



## Recommendations for Improving Intervener Services

### GOAL 1: RECOGNITION

**Increase recognition and appropriate use of intervener services for children and youth who are deaf-blind.**

#### RECOMMENDATION 1

**Develop a coordinated and expanded national approach to provide state and local early intervention and education agencies with information and tools needed to understand and use intervener services.**

#### *Implementation Strategies*

- ❖ The National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB), state deaf-blind projects, and other stakeholders (e.g., families, early interventionists, teachers, related service providers, early intervention and educational administrators, interveners, and university faculty), will join forces to implement a comprehensive national intervener initiative. The initiative, coordinated by NCDB, will:
  - Develop and disseminate a consistently applied *national definition* of intervener services, including clarification of the occupational role of the intervener.
  - Organize workgroups to implement the recommendations in goals 1 through 3 and identify additional needs and recommendations to improve intervener services. Workgroup topics will include, at a minimum:
    - intervener preparation and training;
    - continuing education needs of interveners;
    - coaching and supervision of interveners;
    - credentialing or certification of interveners;
    - interveners in community and home settings; and,

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- interveners for infants and toddlers.
  - Create a Web-based platform on which state deaf-blind projects, NCDB, families, and other organizations and individuals can interact and share knowledge. For example, this platform could be used to:
    - communicate ideas and concerns;
    - highlight intervener training and support models; and
    - access a shared video library related to intervener services (e.g., parent and professional insights, examples of interveners working with children).
  - Identify and implement strategies to increase collaborative efforts between agencies and organizations within individual states (e.g., state deaf-blind projects, PTIs, family organizations) to improve intervener services at the state level.
- ❖ Develop and make available a core set of publications that increase understanding of intervener services and promote their development and use. These materials should, at a minimum, include:
- concise fact sheets that a) promote an enhanced understanding of intervener services, and b) explain the occupational role of a well-trained intervener;
  - publications that highlight promising intervener-training and support programs and provide strategies that describe how they can be replicated; and
  - publications that describe effective practices for intervener services.
- ❖ Design and launch a national data collection program to collect, compile, and make available data about the use of intervener services, such as:
- characteristics of interveners (e.g., how many, where, education level), and
  - characteristics of children and youth who receive intervener services.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

**Coordinate and expand efforts to inform and influence national, state, and local policies and practices so that they reflect and support the provision of intervener services for a child or youth who is deaf-blind when needed.**

### *Implementation Strategies*

- ❖ Produce and disseminate guidelines that IFSP/IEP teams can use to make informed decisions about the need for initial or continued use of intervener services for an individual child or youth.
- ❖ Using the core products described in Recommendation 1:
  - promote best practices for intervener services via information dissemination and technical assistance activities; and,
  - systematically disseminate resources to lawmakers and other policymakers to inform and influence policies related to intervener services.
- ❖ Work with OSEP to encourage U.S. Department of Education cross-agency (e.g., OSEP, Rehabilitation Services Administration, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research) recognition of intervener services.
- ❖ Work with state and national special education organizations and centers (e.g., Regional Resource Centers, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Parent Training and Information Centers) to design and implement strategies that inform and influence policies and practices related to intervener services.
- ❖ Work with state special education advisory councils to raise individual states' awareness of intervener services.
- ❖ Contribute to the growth of knowledge related to intervener services in the following ways:
  - develop professional publications including technical reports or peer-reviewed journal articles that summarize available data about interveners and describe the history and current status of intervener services in the U.S.;
  - promote research on intervener services by:

- facilitating discussions among graduate students and researchers within the field of deaf-blindness;
- assisting researchers in identifying children and families who can participate in research studies;
- providing library support (e.g., literature searching) to researchers working in this area; and
- identifying possible funding sources for intervener services research.

## **GOAL 2: TRAINING & SUPPORT**

**Establish a strong national foundation for intervener training and workplace supports.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**Develop national open-access intervener-training materials that align with the Council for Exceptional Children’s *Specialization Knowledge and Skill Set for Paraeducators Who Are Interveners for Individuals with Deaf-blindness*.**

#### ***Implementation Strategies***

- ❖ Establish a workgroup of individuals with expertise in intervener training to collaborate with NCDB on the development of intervener-training materials.
- ❖ Invite professionals from the field of deaf-blindness to submit intervener or general deaf-blind education training materials for review by the workgroup and possible incorporation into the materials.
- ❖ Develop the training using new and existing materials.
- ❖ Create a web-based platform to house and provide free access to the materials.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**Develop strategies to ensure that interveners have knowledgeable supervisors and access to experts in deaf-blindness who can provide consultation and coaching.**

