youth who have both hearing and vision loss, up to age 22, or while on an IEP. We can help families and educational teams understand how deafblindness impacts the child's ability to learn and communicate. Additionally, the MNDBP provides training and resources to families and educational teams to support learning.

The Minnesota DeafBlind Project believes in the importance of families learning all they can about combined hearing and vision loss. We provide targeted supports for individual families through video/phone calls and text, sharing of resources, training opportunities, and fostering connections within the DeafBlind network and community.

The MNDBP hosts fun family events that provide opportunities for parents and guardians to connect with other families. There is a winter party, a mom's retreat, an annual picnic for families and interveners, and more. We also host virtual Family Learning Community meetings. This is an opportunity to learn about strategies, new resources, and most importantly, connect with other families. To learn more, use the QR code below to connect with us today!

All services are free, with the exception of some trainings for educators.

Connect with us at:
www.dbproject.mn.org



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