

In Focus



Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project



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Road Map to the Future



Recently, the Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project sponsored a workshop presented by the Project's Transition Specialist, Janus Hinson. The one-

day workshop was attended by educators, vocational rehabilitation specialists and other professionals in the field. This workshop focused on the various types of person-centered plans and provided overviews on developing them. The participants divided into groups in the afternoon and practiced the process of developing MAP (Making Action

Plans by Marsha Forest and Judith Snow). Teams identified an individual's history, association map of relationships, skills and preferences, dreams, fears, and developed goals. Teams ended with action plans for their individual. If you are interested in developing a plan for your child with combined sensory loss, contact Susan Bonner at 314-776-4320 ext 3255.

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Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project Missouri School for the Blind

In Focus

Susan BonnerEditor

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Educators' & Service Providers' News: Resources on Transition Planning

Missouri Resources:

Parent's Guide to Special Education in Missouri:

<http://dese.mo.gov/divsped/Compliance/ParentsGuide.pdf>

Parent Involvement for Educators:

<http://dese.mo.gov/se-ep-parentinvolvementforeducators.htm>

MPACT:

<http://ptimpact.org/>

Missouri PIRC:

<http://www.missouri-pirc.org/>

SSD Transition Guidebook:

<http://www.ssdmo.org/assets/123/step3/guidebook.pdf>

National Resources:

Pacer Center:

<http://www.pacer.org/publications/ncsetbriefs.asp>

- How Can My Child Be Involved in the IEP Process?

- Parent Tips for Transition Planning

- Age of Majority

NSTTAC:

<http://www.nsttac.org>

Transition Coalition:

<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/transition/section.php?pageId=72>

Beach Center on Disability:

<http://www.beachcenter.org>

National PTA:

<http://www.pta.org/>

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth:

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/blog/?p=390>

Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project: The Missouri Deafblind Technical

Assistance Project is able to provide educational teams and families assistance when transitioning students into new schools, programs, and community settings. The Project is available to provide direct technical assistance to the schools and families providing them with information, resources and action steps to implement. The Project's transition specialist is available to facilitate student person-centered planning process and provide follow

All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.

Walt Disney



*Don't confuse fame
with success.
Madonna is one;
Helen Keller is the
other.*

[Erma Bombeck](#)

up consultation as needed. Also, the Project spearheads interagency task forces on deafblindness that can provide resources to teams to assist students transitioning into other settings. For more information contact the project coordinator, Susan Bonner at (314) 776-4320 ext 3255 or susan.bonner@msb.dese.mo.gov

Lending Library

The Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project maintains a lending library of books, manuals and DVDs which is available to educators, service providers and families. A complete listing of our library is available for viewing on our website at <http://msb.dese.mo>.



[gov/documents/Ann
otatedBibliography0
11912.pdf](#) .

Some recent acquisitions that may be of interest include:

Profiles: Capturing the Information of Discovery.

Callahan, Michael; Shumpert, Norciva & Condon, Ellen. Marc Gold & Associates Employment for All: A guide book providing over view of the Discovery Process and includes an accompanying CD with blank forms.

Functional Skills Screening Inventory: Print edition (FSSI).

Becker, H; Schur, S; & Hammer, E. Functional Resources: An assessment tool used for students with deafblindness and multiple disabilities ages 6

to 90 years. It may be used for transition planning, alternate assessments, and functional behavioral assessments.

Communication and Congenital Deafblindness.

Rodbroe, Inger & Janssen, Marleen. VCDBF/Vitaal, Netherlands: A four book set on communication with an accompanying DVD that illustrates concepts discussed in each book. Appendices of the books explain the videos. DVDs provide subtitles as speakers speak Dutch in videos. Books are on core principles of intervention, contact and social interaction and transitioning to the cultural language.