### ***Implementation Strategies***

- ❖ Use the intervener-training curriculum described in Recommendation 3 to train teachers and other team members about deaf-blindness and the role of the intervener.
- ❖ Identify successful models used by state deaf-blind projects, university programs, and school districts that provide on-the-job support to interveners.
- ❖ Replicate these models to support an increasing number of interveners.
- ❖ In partnership with a broad group of stakeholders, examine the causes of the shortage of local experts in deaf-blindness, including teachers of the deaf-blind, and identify strategies to alleviate the shortage.
- ❖ Design and implement strategies to provide distance consultation, coaching, and mentoring through the use of technology applications.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**Expand opportunities for interveners to obtain a state or national certificate or credential.**

### ***Implementation Strategies***

- ❖ Invite input from a broad group of stakeholders regarding:
  - preferred characteristics of credentialing processes and criteria;
  - current and future needs for an intervener credential; and,
  - short- and long-term goals of intervener credentialing.
- ❖ In partnership with stakeholders, including the NRCP and the National Intervener Task Force, determine the necessary criteria for an intervener credential.
- ❖ Identify credentialing bodies that could offer a national credential that meets those criteria.
- ❖ Determine the most feasible credentialing options and move forward with efforts to expand pathways to a national credential that are applicable to interveners with a variety of training backgrounds.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

**Establish a national intervener jobs clearinghouse to assist in intervener recruitment and job placement.**

### ***Implementation Strategies***

- ❖ Convene a workgroup of interveners and other individuals who have knowledge of intervener hiring practices (e.g., educational administrators, state deaf-blind project personnel) to determine the design elements needed for an online jobs clearinghouse.
- ❖ Develop a secure online jobs clearinghouse reflecting those design elements.
- ❖ Publicize the availability of the clearinghouse through current intervener training programs, state deaf-blind projects, and other relevant agencies and organizations.
- ❖ Maintain the clearinghouse data on an ongoing basis.

## **RECOMMENDATION 7**

**Provide resources (e.g., technology applications, technical assistance) that assist interveners to establish organized online and face-to-face communities where they can improve their knowledge and skills by sharing ideas and experiences with each other.**

### ***Implementation Strategies***

- ❖ Convene a workgroup of interveners, state deaf-blind project personnel, and university faculty to determine desired features of an online community of interveners.
- ❖ Develop and maintain a Web-based platform providing those features.
- ❖ Publicize the availability of the site and train interveners in its use.
- ❖ Explore opportunities for interveners to occasionally meet in person (e.g., state meetings, national or regional conferences).

## **GOAL 3: FAMILIES**

**Build the capacity of families to participate in decision about intervener services for their children and in efforts to improve these services.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**Develop and disseminate information resources and tools to family members that increase their knowledge of intervener services and enhance their ability to communicate effectively with educators, administrators, and others about those services.**

#### ***Implementation Strategies***

- ❖ Review existing family-focused resources related to intervener services.
- ❖ Use existing resources (if available) or develop new products that families can use to:
  - promote communication about intervener services with early interventionists, educators, and administrators;
  - inform decisions related to intervener services for their child; and
  - inform and influence state and local policies to encourage and promote high-quality intervener services.
- ❖ Collaborate with family organizations to distribute information to families who have limited knowledge of interveners. This will include efforts to reach out to groups who are typically underrepresented (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, families who live in rural areas, and families who are socioeconomically disadvantaged).

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**Develop and implement strategies that create opportunities for families to share ideas and experiences and work together to impact intervener services at local, state, and national levels.**

### ***Implementation Strategies***

- ❖ Establish accessible Web-based and/or telephone groups where family members of children who are deaf-blind can share ideas and experiences about intervener services.
- ❖ Partner with key family organizations (e.g., NFADB, NDBII Parent Group) to implement strategies for recommendations that promote appropriate effective intervener services for children who are deaf-blind.
- ❖ Develop a curriculum module about intervener services to supplement current family leadership curricula that family members can use to educate themselves and to mentor others.

## **GOAL 4: SUSTAINABILITY**

**Sustain high-quality intervener services across the nation through the inclusion of intervener services in national special education policy.**

### **Recommendation 10**

**Congress should ensure the long-term sustainability of intervener services for children and youth who are deaf-blind by including “intervener services” as a related service and as an early intervention service in the next reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).**