Children with Significant Support Needs Including Deaf-Blindness: Building Relationships & Attachment

Megan Mogan, MS, CCC-SLP

Kristi Probst, Ed.D.

Emma Nelson, MS

Presenter Disclosures

- **Megan Mogan** is an employee of the Arizona Deafblind Project, administered by the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind.
- **Dr. Kristi Probst** has no relevant financial or nonfinancial relationships to disclose.
- **Emma Nelson** has no relevant financial or nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Objectives
- Overview of Deaf-Blindness & Etiologies
- Evidence-Based Practices & Application
- Breakout Group Discussion
- Resources & Training Tools

Objectives

- Participants will:
  - Describe the impact that combined vision and hearing loss has on the development of communication and trusting relationships
  - Describe evidence-based practices that build communication and trusting bonds with young children with complex needs
  - Connect practices learned in the session to children on their caseload who have complex needs

Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Network

- National Center on Deaf-Blindness
- State and Multi-State Deaf-Blind Projects
  - Provide resources, consultation, training, and networking opportunities for families & professionals
- Serve Birth - Age 21
- Interveners & Qualified Personnel Initiative
- Funded by the Office of Special Education Programs

Overview of Deaf-Blindness

- “Deaf-Blindness” refers to combined vision and hearing loss.
- Any range of combined vision and hearing loss that significantly limits the child’s ability to get information from people, objects, and activities around them.
- There are many causes and the majority (87%) of children have multiple complex disabilities
- Annual Child Count: *National Child Count of Children and Youth who are Deaf-Blind*.

Evidence Based Practices

- Building Trusting Relationships
- Child Guided Approaches, Active Learning, and Shared Experiences
- Appropriate Hand Use and Respectful Touch
- Identifying Appropriate Communication Modalities
- Predictable Routines & Cues
- Preparing the Learning Environment

Ferrell, Bruce, & Luckner (2018)

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (2022)

Building Trusting Relationships

- Touch in a neutral location (shoulder or arm) - not the hands
- Use a greeting ritual to identify yourself- voice, personal identifier, or touch
- Join the child in what they are doing.
- Affirm what the child is doing in a way that makes sense to them.
- Use a parting ritual to say goodbye.

National Center on Deaf-Blindness (2020)

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (2022)

Shared Conversation

Child Guided Approaches, Active Learning, & Shared Experiences

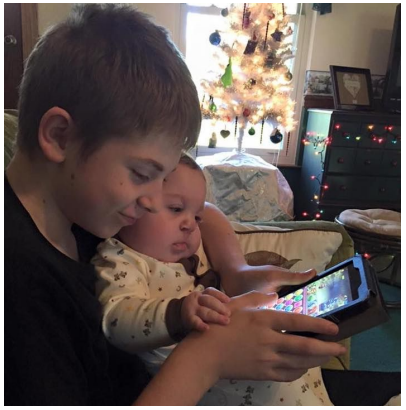
Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (2022)

- Incidental learning is difficult or non-existent
- Follow child's lead and interests
- Pacing and proximity matter!
- Movement, action, and hands-on experiences in interactions in multi-sensory routines
- Thoughtful presentation of experiences that "enable them to develop a gradually expanding view of the world."

Miles & McLetchie (2008)

Appropriate Hand Use & Respectful Touch

- The hands often serve as the eyes and ears for children who are deaf-blind
- Make your hands available to the child
- Hand Under-Hand is a strategy where the learner's hands are gently guided from underneath, which allows the child to explore and participate as they choose.
- Resource: Talking the Language of the Hands to the Hands



National Center on Deaf-Blindness (2021)

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (2022)

Appropriate Hand Use & Respectful Touch

Student is the RECEIVER

We are the SENDERS

Hand Under Hand: Kailee

Identifying Appropriate Communication Modalities

- Everyone communicates!
- Modalities may include: body movements, facial expressions, gestures, objects, sign language, cues, AAC device, vocalizations, speech
- Receptive and Expressive Communication modalities may differ
- Watch for subtle communication attempts, allow adequate response time, respond consistently

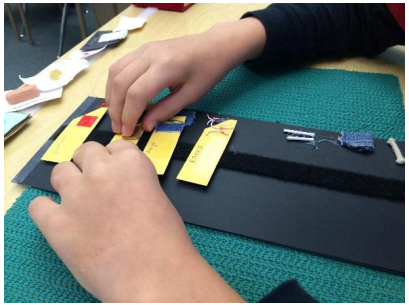
Bruce & Bashinski (2017)

Multiple Systems: Unaided Forms

- Vocalizations
- Unconventional forms of Speech
- Actions on people or objects
- Facial Expressions
- Body Movements and Gestures
- Sign Language

© Mogan, 2017

Multiple Systems: AidedForms



Communication Displays-picture or tangible symbol systems used in exchange, or combined with a point

Communication Device-electronic display that may have auditory output

Handwritten or Typed messages

© Mogan, 2017

Preparing the Learning Environment

- The physical structure is the foundation
  - Provides organization
  - Can either enhance or inhibit access
- Helps everyone understand what occurs in each area
- Helps the child anticipate
- Minimizes distractions

Adapting Materials in the Environment

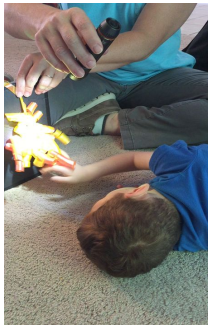
C -Contrast, Color, create defined spaces

