



Supporting infants, children, and youth with combined vision and hearing loss

The Beacon

Newsletter of
The Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project
Volume 2, Issue 3: October 2012



2012 NFADB Symposium Preparing Leaders for Today and Tomorrow: Family Leadership in the 21st Century July 13- 15; Austin, Texas

Submitted by Jodi Anderson, mother of Liam

This past July, I had the privilege of representing Wisconsin at the 2012 National Family Association for Deaf-Blind. The weekend conference began with a wonderful presentation by Beth Mount, a national consultant who works with programs throughout the United States to support others to see capacities in people with disabilities. Dr. Mount works toward the ideal that every person with a disability can be a valued member of community life. She firmly believes that every person has a gift and that there is a place in this world that needs this gift. Following are just a few topics discussed during the conference:



www.nfadb.org

An excellent resource for parents has been developed, *A Family's Guide to Interveners*. This booklet can be found online by going to www.intervener.org, and clicking on the Resource tab, half-way down the page, you will see a link to download the booklet. I highly recommend all parents take a look at this wonderful site and very well written booklet. The booklet covers important things to consider before an IEP meeting as well as your rights under the law for obtaining services for your child. (Note: *WDBTAP has several copies in the lending library for parents and service providers to check out.*)



Jodi's son, Liam

An educational interpreter is a facilitator of information between multiple parties and is a related service under IDEA, under section 4ii – special interpreting services for children who are deaf-blind. Some of the skills needed to interpret for a deaf-blind person are tactile signing about environment, facilitate connections and introductions with other people in the environment, be descriptive of the environment and other people including facial expressions, and providing human guiding support (i.e. formerly known as sighted guide, but blind persons can be guides as well!)

Support Service Providers (SSP) are responsible for community support and access for deaf-blind individuals where they live and work. They provide visual information, facilitate communication with others, provide a human guide, and assist with transportation. Isolation is one of the greatest obstacles of the deaf-blind. Most of these individuals have limited number and variety of life experiences. They need someone to connect them to people, places, and events.

Continued on Page 3





(iCanConnect.org)

New Federal Program Set to Distribute Communications Technology to People with Vision and Hearing Loss

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program

Many thousands of Americans who have combined loss of hearing and vision may soon connect with family, friends, and community via technology such as screen enlargement software, screen readers, and braille display.

This program provides:

- √ Free assessment by qualified program specialist who can help you identify the equipment that best meets your child's needs.
- √ Free training on how to use the equipment
- √ Free communications equipment

To qualify for this program your child must meet three criteria:

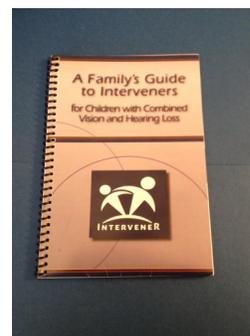
1. **Have combined vision and hearing loss as defined by the Helen Keller National Center Act. A practicing professional with direct knowledge of your vision and hearing loss must verify that you are deaf-blind;**
2. **Be between the ages of birth and 21 years;**
3. **Have a family income that does not exceed 400% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The chart below shows the maximum income limits per family size.**

Household Size	Income Limits Up To:
1	\$ 44,680
2	\$ 60,520
3	\$ 76,320
4	\$ 92,200
5	\$108,040

If you feel your child meets the requirements listed, please contact Jolene Gruber, Grant Coordinator at: Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Program (WDBTAP)
124 2nd Street, Suite 11
Baraboo, WI 53913
(608) 356-0091
jolene.gruber@wesp-dhh.wi.gov

(Continued From Page 1: 2012 NFADB Symposium)

An SSP is appropriate for someone who is 18 or older, is independent, and can make his or her own decisions. There are several programs throughout the country but not in every state. Milwaukee has an SSP program and Minnesota has a statewide program. A poster marketing this occupation was shared that sums up the role of an SSP well: Share your sense of sight. Share your sense of sound. Share their sense of adventure...become a Support Service Provider!



If you are not already a member of NFADB (National Family Association for Deaf-blind), I urge you to go to their website (<http://www.nfadb.org>) and take a look at all of the wonderful resources available. Their philosophy is that individuals who are deaf-blind are valued members of society and are entitled to the same opportunities and choices as other members of the community. It is the largest national network of families focusing on issues surrounding deaf blindness.

A message to you from NFADB:

“Raising a child with deaf- blindness can be overwhelming. The family is there when the child’s eyes first open in the morning and then close again at the end of the day. Family is the first circle of support. We want families to know that they are not alone. We are expanding our network of support so no individual or family feels alone.”

Creative Expression and the Deaf-Blind Child A unique take on what it means to “see”

I came across an article in the newspaper recently about an artist who suddenly lost his sight and was faced with giving up painting, which had been part of his life since the age of 7. He only began painting again when concerned friends encouraged him to continue painting without sight. This led me to investigate further on the subject of artistry, crafts, and the deaf-blind child.



On the National Consortium of Deaf-Blindness, I found a document created by the Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project entitled “Creative Expression: Opportunities for Persons Who Are Deaf-Blind (www.nationaldb.org/documents/products/creativity-bk.pdf) (see QR code above) which addresses the importance of creative expression and some examples of introducing these types of activities to your child. Suggestions range from adding texture to crayon drawing by placing a piece of window screen under paper and have your child draw on the paper with crayon-they will be able to feel the raised texture as they create; to making a cardboard loom and weaving with different yarns. There are very simple instructions on making cardboard looms at [ahow.com](http://www.ahow.com) and demonstrations on YouTube.

Crafting and creating provide relaxation and enjoyment and are used as therapy for all ages. Simple adaptations may be necessary and you, as the parent, who knows your child so well, will be able to find, encourage, and join in expressing and communicating through creativity. More ideas and hints can be found at <http://www.kinderart.com/special/>.



Submitted by Becky Hovde

Give it a try and let us know what you discover. Your story and pictures can be included in a future newsletter and posted on Facebook!

Calendar of Events

“Connect with Technology”

November 3, 2012: WDBTAP Regional Family Meeting
Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells

December 7, 2012: Annual Deaf-Blind Training For Service Providers
Great Wolf Lodge, Wisconsin Dells

March 7-10, 2013: WESP-DHH Statewide Professional and Family Conference
Appleton, WI

July 25-28, 2013: 11th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference
Scottsdale, Arizona

The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the US Dept. of Education, H325C080043. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Dept. of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Louise Tripoli Louise.Tripoli@ed.gov

Around the 'net

The First List of Favorite Apps Generated by the Minnesota Deaf-Blind iPad Project

<http://appopportunities.org>

These are just a few of the apps found on the list. You can purchase and download them from iTunes.

Cut the Rope: Spooky Box Level Pack and Superpowers Peekaboo Barn by Night & Day Studios, Inc.
TapToTalk: Give your non-verbal child a voice!
PopOut! The Tale of Peter Rabbit
Letter Tracer: Preschool Letters Writing Practice

**Do you have a favorite app that you use with your child?
Let us know and we will share it in this section!**



Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project
124 2nd Street Suite 11
Baraboo WI 53913



WDBTAP Staff

Marcy Dicker
Project Director

Jolene Gruber
Grant Coordinator

Becky Hovde
Project Assistant

Heidi Hollenberger
Deaf-Blind Consultant

Brenda Eberle
Family Specialist

TO: