



**North Dakota
Deaf-Blind Services Project**



**Serving
infants, children,
and young adults
who are
deaf-blind**



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What is NDDSP?

The North Dakota Deaf-Blind Services Project (NDDSP) is a federally funded free resource designed to enhance the provision of services for children and young adults, birth through age 21, who are deaf-blind. The mission statement of the NDDSP is to improve the education and services for children with deaf-blindness and their families in North Dakota. We accomplish this through training, mentorship, resource dissemination and technical assistance.

Who Qualifies for Services?

- ◆ Individuals who have a mild to severe hearing loss and vision impairment that require adaptations or modifications
- ◆ Individuals who have a diagnosis which places them at risk for developing a hearing loss and vision impairment
- ◆ Individuals with multiple disabilities who may demonstrate inconsistent responses during evaluations or in the natural environment
- ◆ Individuals who have been diagnosed as deaf and blind (deaf-blindness does not need to be the primary disability)

Who Benefits from Services?

- ◆ Individuals who have a hearing and vision loss
- ◆ Parents and family members
- ◆ Educational personnel
- ◆ Personnel from state and community agencies
- ◆ Other care providers

What can the project do for you?

The NDDSP provides technical assistance and training to families and service providers. Members of the Statewide Technical Assistance Team provide the technical assistance. Each region of the state has identified team members.

The NDDSP equips families, local educators and other professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to improve child outcomes by offering the following:

- ▶ On-site observations
- ▶ Program consultations
- ▶ Workshops/conferences
- ▶ In-services
- ▶ Resource library materials
- ▶ Assistance in identification
- ▶ Newsletter and project mailings
- ▶ Community resource referrals
- ▶ Deaf-blind registry data
- ▶ Links to other families

How Can I Access Information on the Web?

Information is available at the following website:

www.state.nd.us/deafblind

The website will connect you to information about upcoming events, technical assistance, the resource library and referral forms.

Deaf-Blindness

Deaf-blindness is a loss in both the hearing and vision senses. The loss may range from a mild impairment to profound deafness and low vision to total blindness. Deaf-blindness is also known as dual sensory impairment. Deaf-blindness has over 70 known causes such as prematurity, viral infections, brain diseases, Usher's Syndrome, and CHARGE syndrome. Education must address both the hearing loss and vision impairment as well as any other disabilities that may be present.

Children who are deaf-blind may exhibit a wide range of behaviors during interactions with family, friends, and their environment as a result of sensory losses. The losses may occur in varying degrees, and a child need not exhibit all of the behaviors identified in this brochure to be considered deaf-blind. The combined effects of both of these sensory losses, even if both are mild, will qualify a child as deaf-blind.

Parents and professionals may need assistance in confirming the sensory loss. The North Dakota Deaf-blind Services Project (NDDSP) is the first step to securing assistance.



Deaf-Blind Census

The U.S. Department of Education mandates the project to annually identify and collect information on children who meet criteria for being reported on the Deaf-blind Census. The census provides information that is used for regional and statewide planning to develop appropriate services and funding for infants, children, and youth who are deaf-blind.

Behaviors that may Indicate a Dual Sensory Impairment

The following questions are designed to help parents and professionals determine if there is a possibility of a hearing and vision loss. Every child who is suspected of having an impairment should receive complete hearing and vision assessments.

Does the child or student...

- ◆ Often bump into persons and objects?
- ◆ Have difficulty walking or crawling smoothly across shadows or areas that are different like carpet or tile?
- ◆ Need to touch or have an object close to the face to identify it?
- ◆ Prefer only brightly colored or shiny objects?
- ◆ Have difficulty reaching for and grasping objects in a coordinated manner?
- ◆ Squint, cover, or close one eye when looking at objects?
- ◆ Lose interest or tire easily when performing near tasks?
- ◆ Usually turn toward a light source?
- ◆ Fail to recognize and respond to familiar faces?
- ◆ Have difficulty following moving objects with eyes?
- ◆ Have eyes that are red or watery, not clear?
- ◆ Fail to react to loud noise?
- ◆ Frequently ask to have things repeated or follow directions incorrectly?
- ◆ Have difficulty locating the sources of sound?
- ◆ Seem confused when verbal directions are given in noisy environments such as playgrounds or school cafeterias?
- ◆ Indicate agreement (nods head) when you know the individual does not understand what was said?
- ◆ Fail to recognize and respond appropriately to words or common home noises (telephone, door knock)?
- ◆ Understand better when looking directly at the speaker?

What is Technical Assistance (TA)?

Technical Assistance:

- ◆ Is a communication and problem solving process
- ◆ Expands family and service provider care
- ◆ Engages in collaborative planning
- ◆ Enables knowledge to be shared
- ◆ Is individualized

Who is Eligible for Technical Assistance?

Children and young adults (birth through 21 years of age) who

- ◆ Have a documented hearing and vision loss or
- ◆ Are highly suspect of having a dual sensory impairment and
- ◆ Are on the deaf-blind census

How are Referrals Made?

Referrals are made by contacting one of the following:

- ◆ ND Deaf-blind Services Project (NDDSP)
- ◆ ND School for the Deaf
- ◆ ND Vision Services/School for the Blind

Who Can Refer?

- ◆ Parents and family members
- ◆ Educational personnel
- ◆ Service providers from agencies
- ◆ Parents

Who May Receive TA?

- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Agency members
- ▶ School staff
- ▶ Families

Who Provides TA?

The Statewide Technical Assistance Team members who have specific skills in deaf-blindness, communication, mobility, cognitive development, early childhood, and several other areas provide technical assistance. The outreach consultants from the ND School for the Deaf and ND Vision Services/School for the Blind provide most of the on-site technical assistance.

Where is TA Provided?

Technical assistance is provided throughout the state of North Dakota in the child's home, early intervention agency, or school. The location is based on the request.

What TA Activities Are Offered?

- ▶ Workshops and conferences
- ▶ Consultations to families and programs in the home, at school, or by the telephone
- ▶ Information dissemination of the newsletter the "Informer" and up-to-date books and videotapes on research-based practices
- ▶ Information and referral on census related questions and general deaf-blind questions
- ▶ Compilation of the ND Deaf-Blind Census
- ▶ Collaboration with schools, human service agencies, and organizations to improve services and support to families of children with deaf-blindness

Where is the Deaf-Blind Project?

The NDDSP is housed at the North Dakota School for the Deaf in Devils Lake, ND. You may reach the project by mail, phone, fax, e-mail, or on the web. Please contact the project coordinator for more information or to be added to our mailing list.

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