L - Lighting

A - Amount of info (auditory and visual) /figure ground issues

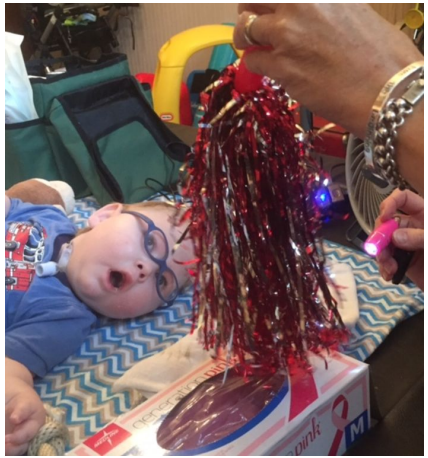
P - Positioning of materials, child and communicators

S - Size- “Big is not always best”

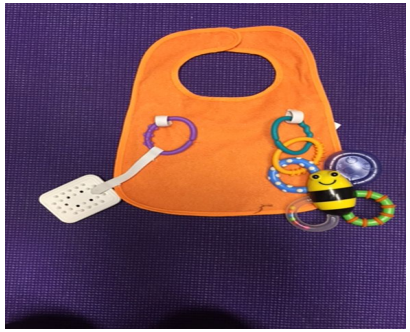


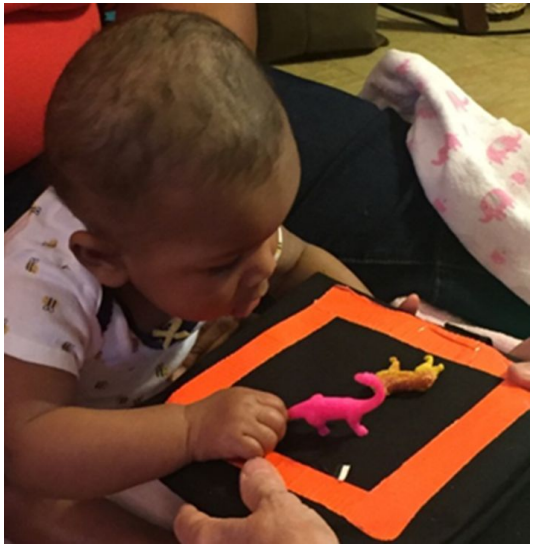
Environmental Adaptations and Modifications

- Supports implemented based on consultation with the family and other professionals
- Lighting optimized to maximize child's useful vision
- Background noise minimized
- Color, texture, and contrast used
- Space allowed for
  - Other staff
  - Materials
  - Equipment



Examples:





Importance of Routine

- To bring order/organization to the child's world
- Build concepts
- Create predictability when possible, increases security
- Predictability → anticipation → ↑intentional communication
- Can include book, objects, or communication board

Miles & Riggio (1998)

Let’s build some connections

3, 2, 1 Breakout Activity

After watching the video of Orion and his mom sharing a snack, you and your group will identify

- 3 big ideas Orion has about apples (that he didn’t have before)
- 2 ways his mom supported his learning (consider strategies from slides!)
- 1 feeling you predict Orion has after this experience

Let’s build some connections

Large Group Discussion

What other experiential learning opportunities might help Orion learn even more about apples?

- Please add in the Chat

Resources at Your Fingertips

- National Center on Deaf-Blindness
- Deaf-blindness, educational practices, and professional development opportunities
- State Deaf-Blind Projects Contacts
- Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Learning Modules
- The Sooner the Better: A Framework for Training Early Intervention Practitioners on Deaf-Blindness
- Communication Matrix

Training Tools

- Training Resources
  - Learning Module: Deaf-Blindness for Early Intervention Practitioners (VA - open to all)
  - Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Learning Modules
  - The Sooner the Better: A Framework for Training Early Intervention Practitioners on Deaf-Blindness
  - Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind: Professional Development for Educators

References (1 of 2)

Bruce, Susan M; Bashinski, Susan M. (May 2017). The Trifocus Framework and Interprofessional Collaborative Practice in Severe Disabilities. American Journal of Speech - Language Pathology (Online); 26(2), 162-180. DOI:10.1044/2016_AJSLP-15-0063

Bruce SM, Luckner JL, Ferrell KA. Assessment of Students With Sensory Disabilities: Evidence-Based Practices. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*. 2018;43(2):79-89. doi:10.1177/1534508417708311

Haynes, D., & Grisham-Brown, J. (2012). *Reach for the stars...planning for the future: A process for planning positive transitions for young children with disabilities.* Louisville, KY: American Printing House for the Blind.

Miles, B. & McLetchie, B. (2008). Developing Concepts with Children Who Are Deaf-Blind. Monmouth, OR: The National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness.

References (2 of 2)

Miles, B. (2003, October). Talking the language of the hands to the hands. DB-Link: The National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are DeafBlind. Monmouth, Oregon. Retrieved: documents.nationaldb.org/products/ hands.pdf

National Center on Deaf-Blindness (Feb. 2020). *Building trusting relationships: NCDB practice guide.* https://documents.nationaldb.org/Building_Trusted_Relationships_Practice_Guide_a_v2.pd

National Center on Deaf-Blindness (Aug. 2021). *Hand-under-hand technique: NCDB practice guide*. https://www.nationaldb.org/media/doc/HandUnderHandTechnique_a.pdf

DEAF-BLIND NETWORK
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACROSS THE NATION

IDEAs that Work
Office of Special Education Programs

Megan Mogan, CCC-SLP, Deafblind Specialist
megan.mogan@asdb.az.gov

Emma Nelson, Project Specialist
enelson@helenkeller.org

Kristi Probst, Project Specialist
kprobst@helenkeller.org

ARIZONA DEAFBLIND PROJECT

NCDB National Center on Deaf-Blindness

The contents of this presentation were developed under grants from the U.S. Department of Education. 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.