



Sunday, August 4, 2019

Breakout Session H43 • 4:00-5:00 pm • Grand Ballroom A/B

## Interveners - Key Members of the Educational Team

Beth Kennedy, DeafBlind Central: Michigan's Training  
& Resource Project

### Presenter Information

Beth Kennedy is the Project Director for DeafBlind Central: Michigan's Training & Resource Project and the Director of the DeafBlind Intervener (DBI) online certificate program through Central Michigan University (CMU). Beth has worked in the field of deafblindness for twenty-eight years and has held a variety of jobs working directly with people who are DeafBlind and as a consultant. She earned her Master's Degree from Boston College and is currently working on a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at CMU. Beth's areas of interest include deafblindness, communication, concept development, interveners, and intervener training.

### Presentation Abstract

Interveners provide support for students who are DeafBlind. CHARGE Syndrome is a leading cause of deafblindness, and people who have CHARGE can benefit from the increased access to environmental and educational information that interveners provide. The intervener can serve as a key member of the educational team, helping students who are deafblind to achieve more and reach their potential. Interveners accomplish this by working with other team members to increase the implementation of the IEP goals.

### Learning Objectives

- Increase knowledge of the role of the intervener for a student who is DeafBlind
- Increase knowledge of the role of the intervener on the team
- Increase knowledge of the benefit of credentialed interveners for students who are deafblind and the other members of the team

## Comparison of Possible Supports for Students Who Are DeafBlind

An intervener, paraprofessional, and/or interpreter can play a critical role in meeting the educational needs of a student who is DeafBlind. Every student who is DeafBlind has unique needs, so supports necessary to provide access will vary from student to student. Think about the student's support needs. Do the support needs change in different environments? If so, the level of support necessary could vary across environments. Below, each position is briefly described. The boxes in the columns below the given role outline the student support needs that might be satisfied by each one.

The team may want to reference "Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student With Deaf-Blindness? An IEP Discussion Guide," available through the National Center on Deaf-Blindness.

<b>Intervener:</b> A person who has specialized training in deafblindness; provides 1:1 support to a student who is DeafBlind by facilitating communication, language, and concept development, providing access to auditory and visual information	<b>Paraprofessional:</b> A person who may have some training for specific job duties; provides support in a small group or 1:1 capacity; may be assigned to a student or a classroom	<b>Interpreter:</b> A person who is trained to interpret English to American Sign Language (or another manual system) and ASL to English; may have training to accommodate for vision loss/deafblindness; may serve as a language model for the student
<b>Student</b> has both a vision and a hearing loss, necessitating specialized one on one support to participate in/provide access to activities, instructional and non-instructional, on and off site	<b>Student</b> functions well in small groups, may occasionally require 1:1 assistance	<b>Student</b> requires translation of information, from one language to another. The student is able to process the information and determine key points with minimal support.
<b>Student</b> support needs necessitate ready accommodations by a person trained in deafblindness in order to participate	<b>Student</b> support needs can be met by someone with basic training in deafblindness	<b>Student</b> requires the skill level of a nationally or state certified interpreter, who can provide appropriate accommodations for access (e.g. restricted field, tactile, etc.)
<b>Student</b> requires support for communication, language, interactions, concept development, curricular modifications, sensory losses, etc.	<b>Student</b> requires only minimal adaptations of classroom materials that can easily be accommodated by the team	<b>Student</b> is able to access interpreted information independently, and is able to seek information or clarification as needed independently
<b>Student</b> requires support to connect with and interact with others	<b>Student</b> requires only minimal support when interacting with peers and others	<b>Student</b> interacts independently, with the support of an interpreter, as needed
<b>Student</b> needs prompts and individualized support to attend/participate	<b>Student</b> requires occasional prompts and support to attend/participate	<b>Student</b> is able to attend for long periods of time with little to no redirection
<b>Student</b> performance is significantly improved by support provided by a consistent, trusted person	<b>Student</b> interacts with and performs comparably with a variety of people	<b>Student</b> performance is typically not impacted by presence or absence of specific people
<b>Student</b> requires support to enhance her/his independence	<b>Student</b> requires occasional support/ prompts to work independently	<b>Student</b> is able to function independently, and makes independent decisions without prompts

References: 1. "What is My Role?" A Comparison of the Responsibilities of Interpreters, Interveners, and Support Service Providers (Susanne Morgan, MA, CI, CT) and, 2. Alsop, L., Robinson, C., Goehl, K., Lace, J., Belote, M., & Rodriguez-Gil, G. (2007). *Interveners in the classroom: Guidelines for teams working with students who are deafblind*. Logan, UT: SKI-HI Institute.

# INTERVENERS: “DO WITH, NOT FOR”

## Who are interveners?

- ★ Paraprofessionals with specialized training in deafblindness who work 1-on-1 with a student who is deafblind
- ★ Those who are credentialed by the National Resource Center for Paraeducators or who are actively working toward the credential

## Who do interveners work with?

### Students who:

- ★ Have a combined vision and hearing loss and are likely to have additional disabilities
- ★ Need consistent 1-on-1 support to participate in/access activities and enhance their independence
- ★ Require support for communication, language interactions, concept development, curricular modifications, sensory losses, etc.
- ★ Require support to connect with and interact with others
- ★ May not otherwise access or attend to instruction

## What do interveners do?

- ★ Provide **access** to auditory and visual information
- ★ Facilitate communication, language, and concept development in students who are deafblind
- ★ Maintain a trusting, interactive relationship to promote social and emotional well-being
- ★ Help students who are deafblind reach their potential
- ★ Work with the team to increase educational outcomes

## Research:

- Correa-Torres, S. (2008). The nature of the social experiences of students with deaf-blindness who are educated in inclusive settings. *Journal of Visual Impairments & Blindness*, 102, 272-283.
- Nelson, C., Hyte, H., & Greenfield, R. (2016). Increasing self-regulation and classroom participation of a child who is deafblind. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 160, 496-509.
- Parker, A. T., & Nelson, C. (2016). Toward a comprehensive system of personnel development in deafblind education. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 161, 486-501.
- Watkins, S., Clark, T., Strong, C., & Barringer, D. (1994). The effectiveness of an intervener model of services for young deafblind children. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 139, 404-409.

This document was developed using the National Center on Deaf-Blindness fact sheet entitled “Definition of Intervener Services and Interveners in Educational Settings,” the Utah State University fact sheet entitled “Educational Interveners for Children Who are DeafBlind,” and the DeafBlind Central fact sheet entitled “Comparison of Possible Supports for Students who are DeafBlind.”



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