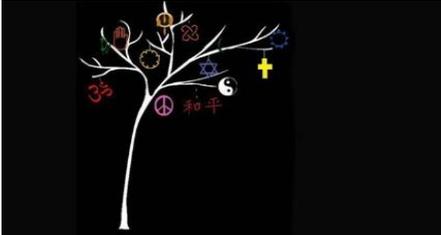


---

**Faith Rosenshein Young, Editor**  
**Winter, 2020**

---



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

## Season's Greetings from Project

With the holiday season in full swing, we find ourselves reflecting on the past year and the challenges and the successes our family have shared. While the winter holidays may feel different this year many traditions will remain from holiday newsletters to favorite movies. If you are looking for a new twist on your holidays, please check out [Easy & Fun Holiday Activities](#). All of us at Project Reach wish you and your family warmth, hope, joy, and laughter this holiday season and in the coming year!

**Faith, Jean, Karen, Michelle, Patty, and Peggy**

## e-Learning and IEPs



COVID-19 is the topic of conversation for everyone this year, especially families. While we may have some control or input regarding other aspects of our lives that have changed, the look, feel and operation of our children's education is largely outside our control. Families are frustrated by on-line and hybrid learning and the resultant barriers, even more so families with children with disabilities. The pandemic brings to light an oversight in most IEPs – distance learning (also referred to as e-learning or remote learning).

Many Illinois school districts established e-learning days to replace no school days (such as snow days) prior to the pandemic. But planning on IEPs for such days is largely absent. The reality is once the pandemic passes children will still face distance learning and parents should consider revising IEPs to address this.

The Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) Question and Answer (Q & A) document regarding implementing Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B provision of services in the COVID-19 environment provides important information for families. The following points relate directly to revising an IEP to accommodate distance learning.

- Even though state and local decisions may require schools to limit or not provide in-person instruction, state and local educational agencies and IEP teams are still required to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
- All children with disabilities must continue to have “the chance to meet **challenging** objectives.” (Emphasis added.)

- At a minimum, the parent(s) of a child, not less than one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is or may be participating in a regular education class), and not less than one special education teacher of the child (or where appropriate one special education provider of the child) are required to develop, review, and revise a child's IEP.
- After the annual IEP Team meeting for a given school year, parents and the school district **may agree not to hold** a meeting to make changes/revisions and instead **may develop a written document** to amend or modify a current IEP. (Emphasis added.)
- Extended school year (ESY) services are future-looking and not intended to make up for past denials of FAPE. A child's entitlement to ESY continues even if schools and other facilities are closed due to COVID-19. Since some ESY services (especially those that required in-person contact) may not have been available during Summer 2020, public agencies should consider providing ESY services during the school year, during school breaks or vacations where appropriate to the child's needs.

For specific Illinois guidance and more IEP and remote learning information, visit the Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center ["Determining Appropriate IEP Services for In-Person or Remote Learning," <https://www.fmptic.org/recordings/family-matters-recordings/4557>, "Remote Learning for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Tips and Tricks to Make it Work!" (contains tips for all students), <https://www.fmptic.org/recordings/family-matters-recordings/4504>, Education and Parenting During COVID-19, <https://www.fmptic.org/node/4453>].

Remember, students who are deafblind do not learn while waiting for other students to take their turn. Learners who are deafblind need to be "doing something" to be learning; small group and one-on-one instruction is key. Large group instruction is only valuable if the child can be consistently active. Valuable resources addressing remote learning are available on the Family Resource Center on Disabilities (FRCDD) COVID-19 Resource page (<https://frcd.org/covid-19-resource-page/>). Key IEP considerations for distance learning include the following.

- First, foremost, and always: YOU are an expert on your child. You are entitled to any assistance and/or parent training necessary to support your child to receive FAPE in a least restrictive environment (LRE) and to progress while they are learning from home. This includes training in any area that supports student outcomes, such as communicating effectively, giving your child encouragement, reinforcing positive behaviors, and modeling tasks.
- Teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers need to have the knowledge, expertise and training specifically related to supporting your child during distance learning. Paraprofessionals need a clear description of their unique responsibilities during this time and to know which educator will supervise them.
- IEP related service providers (e.g., speech and language, social-emotional counseling, O&M, OT, or PT) should detail how services will be provided and by whom; whether sessions will be in person, virtually, or another manner; whether the sessions be one-on-one, in pairs, and/or small groups; and how the schedule is determined.
- If your child uses a sign language as their primary language and requires an interpreter to access their education, detail how these services will be delivered during distance learning.
- Detail the supplementary aids and supports needed for your child to attain their goals and be involved and progress in the general curriculum during distance learning. Examples of these include (but are not limited to) your child's specialized equipment, planning time, supports to address the distance learning environment, pacing of instruction, presentation of subject matter so it is accessible, materials, assignment modifications, self-management tools and skills, testing adaptations, social interaction support, personnel training. All these may look, feel, and operate differently during e-learning; thus, your child's IEP must address related special considerations for distance learning.

