

Intervener, SSP, and VASP

**Alike and Different to Support
Individuals with Deafblindness**

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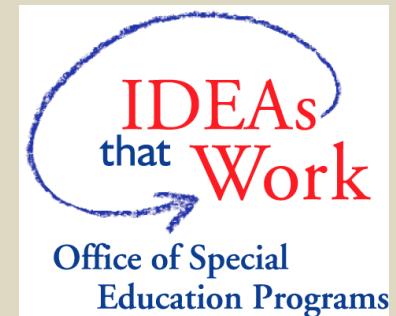
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National Consortium
on Deaf-Blindness



What is Deafblindness?

It depends....

For school age....

For adults.....

What is Deafblindness?

- Having a combined vision-hearing loss; does NOT have to be totally deaf and totally blind
- In Illinois, 429 students were documented as having combined vision-hearing loss by Project Reach on December 1, 2013
- In Illinois, 5,624 persons of all ages were identified as deafblind in an inter-agency count in 1995.

	← Degree of Hearing →				
Degree of Vision ↓	Normal Hearing	Hard of Hearing (mild-moderate)	Deaf (severe to profound)	Progressive Loss	Auditory Neuro-pathy
Normal Vision	Normal for both	Hearing impaired	Hearing impaired	Depends on degree	Hearing impaired
Low Vision (best corrected to 20/70)	Visually impaired (VI)	Identified as DB	DB	DB	DB
Blind - (legally, light perception, field loss, totally)	VI	DB	DB	DB	DB
Progressive Loss	Depends on degree	DB	DB	DB	DB
CVI	VI	DB	DB	DB	DB

Remember
Deafblind is not

Deaf + Blind,

it is

Deaf X Blind

Overall, the biggest
disability in

Deaf-Blindness is in

INFORMATION

GATHERING

Interveners, SSPs, and VASPs are Information Providers

Interveners work with children and youth at home and in schools

SSPS work with adults at home and community

VASPS work with youth and adults to help them achieve their employment outcomes.

What is an Intervener?

An Intervener is an individual, typically a paraeducator, who has received specialized training in deaf-blindness and the process of deafblind intervention.

What does an Intervener do?

- provides access to information and communication
- provides consistent one-to-one support to a student who is deaf-blind
- facilitates the development of social and emotional well-being for children who are deafblind by developing a trusting relationship

So, can only Interveners provide Intervention?

- Anybody can learn and use the techniques, BUT
- Some children need a dedicated one-to-one for the techniques to be effective

Doesn't one to one support foster dependence?

Students with deaf-blindness
depend on the INFORMATION given
by an intervener the way others
depend on their EYES and their EARS

Training Options

- To become a credentialed national intervener: Utah State University distance classes
- College classes also available from other institutions
- To take free online modules (OHOA) with other people in Illinois and with support and a certificate of completion with Project Reach or on your own through NCDB

Utah State University

- Enroll in program and as a student at large
- Pay tuition
- Take 2 classes and one practicum, develop portfolio
- Submit portfolio to NRCPara; if accepted, pay \$100 fee for credential

Open Hands, Open Access (OHOA) Training Modules

- Uses Moodle (old, but accessible, online system)
- No cost!
- Once a registered user, you have 24/7 access
- Two options: Illinois or NCDB

Illinois

- Give name and contact information to Project Reach
- Project Reach submits information so that cohorts can be enrolled
- Project Reach staff act as mentors
- Broad timelines established (like one module per month)
- CPDUs offered for completion of each module

NCDB

- Go to NCDB website, find OHOA Modules, complete registration form online
- Take modules independently; assistance for TECHNICAL, computer issues available
- No CPDU's available

Current OHOA Modules

- Module 1: An Overview of Deaf-Blindness and Instructional Strategies
- Module 2: The Sensory System, the Brain, and Learning
- Module 3: The Role of Interveners in Educational Settings
- Module 4: Building Trusted Relationships and Positive Self-Image

