



**National Center  
on Deaf-Blindness**

# Professional Development Modules for Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

NCDB is creating professional development modules for practitioners who want to improve their knowledge of deafblindness and gain practical skills that are essential for working with students who are deafblind. The intended audience is teachers from a variety of areas (e.g., special education, visual impairment, deaf/hard of hearing, severe/multiple disabilities), related service providers, and administrators.

The primary purpose of these modules is to provide training materials that can be incorporated into existing professional development opportunities offered by state departments of education and other agencies or organizations that provide professional development. Because of the low-incidence nature of deafblindness, these agencies do not typically include deafblindness in their professional development training. NCDB will not provide training, but by making the content free and ready to use, will make it easier for professional development providers to embed topics on deafblindness into their offerings. Our goal is to help make training about deafblindness widely available to educators.

Although not the primary purpose, family organizations and families will likely also find these materials highly relevant and easy to use and will be able to access them on the NCDB website.

The modules will be delivered in content-specific lessons that can be incorporated into a variety of professional development platforms for various purposes (e.g., CEUs, micro-credentials, credits). This online, open-source content will be based on a synthesis of high-quality literature and expert input.

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Because deafblindness is a relatively rare condition, most educators have little to no practical experience working with students who are deafblind. For the same reason, professional development programs typically lack content on how to teach this population of students. NCDB's professional development modules will directly address this need by providing concrete, practical information about high-quality practices for children and youth who are deafblind that can be incorporated into any professional development program.

## Module Topics

The modules completed so far are

- The impact of deafblindness on learning and development
- Early intervention for children who are deafblind

Proposed module topics include

- An overview of communication
- Transition to adult life
- Early communication
- Educational strategies
- Assessment
- Appropriate learning environments

## Module Project Concept

- Modules will be designed for flexible use, for example, as self-guided/self-paced learning or inclusion in face-to-face or online courses.
- Modules will follow a clear sequence of instruction for participants with differing backgrounds in deafblindness.
- Each module will be divided into 30-minute lessons. Content within lessons will be delivered in short chunks (~10 minutes).
- Each module will have specific competency-based learning objectives.
- Modules will meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA standards.

## Module Components

Modules in this program will share the following components and characteristics:

- Provide skills and knowledge that can be easily adapted for and implemented in the classroom (rather than theoretical in nature)
- Incorporate short intermittent videos with experts in deafblindness, such as state deaf-blind project staff, who will highlight particular content areas (long, lecture-style videos will not be used)
- Use real-world examples, activities, and discussion points that allow learners to apply knowledge to current and future teaching situations
- Include general discussion questions and reflection prompts that can be used in multiple contexts (e.g., discussion boards, wikis, online meetings, face-to-face discussions)
- Provide links to additional resources for expanded learning

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