



Our New Look, In Focus

The Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project's newsletter, *In Focus*, is taking on a new look. The new 21st century design, of *In Focus* is for Missourians interested in effective practices for children and youth with combined vision and hearing losses and how the Missouri Deafblind Technical

Assistance Project supports the children and youth with combined vision and hearing losses, their families and their educators. Let us know what you think about the new look. Do you have ideas on articles to include in the newsletter? Do you have questions about vision or hearing losses that you would like

answered in the newsletter? What do you want to know about deafblindness? Just submit your ideas and questions to Susan at susan.bonner@msb.dese.mo.gov.



Inside this issue:

Our New Look	1
Educators' and Service Providers' News Census Update	2
Interagency Collaboration	4
Learning about Deafblindness	4
The Project at Work	6
Families' Corner	7
Back Page: Searching the Internet	8

**Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project Missouri School for the Blind
In Focus**

Susan BonnerEditor

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Every single person has capabilities, abilities and gifts. Living a good life depends on whether those capabilities can be used, abilities expressed and gifts given. If they are, the person will be valued, feel powerful and well-connected to the people around them. And the community around the person will be more powerful because of the contribution the person is making.

John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight

Educators' & Service Providers' News:

Resources to Schools, Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project, Training Opportunities.

Hand In Hand:

The Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project is gearing up for the Hand In Hand Course which is scheduled this year in the southeast area of the state.

The course combines self-studies, homework assignments, and action planning with onsite mentoring, and three face-to-face sessions with course instructors. Participants will apply acquired knowledge regarding visual impairment, auditory impairment,

communication and movement to the programming of the students they serve with the combined vision and hearing losses. The three onsite sessions will be in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, at Cape Girardeau School District, 301 N. Clark Street; October 26-28, 2011; January 25-26, 2012; and April 18-19, 2012. College credit is available.

Registration forms are posted at: www.msb.dese.mo.gov and click onto Resources for Schools, Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project.

SETS-DB: The Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project has developed an in-depth technical assistance option for school

districts serving students with combined vision and hearing losses. It is entitled Supporting Educational Teams of Students with Deafblindness (SETS-DB). It is designed for educational teams serving students with combined vision and hearing losses.

SETS-DB combines general information about the educational implications of combined vision and hearing losses with direct technical assistance regarding individual student supports to educational teams.

SETS-DB is intended for the educational teams of students with deafblindness



For everyone of us that succeeds, it's because there's somebody there to show you the way out. The light doesn't always necessarily have to be in your family; for me it was teachers and school.

- Oprah Winfrey

(including parents/family members). SETS-DB combines presentation and action planning with onsite coaching, over two full days, with staff from the Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project. Participants apply knowledge acquired regarding visual and auditory impairments, communication and movement to the educational programming of the district's student with combined vision and hearing losses. Follow-up consultation and/or onsite coaching may be provided as needed.

Tools for the Assessment & Development of Visual Skills (birth to age 5): *Free* workshop to be held Wednesday, November 9th, 2011, 8:30 a.m. to

4:00 p.m. at Missouri School for the Blind. Intended audience members include early interventionists, teachers certificated in the education of students who are visually impaired, educators including supervisors of instruction serving students with visual impairments and multiple disabilities including deafblindness.

The workshop will focus mainly on using two APH products, the *ToAD* and *TADPOLE* kits, which have dual functions as assessment materials and as tools for the development of visual skills. Plus the use of *ISAVE* as an assessment instrument will be covered. Combined, these products (*ISAVE*, *TADPOLE*, and *ToAD*) are a

collection of suggested protocols, teaching strategies and activities, and materials that are mainly for use with developmentally young learners or those who have communication and/or cognitive delays.

For more information contact



Yvonne Ali,
Supervisor
Missouri
Instructional
Resource Center f/t
Visually Impaired at
yvonne.ali@msb.de
se.mo.gov

Census Update

Annually the Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project is required to survey all Missouri schools and educational agencies to identify children and youth in Missouri, birth through age twenty-one, who have combined vision and hearing losses. It is important to identify all students in Missouri with combined vision and hearing losses. A minor loss may have major implications for the educational program and instructional strategies for these children and youth with combined vision and hearing losses.