- If your child is not benefiting from online instruction, it is appropriate for the team to meet again to discuss how virtual instruction can be modified.
- IEP modifications/updates should include re-accessing whether a child who previously did not qualify for ESY services does now due to the impact distance learning has had on educational activities and opportunities.

## Additional Resources

**Perkins School for the Blind** offers a mini guide for parents about how to develop an effective IEP for children who are deafblind at

[https://www.perkinselearning.org/sites/elearning.perkinsdev1.org/files/develop\\_effective\\_iep\\_mini\\_guide.pdf](https://www.perkinselearning.org/sites/elearning.perkinsdev1.org/files/develop_effective_iep_mini_guide.pdf).

**Virtual IEP Accommodations for Distance Learning** (understood.org) offers a chart of accommodations commonly found on IEPs and ways to adapt for remote learning at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/learning-and-thinking-differences-basics/iep-accommodations-during-distance-learning>.

**The National Deaf Center's COVID-19 FAQs** includes strategies for accessing remote learning for DeafBlind students at <https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/covid19faqs>.

**The National Center on Deaf-Blindness** offers three webinars that may be helpful. Accessing Grade Level General Education Curriculum (<https://www.nationaldb.org/updates/accessing-grade-level-general-education-curriculum/>), Early Literacy and Numeracy for Students who are Deaf-Blind (<https://www.nationaldb.org/updates/early-literacy-numeracy/>) and IEP Development (<https://www.nationaldb.org/updates/IEP-development/>).

## Illinois Families Together Parent Zoom



By Krista Bohl, IADB President

Illinois Advocates for the Deafblind (IADB) is a deafblind family group founded in 1994 by parents looking for the ability to network with other families. IADB's mission is to protect the rights of all people who are deafblind and see that their needs are met. This year IADB would like to focus on providing support to parents and families. Specifically, we would like to focus on more family face to face interaction. IADB with the support of Project Reach has started what we call "Illinois Families Together." Through the trials of COVID-19, we have discovered the convenience of Zoom meetings and its ability to connect us to others across the state. We launched our first meeting November 6, 2020 and would love for others to join us! Please consider filling out the short Google form below so that we can focus our time on the needs that mean most to you! Whether that means covering certain topics, or just chatting with other families that can relate. The link is [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1aZuwX66DkMkk\\_JGZmKulTwsj7cHQUZQzBCVYXHif3iM/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1aZuwX66DkMkk_JGZmKulTwsj7cHQUZQzBCVYXHif3iM/edit).

As always, we welcome your participation in IADB. Please contact Krista Bohl at [kbohl2000@yahoo.com](mailto:kbohl2000@yahoo.com) for details on how to become more involved in IADB.

## Is your child a natural born star?



The National Center of Deaf-Blindness is looking for Family Fun Facts to promote using Facebook and Twitter. Family Fun Fact is a story, photo, and/or video that celebrates families of children who are deaf-blind and provides tips and ideas that might be useful to other families. The best part is the submission is 100 percent online and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete including writing the description and uploading any media. To show off your family star(s) or learn more (or view past #DBFamilyFunFacts), go to <https://www.nationaldb.org/fe/db-family-fun-facts/>. To apply, click on the submission form, fill in your child's name, state, 2-3 sentences about a photo or video, and complete the online consent form. That is all it takes to show everyone your shining star!



## Meet Our New Family Engagement Coordinator

Faith Rosenshein Young is the parent of an adult son who is deafblind and has additional disabilities. She has been his case coordinator managing all aspects of his care, including medical, insurance, educational and vocational issues for more than 20 years. Faith served as the Governor's representative to the Illinois Advisory Board for Services for Persons Who are DeafBlind (IABDB) from 2003 to 2012. In 2004 Faith developed and taught the inaugural class on deafblindness at the Hebrew Seminary of the Deaf in Skokie, Illinois. She is a lifetime member of IADB and NFADB. Please do not hesitate to contact Faith at 630-568-8720 or [fyoung@philiprocenter.org](mailto:fyoung@philiprocenter.org) if you need anything. She is here to help!



## What is NFADB?

NFADB is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that serves families with individuals who are deafblind. NFADB was started by and for families but now includes all individuals, organizations, or agencies that wish to “empower the voices of families with individuals who are deaf-blind and advocate for their unique needs.” NFADB’s activities include connecting families and others to information and resources, offering trainings about topics of interest, partnering with others to improve opportunities and services for families, fostering family-to-family relationships, and partnering with national organizations to build strong service systems. Membership runs yearly and starts every January 1. **Interested in joining?** Go to <https://nfadb.org/join-us> and complete an online membership application or contact Faith Rosenshein Young, Family Engagement Coordinator: Illinois Deafblind Services for a paper application. For more information about NFADB, check out their website at <https://nfadb.org/>.