Census Update

Thank you to all the school districts and service providers who responded to our annual census based on December 1, 2011 enrollment of students with combined vision and hearing losses. Missouri's data is forwarded to be included in the national count. To date 165 students are identified residing in 48 counties of Missouri. The census data is being finalized and these numbers may vary slightly.

On the census, all of the children aged birth to two years are residing in the metropolitan areas and surrounding vicinities of Kansas City and St. Louis. The Project has thirty-one (31) students aged sixteen through twenty-one on the census. These students will soon be exiting the school system. Families and service providers may contact the Project to assist with the transition process either through person-centered planning processes, direct technical assistance to the educational team and family and/or resource assistance through our local deafblind task forces. There are one hundred fourteen (114) students on the census who are aged three through fifteen. All services of the Project are eligible to these families and service providers as well. The Project added seventeen new students to the census this year. It is important that the Project disseminates information about the impact of dual sensory loss and the impact on the student's educational program. Awareness is still a key factor in our work.

*Believe in yourself!
Have faith in your
abilities! Without a
humble but
reasonable
confidence in your
own powers you
cannot be successful
or happy.*

Norman Vincent
Peale

Self-Determination

*From the National Gateway to Self-Determination Project funded by the
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on
Developmental Disabilities*

According to the National Gateway to Self-Determination Project, "self-determination means making things happen in a

person's own life, instead of having others do things to, or for them." Many people with disabilities are used to having people do things for them, but

if they are self-determined, then they are able to identify what they want and how to get it. A self-determined person is able to choose

goals and knows how to reach them. Importantly, a self-determined person is able to advocate for themselves thus able to problem solve and make decisions about their life's goals. As a result of their independence their quality of life has improved.

Self-determined individuals still rely on friends, family and professionals for advice, but ultimately they are able to make decisions about their own life choices. A natural support system of family, friends, co-workers and neighbors are present to assist the individual to be part of their community.



A person who is self-determined is a contributing member to the community. The person is able to work, live and recreate within their neighborhood community. As a result, the individual is seen by others as a valued member of their community. The community's expectations of people with disabilities are heightened when people with disabilities are able to self advocate and contribute to their neighborhoods. According to the National Gateway to Self-Determination Project, research has shown self-determined individuals have many positive quality of life outcomes including employment and independent living.

Where do you begin to teach children to be self-determined? According to Debra Sewell, first and foremost, we must teach children how to make choices through hands-on experiences. Choice-making continues throughout their school experiences and their daily living activities. Another component is for the children to learn about themselves by developing their repertoire of likes and dislikes from foods, toys and daily living activities, such as clothing selection. Another key component is for children to develop social skills including facing speakers, taking turns, requesting assistance if needed and communicating needs, wants and opinions. Also, it is important for children to learn how to set goals and develop a plan to achieve them. Along with this, children need to identify problems and how to develop a plan to solve them. For more information, contact the Project's office for additional resources to assist with your child's needs.

Additional Resource: Debra Sewell, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, "*Becoming Empowered Through Self-Determination Skills*, Spring/Summer 2008; www.tsbvi.edu/resources/2680-becoming-empowered-through-self-determination-skills .

Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.

Michael Jordan



Learning about Deafblindness

From National Consortium on Deafblindness 2.0

Website on Literacy:

Literacy for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

<http://literacy.nationaldb.org/index.php/about-this-site/>

The National Consortium on Deafblindness 2.0 (NCDB2) has developed a website on literacy for students with combine vision and hearing loss. This site is a tool demonstrating strategies, examples and resources for increasing literacy learning opportunities for children at a variety of skill levels. It is designed to give children with deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities and complex challenges expanded learning opportunities.

Literacy has commonly been defined as the ability to read and write. However, that definition has placed literacy beyond the scope of possibility for some children who have complex sensory, physical or developmental challenges. Literacy expands communication and understanding related to self-help, expressing an interest or participating more fully in the community. Regardless of age or ability, acquiring literacy skills is a question of “how” rather than “if” or “when”. *“Literacy is an integrated process which develops gradually from birth and is built upon learning from broad experiences, linking language with the development of concepts, and providing exposure to the written word in a variety of meaningful contexts”* (Wright, 1997).