Recently, the Project submitted data based on the December 1, 2010 count of children and youth with a combined vision and hearing loss to the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness for the annual report to the Federal government, Office of Special Education Programs. The Project had 100% Missouri school districts reporting to our data base. This represents an increase of 12% reporting schools. A total of 572 responses to our annual census were made.

For 2010, we removed several children from the census for various reasons. Six (6) student moved out-of-state; four (4) students no longer met the eligibility criteria to be included on the census; seven (7) students were found no longer eligible as we were unable to *track their whereabouts for over two years*; fifteen (15) children reached the age of majority and six (6) child were deceased. This represented a change of thirty-eight (38) children on the census. Current census shows 182 students with combined vision and hearing losses residing in Missouri.

Interagency Collaboration

The Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project is active in coordinating and facilitating the interagency collaboration of three local task forces. These local

task forces are located in St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield. The purpose of the local task forces is to improve services (educational, adult living, employment, transition planning,

etc.) for individuals with deafblindness and their families within its specific community/region of the state. Through a case study approach, the individuals' direct service team



The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched; they must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller

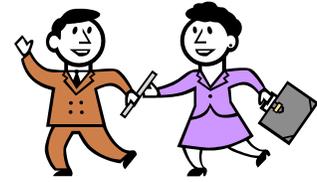
Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

Henry Ford

(educational, employment, person centered, etc.), and the local task forces identify local systems issues and service barriers. They then facilitate resolution of these issues and barriers. The local task force communicates unresolved service delivery and systems issues - particularly those that are statewide in nature to the State Task Force for assistance. The local task forces assist in the development of local resources and in the dissemination of information to enhance local service delivery. They identify local inservice training

needs and help secure any needed training. Membership of the local task forces is drawn from the following groups/agencies: individuals with deafblindness and their families; local educational agencies (LEAs); state educational agencies (SEAs); the Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project; the Regional Offices (Department of Mental Health); Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB); Senate Bill 40 Boards; and, other service agencies for children and adults.

Currently, the St. Louis Task Force is



addressing the needs of two students in transition from school to post-secondary education and preparing for Deafblind Awareness Day on September 29. The Springfield group is working collaboratively with the local transition council to increase disability and deafblind awareness to the community. Kansas City is preparing for their annual service award in the field of deafblindness.





Learning about Deafblindness

*From Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project. Winter 2008
Newsletter, Vol. 17 No. 2*

What Combination of Vision and Hearing Impairments (and other disabilities) Might Be Present for a Child Identified as Deafblind?

(To be identified as deafblind, a child must have BOTH documented hearing and vision losses as specified below)

Documented Hearing Loss	Documented Vision Loss	Other Disabilities
<p><u>Documented hearing and vision loss</u> as specified in the columns below <u>can combine in any way.</u> If the child is identified as having any of the below for hearing and any of the below for vision, then that child is eligible as “deafblind.”</p>		<p>Can the student have other disabilities in addition to the sensory impairments and still be identified as deafblind?</p>
Mild (26 – 40 dB loss)	Low Vision (visual acuity of 20/70 to 20/200>	<p>YES</p> <p>The student could also be identified as having other disabilities such as those listed below. It is also possible that the child will not have any other disabilities and will only have impairments in vision and hearing.</p> <p>Possible other disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Impairment Cognitive Impairment Physical Impairment Speech, Communication and/or Language Impairment Other disabilities (such as autism, learning disabilities)
Moderately Severe (58 – 70 dB loss)	Legally blind (Visual acuity of 20/200 or less or field restriction of 20 degrees)	
Severe (71 – 90 dB loss)	Light perception only	
Profound (91 + dB loss)	Totally Blind	
Diagnosed Progressive Loss	Diagnosed Progressive Loss	
Documented Functional Hearing Loss	Documented Functional Vision Loss	
Auditory Neuropathy		
<p>A functional assessment is defined as a non-clinical assessment carried out by a trained professional (vision or hearing as appropriate) using commonly accepted tools, checklists and measures.</p>		

“The most beautiful world is always entered through imagination.”