## NFADB Update

By Krista Bohl, Illinois Liaison to NFADB

The 2021 Texas Deafblind Education Symposium registration is now open! This year the conference will be held virtually from March 1-6, 2021. All this amazing information will be available to you in the comfort of your own home. Early registration is only \$35 dollars for families and paraprofessionals through January 7, 2021. This conference has information for everybody! You do not want to miss this! Consider asking the paraprofessional working with your child to attend topics of interest. Visit <https://www.nationaldb.org/updates/2021-texas-deafblind-education-symposium/> for more information.

## Easy & Fun Holiday Activities

[Get a Braille letter from Santa](#)

[Virtual Hanukkah and Kwanzaa events at the Aquarium of the Pacific](#) (closed captioning available)

[Listen to Goodman Theatre's A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens](#)

[Book and Activity Ideas for the Holidays](#)

**Chicagoland Holiday Lights Displays**

[Christmas Around the World & Holiday of Lights at the Museum of Science & Industry, Virtual Live Tour](#)

[CTA Holiday Train & Bus](#)

[Holiday Lights in Lilacia Park, Lombard](#)

[Aurora Festival of Lights](#)

[Naperville Lights, Naperville](#)

[Waterman Holiday Lights Display](#)

**Northwestern Illinois Holiday Lights Displays**

[Festival of Lights 2020, Rockford](#)

[Holiday Lights at Fejervary Learning Center, Quad-Cities](#)

**Central Illinois Holiday Lights Displays**

[Celebration of Lights, LaSalle](#)

[Downs Dooley Park Holiday Wonderland, Bloomington-Normal area](#)

[Candlestick Lane, Urbana](#)

[Light Up McFerren Park, Hoopeston \(Danville area\)](#)

[Lightworks 2020, Mattoon](#)

[Shelbyville Festival of Lights](#)

[Wonderland in Lights, Effingham](#)

**Southern Illinois Holiday Lights Displays**

[Christmas Wonderland, Alton](#)

[Anheuser-Busch Brewery Lights Drive-Thru Experience, St. Louis](#)

[Festival of Lights, St. Louis](#)

[Candy Cane Lane, St. Louis](#)

[Way of Lights, Belleville](#)

[Lebanon's Winter Wonderland](#)

[Gumdrop Drive, Anna](#)

[Tour of Lights, Macomb](#)

**Holiday Fun, OT, Dinner, and Dessert all in one!** The following food activities are practical OT exercises that address crossing midline, cutting, fine motor control, grasp, pincer grasp, self-help (feeding), sensory processing, social interaction, and tactile perception. For baking ideas check out

- [Pull-Apart Wreath](#) or [Christmas Tree](#) (substitute any store-bought or ready-made fresh or frozen pizza dough or tube of crescent roll dough; use either fresh or dried herbs). Add decorations of your choice such as sliced olives, vegetables, pepperoni, pineapple, anything you would put on pizza.
- [No Bake Cookie Christmas Trees](#), [Christmas Tree Sandwich Cookies](#) (or use ready to bake shape dough), decorated sugar cookies (ready-made refrigerated cookie dough, a can of frosting, cookies cutters, and your choice of sprinkles and decorations); Gingerbread House (just make & eat with prebaked kit)
- [Edible Dreidel](#)

## Wanted: CHARGE Syndrome Family Liaison

The CHARGE Syndrome Foundation (<https://www.chargesyndrome.org/>) is looking for an Illinois parent to be the family liaison to the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation for our state. Family liaisons share CHARGE resources with state deafblind projects and families; help identify new families; update the foundation on available state resources; and promote connections among families. **Interested in becoming a liaison or finding out more information?** Contact Minnie Lambert at [minnie@chargesyndrome.org](mailto:minnie@chargesyndrome.org).

## Upcoming Events

- **January/February 2021 – Project Reach Family Directory** letter and response form will be arriving in your mailbox. Please look for it and respond!
- **January 21 , 7 pm**– Project Reach Communication Matrix training: An introductory, interactive training on a free, online communication assessment parents can use with their children for whom speech and sign do not meet their needs. Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcsd--hrDsuHNavcLEKuaLdLipPaoWLfxI>
- **March / April 2021 - Texas Deafblind Education Symposium** – TSBVI and others are partnering to offer this amazing virtual event. The Symposium will offer over 20 hours of content in March and April featuring international Deafblind Specialists. Information at: <https://www.tsbvi.edu/texassymposium-on-deafblindness>.
- **Summer 2021 - The 4th Annual Midwest Deafblind Transition Institute** - A chance for young adults ages 16 - 21 to connect virtually, have fun and plan for future opportunities.



Office of Special Education Programs  
U.S. Department of Education

Services of Project Reach are provided under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education #H326T180012. However, materials do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Louise Tripoli.

### Please return the following information to Philip J. Rock Center and School

\_\_\_\_\_ Please make no changes to my address and keep me on your mailing list

\_\_\_\_\_ Please take my name off the mailing list.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please mail me a large print edition of the newsletter.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please mail me a Braille edition of the newsletter.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please make the following changes on my mailing address label:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent? \_\_\_\_\_ Educator? \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

***Project Reach  
Philip J. Rock Center and School  
818 DuPage Blvd.  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137***