According to NCDB2, some basic assumptions about literacy should be considered:

- All children can become and are becoming literate.
- Literacy development is founded on experiences and concepts beginning very early in life.
- Literacy instruction must include a strong emphasis on communication and socialization.
- Literacy exists along a continuum from emergent literacy to independent literacy.

On the website, evidence-based strategies are identified to support literacy for students at all levels of development. The strategies presented include related skills, examples, video clips, articles and additional resources. Subsections are given for each stage of development of literacy skills such as building a foundation, early emergent literacy, emergent literacy and writing. Areas being developed include vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and expanding literacy. To learn more, access their website listed above.

*So many of our
dreams at first seem
impossible, then
they seem
improbable, and
then, when we
summon the will,
they soon become
inevitable.*

*Christopher
Reeve*

The Project at Work

Ginny Williams, MA, is the Project's Family Specialist. She is a graduate of University of Missouri – Columbia and Northern Illinois University. Ginny provides home-based early intervention services to families of infants, toddlers and preschoolers for the Missouri Statewide Parent Involvement Network (MoSPIN) program since 1989. As the Project's Family Specialist, she also coordinates the Project SPARKLE program.

Annual Report of the Project

The Project has just completed its fourth year in the 5 year cycle with the Grant. Our annual report to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is in the process of being submitted to our Project's Officer.

Some of the milestones that we have achieved this past year include:

- Thirty (30) new individuals were added to the census
- Early literacy experiences and reading to children are important
Thirty-two (32) families enrolled in



GinnyWilliams

Beliefs have the power to create and the power to destroy. Human beings have the awesome ability to take any experience of their lives and create a meaning that disempowers them or one that can literally save their lives.

[Tony Robbins](#)

MoSPIN received information regarding the National Federation of the Blind's Braille Reading Pals Club and braille letters from Santa in November 2011.

- Nine families accessed the Family Involvement Fund for financial support to attend workshops and trainings.
- Seven families participated in the collaborative family meetings with Missouri School for the Deaf, Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project and other children's agencies in Kansas City and St. Louis for the organizational meetings of Hands and Voices, a national parent support group for children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind.
- The lending library of books and DVDs was accessed twenty-three times this past year by families and service providers.
- The Project responded to three hundred twenty-eight (328) requests from districts, families and other service providers for technical assistance, information and resources on a variety of topics including assessment, individual student supports, communication, person-centered planning, core and expanded core curriculum topics.

Families' Corner:

Hands & Voices:

The Missouri Chapter of Hands & Voices has recently been formed. Hands & Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology. They are a parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. Their outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration, and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children to reach their highest potential.

Hands & Voices provides information, training, advocacy support, parent-to-parent networking, a quarterly newspaper, *The Communicator*, website, special events and other activities designed to provide families with the information they need to make good choices for their children. The organization is parent-driven, but works collaboratively with professionals and consumers who are represented on their Board of Directors, and advisory board, and make up approximately one third of the membership. Hands & Voices works at both the local and national levels. State chapters provide local and regional support consistent with the Hands & Voices non-biased philosophy and mission. In



addition to family support, they strive to be meaningfully involved at the systems development level in each state where there are chapters and members.

If you are not familiar with Hands and Voices, check their website: www.handsandvoices.org.

The organizational board met in February at St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf, 1809 Clarkson Road, Chesterfield, Missouri. For more information, contact Melissa Jensen, faire_jour@yahoo.com.

