

The Louisiana Deafblind Project at LSU Human Development Center

By: Cassandra Glausier

The Louisiana Deafblind Project (LA DBP) is a technical assistance and dissemination project. We are funded through the Office of Special Education Programs. Project staff works with children birth up to 21 years of age who have a **combined** vision and hearing loss. Every state has a Deafblind Project. For the last 20 years the LA DBP has been housed at the Department of Education (DOE). Every five years we are required to re-write for the technical assistance grant. Last August when it was time to re-write for the grant, DOE decided to pass the reins on to a university setting. The LSU Human Development Center wrote for the grant in August 2013 and was awarded it in October of 2013.

The LA DBP provides services at **no cost** and anyone can refer to our project. Our main responsibility is to identify children with deafblindness. We use the term deafblind to indicate there is a combined vision and hearing loss not a total absence of vision and hearing. Most of the children we work with have useable vision and hearing. Only 6 % have total vision and hearing loss and 90% of the kids have addition disabilities. As we go out to work with schools we are finding more and more of the children under the multiple disabilities category. We are working with Pupil Appraisal, nursing staff, teachers, paraprofessionals and other school personnel to identify children with combined vision and hearing loss.

Some of the other services we offer are professional development opportunities for parents, teachers, paraprofessionals and service providers. We do not provide direct services. The project's role is to identify children with combined vision and hearing loss as well as, support parents, educators and service providers by connecting them to resources and training. As a project we can work in the classroom, home or community. We support teachers in the classroom by observing the classroom situation, to see if there are any resources that can be suggested to enhance the child's learning experiences. We also work with the teachers to develop IEP goals specific to the unique needs of the child with combined vision and hearing loss.

We are currently working with the Kansas Deafblind Project to offer continuing educational opportunities specifically focusing on the topic of combined vision and hearing loss. 12.0 CEUs will be given for the completion of the Deafblind 101 modules. These are pre-recorded modules that are one hour each. We are offering these at no cost. If you are interested please check out our website www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/ladbp, Facebook Page www.facebook.com/lsuladbp or call 504-534-8511 for more information.

Another web based training opportunity is the Open Hands Open Access Intervener Modules. Interveners are paraprofessionals who have had specialized training in working with kids with combined vision and hearing loss. These modules focus on providing awareness about implementing intervener strategies in the classroom. They are pre-recorded and are at no cost. We are working through the National Center on Deafblindness to offer these. We are targeting

paraprofessionals who are currently working with children with combined vision and hearing loss or who are interested in working with children with combined vision and hearing loss. However, it is not limited to paraprofessionals only anyone interested is welcome to sign up. Please visit our website or contact our Project Coordinator Cassondra Glausier for more information.

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