



Professional Day

Friday, August 2, 2019

## Meeting the Needs of Students with CHARGE Syndrome with Proficient Communication Skills in General Education

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### Presenter Information

Robbie Blaha has served students with DeafBlindness including those with CHARGE Syndrome and their families for 48 years. She been a classroom teacher for students with DeafBlindness as well as a consultant on the Texas DeafBlind Outreach Project.

### Presentation Abstract

The field of deafblindness has appropriately focused on learners with emerging language and multiple disabilities. This is a result, in part, of the Rubella epidemic that was foundational in the development of the field we have today. In the past, academic students with deafblindness were typically those with Usher Syndrome.. Currently, as an effect of significant changes in etiology and quality of medical interventions, there is a growing population of congenital students with CHARGE who have formal language. These students are undergoing and presenting considerable challenges to local districts that serve them. Though many of the essential strategies and best practices in our field do not address their needs, the underpinnings of the deafblind learning style: significant and ongoing lack of incidental information, concept development and social issues are very much at play with these students. These academic children and youth with deafblindness need our attention and support to assure that there are new and unique strategies that address the needs of this growing academic population.

### Learning Objectives

- Increased awareness of the needs of and effective strategies to serve this population.