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. The NFADB is preparing for their **NFADB 2012 Symposium** “Preparing Leaders for Today and Tomorrow: Leadership in the 21st Century.” The symposium is scheduled for July 13 – 15, 2012, in Austin, Texas. At the symposium, participants will learn new skills, receive invaluable resources, meet families from around the country and return home with new ideas to help them, their child and their community. For additional information, contact Janette Peracchio at (860) 742-8612 or at jperacchio@gmail.com. If families are interested in attending and wish to access the Family Involvement Fund to assist with reimbursement of associated costs to attend the symposium, they may contact Susan Bonner at the Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project (susan.bonner@msb.dese.mo.gov).

Other Opportunities for Families

The Southeast Regional Weekend for Families and Professionals is being held in Franklin, Tennessee, July 13-14, 2012. There will be hosting four fabulous speakers: **Robbie Blaha, Kate Beals, John Halloran and Millie Smith.**

The registration deadline is May 31st. The registration for professionals/Individuals is \$175 and registration fee for a family (up to 4 members) is \$300. The registration fee includes breakfast and lunch on Friday and Saturday, the morning and afternoon break foods, printed materials for the conference and the conference itself. **A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is required with the registration.** To register or get more information go to: <http://www.treds-deafblindproject.com/> to complete your registration.

During the conference, **free** child care will be available for all children of families attending who have a child with a disability. Sibshops for siblings ages 8 to 13 will also be available **free of charge.** On page 3 of the registration form, indicate all children who will need child care and/or want to attend a

Sibshop. The Sibshops are three hours long and will be conducted by Tina Prochaska who has led Sibshops at their previous Weekends for Families and Professionals.

The conference hotel is the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs in Franklin, Tennessee. The conference rate for the hotel is \$99 + taxes per night and will be available Thursday, July 12th through Saturday night, July 14th. You may call the hotel at 1-615-261-6100 and ask for reservations and mention that you are registering for the **Deafblind** conference to get the conference rate. If you need a refrigerator or microwave please let them know at the time you make your reservation. You may also register online at

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/BNACS?groupCode=VANA&app=resvlink&fromDate=7/12/12&toDate=7/15/12> .

Usher Syndrome Family Conference

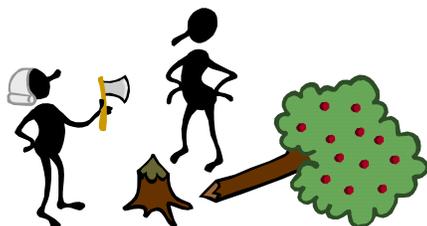
The Coalition for Usher Syndrome Research, the Decibels Foundation and The Megan Foundation sponsoring the fourth family focused Usher syndrome conference to be held Saturday, July 7, 2012 at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel in St. Louis. Families will learn about current research and therapies for Usher syndrome, will network with other families and professional regarding Usher syndrome and will identify strategies for living with Usher syndrome. For additional questions, contact Krista Scheall at k.scheall@decibelsfoundation.org or (617) 784-8818. The Family Involvement Fund of the Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project may be accessed to attend this conference.

Save the Date: CHARGE Syndrome Foundation

The 11th *International CHARGE Syndrome Conference* is scheduled for July 25-28, 2013, at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, in Scottsdale, Arizona. Watch their website for more information: www.chargesyndrome.com .



Missouri Going Green



The Missouri Deafblind Assistance Project wants to go green. Please email our Project Coordinator if you would like your future issues of “*In Focus*” to come by email. You will continue to receive hard copies by mail if you wish. Those interested in going green contact: susan.bonner@msb.dese.mo.gov Thank you.

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iPads: from "TechNews Daily" Oct. 2011:
www.technewsdaily.com/3238-ipads-kids-severe-vision-impairments

During recent research at the University of Kansas, Muriel Saunders has studied how children respond to adaptive switches to teach cause and effect for early language development. Children with cortical visual impairment (CVI) who have difficulty giving people eye contact were found to be drawn to the light of the iPad. According to Saunders, early intervention with the children with CVI is important in improving their vision. By providing proper instruction, the children's brains may grow the cells required to begin understanding what their eye is seeing. Saunders' work continues in this research through the Junior Blind of America and funds from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human development.

