

The Pennsylvania Deaf-Blind Project

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Education,
Bureau of Special Education, and the
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network



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What is Deaf-Blindness?

The term “deaf-blindness” is defined as a combination of a vision and hearing loss, requiring specific instructional strategies that address the presence of both sensory impairments.

Many children and youth who are deaf-blind have varying degrees of vision and hearing loss. It is the combination of the vision and hearing loss that compounds the impact on how an individual interacts and learns. Deaf-blindness, especially if present from birth, affects natural opportunities to learn and communicate.

Federal Definition of Deaf-blindness:

Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination which creates such severe communication and other

developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education in programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

FR, Department of Education: 34 CFR Parts 300 and 303. Vol. 64, No.48. 3/12/99

Deaf-blindness affects more than 10,000 children between birth and 22 years of age in the United States.

Deaf-blindness has more than 70 known causes, including:

- Usher’s Syndrome
- CHARGE Syndrome
- Meningitis
- Rubella Syndrome

Within each of these etiologies, there are specific concerns that carry lifelong challenges. Appropriate education must address both the hearing and vision impairment, as well as other disabilities that may be present.





What does the Deaf-Blind Project offer?

Through the PaTTAN system, the Deaf-Blind Project offers a variety of training, technical assistance, and resources to assist educators in assessment and instruction for students who are deaf-blind, between birth and 22 years of age.

The Deaf-Blind Project offers family involvement activities, such as family-to-family networking, an online study group for families, an annual conference, and connection to other low incidence initiatives under PaTTAN.

Contact Information

If you have questions regarding technical assistance, please contact an educational consultant in your region:

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