



Critical Fact Sheet

A Publication of the Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project

Overview/Background: The Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project provides statewide technical assistance and support to persons who have a combination of vision and hearing challenges. Services are offered to children and youth ages 0-22, their families, school teams, and service providers.

Critical Points:

- Although the term *deaf-blind* implies a complete absence of hearing and sight, in reality, it refers to children with varying degrees of vision and hearing losses. The type and severity differ from child to child. The key feature of deaf-blindness is that the combination of losses limits access to auditory and visual information. Deafblindness impairs access to learning like one would with hearing and sight, Communication is the first and foremost step one should take to ensure a student who is Deafblind has access to information.
- Deaf-blindness is a disability of access – access to visual and auditory information (Alsop, Blaha, & Kloos, 2008). Most content information is presented visually and/or auditory in the classroom. It is important that children experiencing both a vision and hearing loss are appropriately identified and receiving accommodations and/or modifications to ensure access to education. If a student is not receiving access to education and communication, then the student is not receiving FAPE. Stating that a child has deafblindness does not necessarily require a change in placement.
- Children with deaf-blindness require teaching methods that are different from those for children who have only hearing or vision loss. When *both* vision and hearing are affected, especially from birth or early in life, natural opportunities to learn and communicate can be severely limited. Deafblind should be selected as the primary disability when determining eligibility.
- More than 90% of children who are deaf-blind have one or more additional disabilities (NCDB-NTAC 2007; p. 7) or health problems and some may be identified as having multiple disabilities rather than deaf-blindness. In these cases, the impact of combined hearing and vision loss may not be recognized or addressed.
- It is critical that families and educators have access to training and support for the assessment and education of infants, children, and youth who are deaf-blind. Each state has a federally funded technical assistance project to provide this training and support.

- The Kentucky Deafblind Project has identified over 150 children and youth who are deafblind across the state of Kentucky.

Quick Links: The Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project: <https://education.uky.edu/kydbp/>

National Center on Deaf-Blindness - <https://nationaldb.org/>

Contact Information

Donna Carpenter, Ed. D. KDBP State Coordinator – donna.carpenter@uky.edu

Kim Zeigler, KDBP Family Coordinator – kim.zeigler2@ksb.kyschools.us

Peggy Sinclair-Morris, KDBP TA Coordinator – peggy.sinclair-morris@uky.edu

Emma Riley, KDE/KDBP Transition Coordinator – emma.riley@education.ky.gov