Current OHOA Modules

- Module 5: Availability for Learning
- Module 6: Understanding Communication Principles with Students who are Deaf-Blind
- Module 7: Emergent Communication
- Module 8: Progressing from Non-symbolic to Symbolic Communication and Complex Language

Next Steps for Intervention in Illinois

- Continue to educate parents of children with deaf-blindness
- Continue to educate educators and administrators
- Develop language to be considered by ISBE
- Continue to support OHOA and share resource about USU and NRCPara

SSP

Can serve as:

- Human Guide
- Provide visual information
- Provide audio information
- Facilitate communication with environment

SSP provides a way to empower the DB to make decisions about their environment

SSP should ask:

- Communication Preferences
- How Communication takes place
- Location of Communication
- Where communication takes place (lighting seating arrangement)

SSP should ask:

- Pace of communication (how fast or how slow – importance of clarity)
- Duration and Pausing during communication
(due to eye, hand, or hearing fatigue)

SSP

- Can only provide opinion feedback when asked
- Can be in a variety of environment of community and home
- Payment (SSP program not established in IL to be paid, yet)
- Usually – volunteer, agency, or person himself/herself would pay

Vocational Access Service Provider (VASP)

A VASP conveys and describes visual and environmental information to the person who is DeafBlind which provides them the resources & opportunity to make independent decisions in support of their Vocational Rehabilitation Employment goal.

What does a VASP do?

The VASP provides information to the individual so they are able to consider their options, but at no point shall the VASP make choices and decisions for the person who is DeafBlind

There are two key components of a VASP's function:

- The VASP provides access to the community by making transportation available (by car, bus, or other conveyance), and serves as a human guide while walking.
- The VASP relays visual and environmental information that may not be heard or seen by the person who is DeafBlind. This is done in the person's preferred language and communication mode.

Who can receive VASP services?

- A customer of the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) who is DeafBlind, and
- Has an Individualized Plan for Employment outlining job placement services, and
- VASP services in support of the individuals job readiness development, job search and job placement assistance.

VASPs can do

- VASPs can serve as a guide when escorting a person to and from a meeting room, a restroom in an office, or through a lunch line during a workshop.
- Assist as a scribe to complete paper applications, on-line applications, thank you letters, etc

VASPs can do

- provide visual and environmental information which can take several forms:
 - describing who is in a room,
 - the activity and mood;
 - reading a job posting or a job application, if the print is not legible
 - assisting with selecting appropriate work attire in a store or at home.

VASPs can do

- provide support to individuals who are deaf-blind while conducting his or her individual job search (One-Stop Centers, local library, via internet in their home or at a local Community Rehabilitation Program) and at his or her place of employment

What VASPs cannot do

- VASPs cannot provide personal care, e.g., bathing and grooming.
- VASPs do not run errands alone for the person who is deaf-blind.
- VASPs do not make decisions for the person who is DeafBlind
- VASPs do not teach or instruct.
- VASPs must refrain from formal interpreting in medical, legal, business, or other settings.

VASP Training

- To provider
- To DB
- VASP training is currently informal, often taught in hands-on workshop format or through life experiences working individually with a person who is deaf-blind. There are currently no state or national certifications or licensures for VASPs.

VASP v Interpreter

- Interpreter and VASP roles both differ and have numerous similarities. Some of the precepts they have in common include: remaining impartial, maintaining confidentiality, and working in a variety of settings.

VASP Training

- Communication: the VASP must use and respect the customers preferred method of communication which may include tactile and visual signing adaptations, assistive listening devices, text reading on a computer screen, Braille communication, Print On Palm (POP) and others.

VASP Training

- Guiding: VASPs must be skilled with human guide techniques, and consult with the individual who is DeafBlind for their preferences.

VASP Training

- Fostering independence: VASP training includes efficient and effective ways of assisting people who are DeafBlind with job readiness and job development activities, reading and completing employment related documents and contacting perspective employers. This is where we really need to stress assistance with independence for job readiness and development.