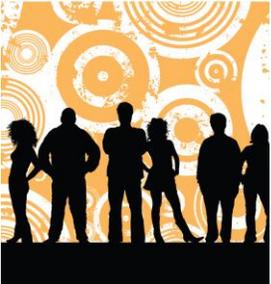
*- Helen Keller,
1908*

The Project at Work

Jennie Mascheck is the Project's Director. As Project Director, she oversees all the activities of the Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project, monitors expenditures and services of the Project's federal grant from the Office of Special Education Programs and is the Project's liaison with the Project's Federal Officer. Jennie Mascheck, MA, COMS, joined the Project as Director in the fall of 2007. Jennie has been with the Missouri School for the Blind for over 30 years and with the Outreach Services Division for the past majority of those years. She began

her career as a speech-language pathologist and is Missouri certificated as a teacher of students with visual impairments. She is also a certified orientation and mobility specialist. In addition to providing direction to the Project, Jennie is also the Coordinator of Outreach Services of the Missouri School for the Blind.

Jennie has a special interest in teaching infants and younger children with visual impairments and deafblindness.



I have a different vision of leadership. A leader is someone who brings people together.

George W. Bush

Families' Corner:

National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI)

NAPVI is the **only** independent, non-profit, parent support group directed entirely by parents of children with visual impairments. NAPVI has been a resource for thousands of families by:

- Providing a toll-free line to answer individual requests for information, support, & services for parents, teachers, students and doctors
- Distributing 12,000 copies of AWARENESS magazine to families and professionals
- Providing lectures on education of students with visual impairments to parents and professionals throughout the country
- Being a legislative advocate in D.C. for all students with visual impairments by successfully lobbying to maintain their rights in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Outreaching to over 50,000 households with opportunities to acquire resources, to receive information, and to meet other families
- Maintaining a website with national and local conference and workshop information and information on additional resources for parents and families
- Giving consultative and financial support to twenty state affiliate parent support groups

NAPVI hopes to someday have online membership, but until then you simply contact them at: NAPVI, P.O. Box 317, Watertown, MA 02471.

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB) ***Supporting Persons Who Are Deaf-Blind and Their Families***



The National Family Association for Deaf-Blind is an organization that has been supporting individuals who are deaf-blind and their families for over sixteen years.

NFADB offers support in a variety of ways

- A toll free number (answered by a real person) that connects families and others to resources and one-to-one support
- Current information and national updates delivered through a bi-annual newsletter
- Online resources and support through their website and Facebook page
- A member listserv that connects members by email to hundreds of other members

NFADBI represents families on the National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness by providing a unified voice on national issues related to deaf-blindness. For further information contact NFADB at: NFADB Membership, 141 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point, NY 11050-1129.

Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project
Missouri School for the Blind
3815 Magnolia
St. Louis, Missouri 63110
www.msb.dese.mo.gov/deafblind.htm



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Searching the Internet

The internet has a wealth of information about children and youth with deafblindness. Look at these APP-links on the Internet about sign language:

- **ABC Sign by iDev2.com:** <http://ax.itunes.apple.com/app/abc-sign/id287220778?mt=8>
- **American Sign Language (ASL) Alphabet by DMBC:** <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/american-sign-languauge-asl/id302742265?mt=8>
- **ASL by Zoosware** - Another program available in three levels, the ASL program lets you learn at your own pace, tracking your progress along the way. The Lite version contains 50 words, Pro has 700 and Ultimate contains 1,400 signs.: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/asl-pro/id286261176?mt=8>
- **Baby Sign ASL by iDev2.com** - A video phrase book with over 200 signs useful for children.: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/baby-sign-asl/id301156981?mt=8>
- **Hand Speak by Imagine Software:** <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/handspeak/id292532919?mt=8>
- **Sign 4 Me:** <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/sign-4-me-a-signed-english/id312882992?mt=8>

