



Saturday, August 1, 2015
Breakout Session #27: 10:45 - 11:45am
Schaumburg C-D

**Making it Happen: Intervener Services
for Children and Young Adults Who
Have Vision and Hearing Losses**

Linda Alsop, M.Ed.
**SKI-HI Institute, Center for Persons with
Disabilities, Utah State University**
Beth Kennedy, M.Ed.
**DeafBlind Central: Michigan's Training &
Resource Project**
**Parent Panel: Tim and Nancy Hartshorne,
Paul and Jodie Beavers, Cheryl Kruger**

Presenter Information:

Beth Kennedy has worked in the field of deafblindness for twenty-five years. She worked at Perkins School for the Blind, in the Deafblind Department, and graduated from the teacher training program at Boston College before taking a job consulting for the Florida deafblind project. Beth is currently the Director of DB Central: Michigan's Training & Resource Project and teaches American Sign Language at Central Michigan University. While she addresses a variety of topics as a consultant, she has worked on and supported many teams involving a person who has CHARGE Syndrome. She is currently leading a team to develop her fourth Open Hands, Open Access (OHOA) intervener training module for the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB), and has made notable progress in increasing the number of credentialed interveners working in Michigan.

Linda Alsop is the Director of Deafblind Programs at the SKI-HI Institute/Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. She has extensive experience working directly with children with deafblindness (including those with CHARGE) and their families. She developed the SPARKLE model of parent training and resources in deafblindness, and numerous service programs, curriculum, and training materials that are being used by families, educators, interveners, and others around the country. She acts as a national consultant in deafblindness, and is actively involved in national advocacy efforts related to intervener practices in the United States. She developed and implemented the first online higher education training program in the country that trains interveners to work with children and youth who are deafblind and prepares them to receive the National Intervener Credential. She is actively involved in efforts to establish interveners as a professional discipline that is recognized as a related service under IDEA.

Presentation Abstract:

Interveners are individuals who work one-to-one with children and youth who are deafblind and who have training and specialized skills in deafblindness. The practice of using interveners as individualized supports for children with combined vision and hearing loss in educational settings is growing across the country, and this is creating an ongoing need to provide information and training to parents about the critical role that interveners play in the education of their children. You know that an intervener is what your child/student needs- but how do you make it happen? This presentation will provide parents and other members of the team with important information for making the case for intervener services. A parent panel will share personal stories of how interveners were added to their children's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and what a difference having an intervener as made for their child.

Making it Happen: Intervener Services for Students Who Are Deaf-Blind

Interveners are for people who are Deaf-Blind:

- People who have combined vision and losses may qualify as “Deaf-Blind.”
- Deafblindness is a disability of access- access to visual and auditory information about people and things in the environment.
- Students who are Deaf-Blind must have direct, hands-on experiences in order to learn. Learning information and/or skills secondarily or incidentally is difficult to impossible.
- The unique learning and support needs of children who are Deaf-Blind pose a challenge to most educational settings because they are generally not designed to provide constant direct, hands-on learning.

Interveners have training and a specific role:

- An intervener is a person who: 1. has training and specialized skills in deafblindness and 2. works consistently one-to-one with a child who is deaf-blind.
- The role of the intervener is to: 1. facilitate access to environmental information usually gained through vision and hearing, 2. facilitate the development and/or use of receptive and or expressive communication skills, 3. develop and maintain a trusting, interactive relationship that can promote social and emotional well-being.
- The National Intervener Task Force formed on January 17, 2002. The work of the Task Force includes: 1. collecting data and disseminating information on child impact (of intervention), 2. raising awareness about interveners and advocating for intervention, 3. impacting systems change, 4. providing parent education and encouraging parent involvement, and 5. advocating for intervener training.
- Interveners can now take coursework through an online program through Utah State University, complete a practicum, and compile a portfolio in order to receive the National Intervener Credential from the National Resource Center for Paraeducators. The competencies for interveners were approved by the Council for Exceptional Children in 2008.
- Interveners formed the National Intervener Association (NIA) to: 1. promote quality intervener services, 2. recognition of interveners on local, state, and national levels, 3. promote awareness of the impact an intervener can have for a student who is deaf-blind, 4. provide support for interveners in the field.
- There are now approximately 103 interveners who have completed the USU coursework, and about 70 credentialed interveners across the United States.
- In Michigan, there are 18 students who have the support of an intervener. Six of those interveners hold the national credential, three more are completing

portfolios, and nine others are currently taking or have completed the coursework.

Advocating for an intervener:

- Your state's deaf-blind project may be able to assist. To find the project in your state, and to access additional resources on interveners/intervention, visit www.nationaldb.org.
- Deafblindness is a disability of access. While interveners are not yet included in IDEA, the mandates afforded by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding access may be helpful.
- House Resolution 4040, the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan-Macy Act, includes intervener services. To learn more visit <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/4040>.

More information is available:

- To learn more, visit www.intervener.org.
- Find them on Facebook.