



Project Reach: Illinois Deaf-Blind Services Awarded a New Five Year Project!!!

By Karen Windy, Deaf-Blind Specialist

As you may or may not know, our current five-year grant ended September 30, 2013. It was announced in July 2013 that applications for a new five-year grant were being accepted. We worked to put together a new grant application that would reflect what we would do for the deaf-blind population in Illinois for the next five years. We were notified on September 27, 2013 that that we were the recipient of a new five year grant. As with many grant recipients, the awarded monies are limited and in our case, more limited than the last five years. As a result, you will see some changes in our delivery of service.

The activities of this renewed project were designed to meet the priorities designated by OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs). While some activities may look the same, there are also some new activities and ways of doing things to better serve the families and school of Illinois. Here is a rundown for you....

What will be the same?

1. We will still provide technical assistance to families and services providers of individuals with deaf-blindness.
2. We will still perform child-find for the National Deaf-Blind Census.
3. We plan to continue with our newsletters. It will be available electronically to those who have access to electronic material and a hard copy to those who cannot access our newsletter electronically. The newsletter will provide valuable information, resources and strategies that you might find helpful when working with an individual with deaf-blindness
4. You will still have access to our Deaf-Blind Specialists, Family Specialists and our website.

What will look different?

1. When a new child is referred, we will determine eligibility based on available medical information and functional reports. Project Reach will determine whether project staff needs to provide additional functional assessments.
2. In order to obtain Technical Assistance from Project Reach for a child who is eligible, a parent signed Referral Form B will be submitted. A Technical Assistance Plan will be developed together with the service provider(s)/family member and deaf-blind specialist that will reflect their commitment to receiving/providing technical assistance. The service provider/family member will be asked to complete an evaluation at the conclusion of the technical assistance. Technical assistance may include:

NOTE: This will be the last print newsletter sent by mail. To sign up for future E-Newsletters please email – ppausche@philiprockcenter.org.

FREE LEARNING MODULES ANYBODY INTERESTED IN DEAF-BLINDNESS AND DEAF-BLIND INTERVENTION

- a. The service provider/family member may be asked to read an article, view a video /webinar or complete a similar brief activity. This will be followed-up with phone call or email with the deaf-blind specialist to discuss specific concerns or questions.
 - b. The service provider/family member may be asked to video the child in a variety of settings or provide additional information such as assessment information, of communication system being used, etc. The deaf-blind specialist will follow-up via phone call or email.
 - c. If it is determined that an on-site visit to a classroom is needed:
 - i. The service provider and family member will agree to allowing the deaf-blind specialist observe and use a Classroom Observation Inventory to help determine the best way to provide technical assistance.
 - ii. A Classroom Observation Inventory will be repeated to determine if the outcomes of the Technical Assistance Plan have been met.
 - d. If it is determined that an on-site home visit is needed it will be schedule by the assigned deaf-blind specialist.
3. The service provider/family member may be invited to visit a model classroom with students who are deaf-blind or view video of the model classroom to observe successful strategies being used with students who are deaf-blind.
 4. The service provider/family may also be invited to complete an OHOA (Open Hands, Open Access) modules related to the goals of the Technical Assistance.
 5. If you feel input from the Deaf-Blind Specialist at an IEP/IFSP would be beneficial, the specialist may ask if she can attend via phone conference, Facetime, Skype, etc. if the technology is available to all parties involved.

Project Reach is committed to providing quality and effective service to all individuals who are involved with children who are deaf-blind. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your deaf-blind specialist, family specialist or Project Coordinator, Michelle Clyne at (630) 790-2474 or mclyne@philiprockcenter.org. ▲

You may have heard about the new, free national resource for web-based trainings on deaf-blindness, the OHOA Modules. The *Open Hands Open Access (OHOA) Intervener Learning Modules* are a national resource designed to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills related to deaf-blind intervention for students who are being served in educational settings (ages 3 through 21). The module content was created by a diverse group of experts in the field of deaf-blindness including state and national deaf-blind project staff, parents of children who are deaf-blind, higher education faculty, teachers, educational interpreters, and interveners. Each includes a variety of accessible videos, photographs, slide presentations, and learning activities

While the primary purpose of the modules is as a resource for agencies or institutions that develop, host, or deliver comprehensive intervener training programs, the modules will also be useful to other learners (e.g., parents, teachers, other service providers) who are not seeking to become interveners, but simply wish to:

- increase their awareness and understanding of deaf-blindness and its unique intervention practices and principles,
- increase their awareness of the process of intervention and the role of the intervener, and
- learn about ways to support students who are deaf-blind and their interveners.

