

DEAF-BLINDNESS

INFORMATION & RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES



WHAT IS DEAF-BLINDNESS?

- When we hear the term deaf-blind, we often imagine a person who is unable to hear or see anything; however, this is typically not the case.
- Deaf-blind describes any combined hearing and vision loss that significantly limits children's ability to get information from people and objects around them.
- Major causes of deaf-blindness include hereditary syndromes (Usher syndrome, CHARGE, etc.), prematurity, birth complications, infections (CMV, meningitis, etc.), and brain injury.
- Many children who are deaf-blind also have additional disabilities and/or complex health needs.
- Children with deaf-blindness often have unique educational needs requiring specialized instructional techniques and modifications.
- Deaf-blindness is an extremely low incidence disability. Children with deaf-blindness are often the ONLY one in their school or community with this diagnosis.



GEORGIA SENSORY ASSISTANCE PROJECT

GSAP is a federal special education grant project that provides technical assistance to families, teachers, and service providers of children and youth with deaf-blindness (birth-21 years).

- Onsite consultation (home and/or school)
- Family training, support, and networking
- Sibling Workshops
- Training for school personnel and service providers

<http://gsap.coe.uga.edu>

COMMUNICATION

- without access to visual and auditory information, communication development can be challenging
- can include movements, gestures, vocalizations, pictures, objects, sign language (visual or tactile), speech, augmentative/alternative systems, and other means to communicate



LEARNING

- incidental learning (just by seeing or hearing what's going on around them) is difficult or does not occur
- hands-on experience, active exploration, systematic instruction, and predictable routines are essential

Family-Professional Partnerships are vital for promoting optimal outcomes for children with deaf-blindness.

GSAP FAMILY SUPPORT COORDINATORS

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INTERNET RESOURCES

National Center on Deaf-Blindness

<https://nationaldb.org>

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind

<http://nfadb.org>

Family Leadership Project

<http://familieslead.org>