

Deaf/Blindness

Definition

- **IDEA Definition** [§ 300.8 \(c\) \(2\)](#)
- Deaf-blind means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

Eligibility Criteria

- Deaf-Blindness is a clinical term as well as an educational disability classification under the IDEA. The eligibility criteria for Deaf-Blindness requires documentation of eligibility under the classifications of Deafness or Hearing Impairment (Hard of Hearing) and Visual Impairment including Blindness. Documentation of an adverse educational impact and the need for specially designed instruction are also required and are not based solely on a clinical or medical diagnosis.

Professional Advocacy Organizations

- [National Center on Deafblindness](#) The National Center on Deaf-blindness is a national technical assistance center that works with state level Deaf-blind Projects to support learning and quality of life of across the wide variation among individuals with both vision and hearing loss.

Prevalence

- Estimated about >0.1% of school-age population are served as Deaf-Blind.

Causes

- Congenital or acquired causes; Charge syndrome and Usher syndrome

Placements

- 26% of students who are deaf-blind receive instruction in regular classrooms, 13% in resource rooms, 36% in separate classes, and 25% in special schools and other settings.

Educational Approaches

- Curriculum
 - Functionality
 - Age-appropriateness
- Curriculum Areas
 - Self-care
 - Communication
 - Literacy
 - Recreation and Leisure
 - Making Choices
 - Access to the General Education Curriculum

Selecting and Prioritizing Instructional Targets

- Two strategies for combining functional and academic content are:
 - Embedding core academic content into functional activities
 - Adding functional applications to instructional objectives based on core content standard
- A functional approach must remain a priority in curriculum

How Should Students Be Taught?

- Select and prioritize instructional targets that are meaningful for students and their families.
- Instruction must be carefully planned, systematically executed, continuously monitored for effectiveness.
- The following are components of an instructional program:
 - The student's current level of performance must be assessed.
 - The skill must be defined clearly and actively engage the student.

Instructional Methods

- The skill may need to be broken down into smaller component steps.
- The teacher must determine how the student can actively participate, provide a clear prompt, and gradually withdraw the prompt.
- The student must receive immediate feedback.
- The teacher must use strategies that promote generalization and maintenance.
- The student's performance must be directly and frequently assessed.
- Partial Participation
- Positive Behavioral Support
 - Functional assessment
- Small-Group Instruction
- Students with Deaf-Blindness
 - Tactile teaching techniques
- Students with T B I
 - Curricular and instructional approaches for students with severe/multiple disabilities are appropriate