(Information taken from National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness. (2013).

Open Hands Open Access: Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules. Retrieved from <http://www.nationaldb.org/ohoamoodle/index.php>
Any person can register to take the modules by filling out the registration form at this site: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1IBzFLmk0JxmhGHgN72_pgmzEcg2In3y3K68Hk5F2iKE/viewform?pli=1

IF participants would like to take the modules and receive a certificate of completion and CPDUs, then they are invited to contact Project Reach.



PROJECT REACH/FAMILY LEADERS CONFERENCE REPORT:
AN INTERVENER:
ACCESS TO INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY Eliza Elliot, parent Illinois Advisory Board member and Karen Windy, Deaf-Blind Specialist

"Ever since she took my hand on the doorstep of my home, she has been not only my eyes and ears, but also the light in all dark places, a bond between me and the life of the world." –HK What a perfect description of what we want for our children! That is what an intervener is. At a recent Illinois Advocates for the Deaf-Blind family weekend in Peoria, the parents who attended were able to view a DVD and were provided with a booklet that describes what an intervener is. The booklet titled: "A Family's Guide to Interveners for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing loss" was produced by Utah State University Ski-Hi Institute in 2012. The DVD that comes with it is titled "Deaf-blindness and the Role of the Intervener."

As defined in this booklet an Intervener is "a person who: Works consistently one-to-one with a child who is deaf-blind and has training and specialized skills in Deaf-blindness." Also stated in the booklet is the role of the intervener: "to provide effective, deaf-blind specific intervention for a child with Deaf-blindness in the three following areas: Access to information, Access to Communication and Access to social and emotional development."

A fact sheet was also handed out to the parents that talked about what is currently happening in Illinois and nationally and what the next steps would be. Philip J. Rock Center and school started a pilot program to offer on-line classes from Utah State University to para-professionals who wanted to become an interventionist. One new para-professional began classes in January 2013.

What was stressed to the parents at the conference was our need to make intervention a recognized and available service to deaf-blind children. One way Project Reach is currently involved is by inviting interested persons in the educational field and family members from across the state to attend shareholder meetings. Two have taken place so far and a third is scheduled for May 21, 2013.

If you would like to have more information about intervention and to get involved, visit the following websites:

<http://interveners.nationaldb.org/documents/NCDB-Intervener-Services-Recommendations.pdf>

http://intervener.org/?page_id=31

<http://intervener.org> – You can download the above-mentioned booklet "A Family's Guide to Interveners...."

<http://www.nfadb.org/home.html>

<http://nationaldb.org> - search "intervener" on the website for more information

or

Contact Project Reach at the Philip Rock Center: (630)790-2474 or PRC@philiprockcenter.org . ◆◆



HEADS UP!

Project Reach Website can now be found at: philiprockcenter.org

Volunteers

RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED **TO EARN \$350 TO \$400 if you qualify!**

Dr. Suskind and her research team at the University of Chicago are looking for parents of children with a hearing loss to participate in a toddler sound environment study.

Call 773-834-8629 to find out if you qualify!

What will be expected of the parent:	What the research team will do with the recordings:	You and your child may qualify if:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete recordings of your child's environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze the recordings using special software	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child is under 4 ½ years old
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete recordings of your child's environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the information to help find way to improve children's sound environment and reach their potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child has a moderate to profound hearing loss
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete recordings of your child's environmen		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child uses hearing aid(s), bone anchored hearing aid, or cochlear implant(s)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your family uses spoken language in the home
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You have at least one day per week when you're home with your child

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Project Reach is
operated by the Illinois
State Board of
Education