

National Child Count: A Snapshot of Newly Identified Children and Youth (2013-2017)

Tara Brown-Ogilvie & Mark Schalock

The National Deaf-Blind Child Count is conducted each year to supplement OSEP’s Federal Part C and Part B child counts, which include children as deaf-blind only when deaf-blindness is their single disability. In contrast, the National Deaf-Blind Child Count includes children whose disability is solely deaf-blindness, as well as those who have additional disabilities.

In each of the past five years, 11% of children on the National Child Count were removed due to graduation, aging out, dropping out, death, or loss of contact. During that same timespan, 11% to 13% were newly identified and added each year.

Understanding who these newly identified children are is important to state deaf-blind projects and the National Center on Deaf-Blindness, to ensure that TA services and products continue to meet their needs. This brief report summarizes this population.

Child Count Entering/Exiting Status

Over the past 5 years, 6,315 children and youth were added to the Child Count and 5,795 exited.

Year	Entering	Exiting	% of Total Entering	% of Total Exiting
2013	1197	1167	11%	11%
2014	1140	1132	11%	11%
2015	1335	1130	13%	11%
2016	1263	1203	12%	11%
2017	1380	1163	13%	11%

Table 1 Five-Year Summary of Child Count Entering/Exiting Status

Newly Identified Children and Youth by Age Group

Nearly half (49%) of the newly identified (“Entering”) children were aged birth through 5 years (average age – 7 years). This is not surprising given the likelihood of new identifications occurring earlier in life, but may also reflect improvements in early identification and referral due to the use of a systematic process described in the [Early Identification and Referral Self-Assessment Guide](#).

Year	Birth to 2	3 to 5	Birth to 5	6-11	12-21
2013	333 (28.6%)	229 (19.6%)	562 (48.2%)	331 (28.4%)	273 (23.4%)
2014	315 (28.5%)	258 (23.3%)	573 (51.8%)	291 (26.3%)	240 (21.9%)
2015	360 (27.4%)	281 (21.4%)	641 (48.8%)	363 (27.6%)	309 (23.6%)
2016	328 (26.5%)	235 (19.0%)	563 (45.5%)	346 (27.9%)	330 (26.6%)
2017	389 (28.4%)	284 (20.7%)	673 (49.1%)	373 (27.2%)	323 (23.7%)
Total	1725	1287	3012	1704	1475

Table 2 Five-Year Summary of Newly Identified Children and Youth by Age Group

Demographics

Etiology

Deaf-blindness in newly identified children is due to more than over 70 specific etiologies. Complications from prematurity and CHARGE Syndrome are the most common of specifically identified etiologies. Approximately 20% have no determined etiology.

Year	Hereditary Syndromes & Disorders	Prenatal and Congenital Complications	Post Natal Non-Congenital Complications	Complications from Pre-maturity	Unknown
2013	497	156	127	105	312
2014	517	144	125	118	236
2015	603	146	137	126	323
2016	550	166	144	109	294
2017	631	191	169	114	275
Total	2798	803	702	572	1440

Table 3 Five-Year Summary of Main Etiology Categories

Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Nearly 90% were reported as White, Hispanic/Latino, or Black/African American.

Year	American Indian/Native Alaskan	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White	Native Hawaiian	Two or More Races
2013	21	43	173	212	616	17	48
2014	25	47	158	179	623	23	43
2015	24	69	212	269	669	12	42
2016	18	46	193	224	649	8	43
2017	17	60	198	231	747	14	65
Total	105	265	934	1115	3304	74	241

Table 4 Five-Year Summary of Race/Ethnicity

The distribution by gender fluctuated over the five-year period, ranging from 50%-56% for males and 43%-49% for females.

Classification of Visual Impairment

Just over 70% were classified as having low vision, being legally blind, or having a documented functional vision loss. Approximately 15% were reported to need further testing for a formal diagnosis. About one quarter had cortical vision impairment.

Year	Low Vision	Legally Blind	Light Perception Only	Totally Blind	Progressive Vision Loss	Further Testing Needed	Functional Vision Loss
2013	369	241	62	47	59	180	237
2014	339	250	37	50	57	187	220
2015	386	267	76	52	70	163	320
2016	395	250	63	48	50	184	273
2017	409	277	59	53	63	248	270
Total	1898	1285	297	250	299	962	1320

Table 5 Five-Year Summary of Classification of Visual Impairment

Classification of Hearing Loss

Approximately 30% had mild or moderate hearing loss. Nearly 40% had a moderately severe to profound loss.

Year	Mild or Moderate Loss	Moderately Severe or Severe Loss	Profound Loss	Progressive Hearing Loss	Further Testing Needed	Functional Hearing Loss
2013	382	266	210	10	205	123
2014	368	258	183	14	195	122
2015	420	306	217	26	207	158
2016	381	269	217	14	243	139
2017	410	315	243	10	248	154
Total	1961	1414	1070	74	1098	696

Table 6 Five-Year Summary of Classification of Hearing Impairment

Approximately 10% had cochlear implants.

Additional Disabilities

Twenty percent had no additional disabilities. At the other end of the spectrum, approximately 37% had four or more. More than half had orthopedic/physical or cognitive disabilities.

Year	No Additional Disabilities	Orthopedic or Physical Disability	Cognitive Disability	Complex Health Care Needs	Four or More Additional Disabilities
2013	218	649	679	568	449
2014	218	620	651	530	432
2015	259	685	756	607	486
2016	235	682	738	596	495
2017	276	732	723	618	465
Total	1206	3368	3547	2919	2327

Table 7 Five-Year Summary of Additional Disabilities

Summary

Overall, this “snap shot” indicates that demographic characteristics of newly identified children and youth over the past five years were consistent with those of the overall national population of children with deaf-blindness. No significant departures or new trends were seen.

National Center on Deaf-Blindness, 2018

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The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education #H326T130013. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of The Research Institute, nor the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Jo Ann McCann.

