

Comparison of Possible Supports for Students Who Are DeafBlind

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An intervener, paraprofessional, and/or interpreter can play a critical role in meeting the educational needs of a student who is DeafBlind. Every student who is DeafBlind has unique needs, so supports necessary to provide access will vary from student to student. Think about the student's support needs. Do they change in different environments? If so, the level of support necessary could vary across environments. Below, each position is briefly described. The table on the second page outlines the student support needs that might be satisfied by each one.

The team may want to reference "[Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student with Deaf-Blindness? An IEP Discussion Guide](#)," available through the National Center on Deaf-Blindness.

Definitions

Intervener

A person who has specialized training in deafblindness; provides 1:1 support to a student who is DeafBlind by facilitating communication, language, and concept development, providing access to auditory and visual information.

Paraprofessional

A person who may have some training for specific job duties; provides support in a small group or 1:1 capacity; may be assigned to a student or a classroom.

Interpreter

A person who is trained to interpret English to American Sign Language (or another manual system) and ASL to English; may have training to accommodate for vision loss/deafblindness; may serve as a language model for the student.

Characteristics of Students Who Might Benefit from Interveners, Paraprofessionals, and Interpreters

Interveners	Paraprofessionals	Interpreters
Student has both a vision and a hearing loss, necessitating specialized one-on-one support to participate in/provide access to activities, instructional and non-instructional, on and off site.	Student functions well in small groups, may occasionally require 1:1 assistance.	Student requires translation of information, from one language to another. The student is able to process the information and determine key points with minimal support.
Student support needs necessitate ready accommodations by a person trained in deafblindness in order to participate.	Student support needs can be met by someone with basic training in deafblindness.	Student requires the skill level of a nationally or state certified interpreter, who can provide appropriate accommodations for access (e.g. restricted field, tactile).
Student requires support for communication, language, interactions, concept development, curricular modifications, sensory losses, etc.	Student requires only minimal adaptations of classroom materials that can easily be accommodated by the team.	Student is able to access interpreted information independently, and is able to seek information or clarification as needed independently.
Student requires support to connect with and interact with others.	Student requires only minimal support when interacting with peers and others.	Student interacts independently, with the support of an interpreter, as needed.
Student needs prompts and individualized support to attend/participate.	Student requires occasional prompts and support to attend/participate.	Student is able to attend for long periods of time with little to no redirection.
Student performance is significantly improved by support provided by a consistent, trusted person.	Student interacts with and performs comparably with a variety of people.	Student performance is typically not impacted by presence or absence of specific people.
Student requires support to enhance her/his independence.	Student requires occasional support/prompts to work independently.	Student is able to function independently, and makes independent decisions without prompts.

References: 1. *“What is My Role?” A Comparison of the Responsibilities of Interpreters, Interveners, and Support Service Providers* (Susanne Morgan, MA, CI, CT). 2. Alsop, L., Robinson, C., Goehl, K., Lace, J., Belote, M., & Rodriguez-Gil, G. (2007). *Interveners in the classroom: Guidelines for teams working with students who are deafblind*. Logan, UT: SKI-HI Institute.

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