



Are You Serving a Student Who Has a Dual Sensory Loss or Deafblindness?

What is Dual Sensory Loss / Deafblindness?

Dual Sensory Loss or Deafblindness is defined as: The combination of vision and hearing loss which causes communication, developmental and educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely designed for children with deafness or children with blindness.

An individual is considered deaf-blind when that person has both vision and hearing loss (dual sensory loss) or has been diagnosed with a health condition that causes progressive loss of vision and/or hearing.

Does Deaf-Blind mean the person cannot see or hear?

No. When most people hear the term deafblindness, they think of Helen Keller, who was totally blind and totally deaf.

In reality, deafblindness does not always mean a total loss of vision and hearing. Most individuals with deafblindness have varying degrees of functional vision and hearing.

Can the student have other disabilities and still be identified as Deaf-Blind?

YES! The student can 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.

Possible other disabilities:

- Health Impairments
- Cognitive Impairments
- Physical / Orthopedic Impairments
- Speech, Communication, and/or Language Impairment
- Other disabilities (such as autism, learning disabilities)

Why Identify Students as Having a Dual Sensory Loss/ Deafblindness?

- Appropriate identification of sensory loss can assist educational professionals in appropriately planning to meet the student's educational needs.
- Specially designed instruction might be needed.
- Adapted materials might be needed.
- Corrective lenses and/or hearing aids might be needed.
- Related / supplemental services might be needed (e.g., orientation & mobility, vision support services, hearing support services, American Sign Language, Tactile Sign Language or Haptics).

The following are some health conditions and events, including complications of childbirth, which may result in both a vision and hearing loss:

- Congenital Rubella
- Congenital Syphilis
- Congenital Toxoplasmosis
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Hydrocephaly
- Maternal Drug Use
- Microcephaly
- Neonatal Herpes Simplex
- Asphyxia Direct eye and/or ear trauma
- Encephalitis
- Infections
- Meningitis
- Severe head injury
- Stroke
- Tumors
- Medicines
- Chemicals

Many syndromes have associated vision and hearing loss. A *partial* list of these syndromes includes:

- Bardet-Biedl Syndrome (Laurence Moon-Biedl)
- Batten Disease
- CHARGE Syndrome
- Cockayne Syndrome
- Cornelia de Lange
- Dandy Walker Syndrome
- Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21 Syndrome)
- Goldenhar Syndrome
- Herpes-Zoster (or Hunt)
- Leber Congenital Amaurosis
- Marfan Syndrome
- Monosomy 10p
- NF1 – Neurofibromatosis (von Recklinghausen Disease)Norrie Disease
- Prader-Willi
- Pierre-Robin Syndrome
- Treacher Collins Syndrome
- Trisomy 13 (Trisomy 13-15, Patau Syndrome)
- Trisomy 18 (Edwards Syndrome)
- NF2 – Bilateral Acoustic Neurofibromatosis Turner Syndrome
- Usher I Syndrome
- Waardenburg Syndrome
- Wildervanck Syndrome
- Wolf-Hirschorn Syndrome (Trisomy 4p)

For more information contact:

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