

Deafblindness



Deafblindness is a combination of vision and hearing loss. Deafblindness encompasses a spectrum from mildly hard of hearing plus mildly visually impaired to totally deaf and blind. It is rare that an individual with deafblindness would be completely blind and completely deaf. Individuals who have a combined vision and hearing loss have unique communication, learning, and mobility challenges due to their dual sensory loss. Deafblindness is a unique and diverse condition due to the wide range of sensory capabilities, possible presence of additional disabilities, and the age of onset for the vision and hearing loss. A child with deafblindness would include the infant who has a diagnosis of Retinopathy of Prematurity (a retinal condition that is associated with premature birth) and has an

acquired hearing loss due to meningitis at age two. Another person with deafblindness may have been born with a profound hearing loss and developed a later vision loss due to a genetic condition called retinitis pigmentosa. There are many causes of deaf-blindness; Rubella, CHARGE Syndrome, Usher's Syndrome, genetic disorders, accident and / or illness are some of the more common ones.

Deafblindness occurs in three of 100,000 births. In Colorado, just over 140 children and youth (ages birth through 21 years) have been identified as having both a vision and hearing loss. These individuals are eligible for free technical assistance through the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project, located at the Colorado Department of Education. This project provides technical assistance which supports Colorado children and youth, birth to 21 years, who have BOTH a vision and hearing impairment. These services are in addition to those provided by administrative units, and other state and local agencies.

- [ECEA Regulations on Eligibility as a Learner with Deafblindness \(combined vision and hearing loss\)](#) (PDF)

Project Information

Colorado Services to Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

- [Fact Sheet - Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project](#) (PDF)

Project Staff

The technical assistance (T.A.) team consists of two Family Specialists (parents) and three educational consultants. Project staff are available for on-site visits to homes or schools to provide technical assistance as needed. This may include consultation with parents, teachers,

related staff members, and school administrators. We help families and educators understand the impact of combined vision and hearing loss on development and learning.

We can help staff with individualized programs for learners with combined vision and hearing loss based on student need. Inservice training can be tailored to an individual student and/or address the general education need of learners who are deafblind. To request a visit, return the Technical Assistance Request Form by fax at 303-866-6767 or email to Gina Herrera Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us. You can also call Gina at 303-866-6605.

- [Technical Assistance Request Form](#) (PDF)

Who Do We Serve?

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project provides free technical assistance to families, education teams and service providers of children birth through the year of their 21st birthday, if the children:

- have a combined vision and hearing loss, or
- are highly suspect of being both vision and hearing loss.

The combination of these sensory impairments, even if both are mild, may qualify the child for the project's services. These services are in addition to those provided by schools, and other state and local agencies. Help may include:

- personalized on-site consultation
- inservice training
- workshops
- program development
- and family support services

Services may be requested by families of children and youth who are deafblind, school personnel, and agencies provided services to children and youth who are deafblind.

This federal project is funded by the United States Department of Education, CFDA 84:32C: Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities.

Annual Student Census: When a learner qualifies as being deafblind, according to the federal and state definitions, the child is registered with the Colorado State Deafblind Census. On an annual basis, the state and federal governments collect demographic and educational data on the children between the ages of birth through 21 who have been identified as having a dual sensory impairment. The purpose of this data collection is to help in planning for personnel, educational, and transitional services. These data are also one factor the U.S. Department of Education uses to determine how much funding Colorado Services to Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss will receive. All information is kept strictly confidential as stated in

the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. For more information about the Colorado State Deafblind Census, download a PDF copy of the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (PDF)

For additional information please check the website at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db>



A project of the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

The Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss is funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

For more information about the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project, please contact:

Colorado Department of Education
Exceptional Student Services Unit
1560 Broadway Avenue, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202
303-866-6694