

CDBS Refunded: The Next Five Years

by Maurice Belote, Project Coordinator

We are very pleased to announce that California Deaf-Blind Services has been refunded for a five-year cycle by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

The CDBS proposal for the 2003–2008 funding cycle will include the following key activities and initiatives. We believe these activities and initiatives represent an innovative approach to meeting the needs of children who are deaf-blind, their families and service providers, and create a CDBS service delivery system that is as comprehensive as possible considering limited resources in a state as large and diverse as ours.

- ❖ On-going support and expansion of the CDBS Network of Family Service Providers, including support and training for local Family Resource Centers;
- ❖ Training for one-on-one paraprofessionals (interveners) serving children who are deaf-blind, including a training of trainers component to support paraprofessionals in the future;

- ❖ On-going staff training for two key agencies in the state that provide direct early intervention services to infants and toddlers who are deaf-blind;
- ❖ Coordinated and comprehensive training at targeted California State University campuses for individuals earning special education teaching/specialist credentials;
- ❖ Annual regional training conducted in Spanish for Spanish speaking families on a broad range of topics related to deaf-blindness;
- ❖ Technical assistance delivered on-site, by telephone and via the Internet based on identified local needs and CDBS staff availability and resources;
- ❖ Collaborative post-assessment technical assistance for children assessed by the California School for the Blind Assessment Center;
- ❖ Technical assistance for targeted districts and county offices of education to support efforts to accurately and thoroughly identify children who have both hearing and vision problems;
- ❖ Electronic distribution of English and Spanish editions of the respected CDBS quarterly publication *reSources*;
- ❖ Improvements to the CDBS website to increase accessibility in multiple languages;
- ❖ Streamlined process for collection of the annual census of children who are deaf-blind including electronic distribution of materials and forms.

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The staff of CDBS extends its thanks to the following individuals who wrote letters in support of the CDBS grant application. Letters of support are a very important component of a successful grant application—they demonstrate the project's impact on children throughout the state and document many years of collaborative activities.

Linda Alsop, Director of Deafblind Programs, SKI•HI Institute

Dr. Tanni Anthony, Project Director, Colorado Project for Children with Deaf-Blindness

Shawn Barnard, Technical Assistance Specialist, National Technical Assistance Consortium

Shelley Barron, Staff Development Coordinator, Project NEEDS, San Diego City Schools

Teresa Becerra, parent and member of the CDBS Network of Family Support Providers, Los Angeles

Julie Bernas-Pierce, Program Director, Blind Babies Foundation

Nancy Cornelius, Training Manager, Exceptional Family Resource Center and member of the CDBS Network of Family Support Providers, San Diego

Dr. MaryAnn Demchak, Project Director, Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project

Dr. June Downing, Professor, California State University, Northridge

Laura Fogg, Orientation and Mobility Instructor/Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Mendocino County Office of Education

Josie Garro, parent and member of the CDBS Network of Family Support Providers, Chino (San Bernardino County)

Virginia Gibson, Early Start Teacher, Los Angeles County Office of Education

Mary Goldman, Director, Infant-Family Program, Foundation for the Junior Blind

Kathryn Goodspeed, Early Childhood Coordinator/Assistant Executive Director, Blind Children's Learning Center

Dr. Robin Greenfield, Project Director, Idaho Project for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness

Wendy Keedy, parent and member of the CDBS Network of Family Support Providers, Riverside

Cathy Kirscher, Regional Representative, Helen Keller National Center

Agnes Lopez, Infant Specialist, Bakersfield City School District

Dr. Dennis Kelleher, Special Education Consultant, California Department of Education

Cathy Mouchka, consumer, Sacramento

Tom Neary, Program Specialist, Sacramento County Office of Education

John Reiman, Project Director, DB-LINK (National Information Clearinghouse On Children Who Are Deaf-Blind)

Virginia Reynolds, Program Director, California Early Intervention Technical Assistance Network

Dr. Sandra Rosen, Professor, Coordinator of Program in Orientation and Mobility, San Francisco State University

Dr. Sharon Zell Sacks, Professor and Program Coordinator, Teacher Preparation Programs in Visual Impairment, California State University, Los Angeles

Michael and Laurie Schwartz, parents, Ventura

Bethany Stark, parent and member of the CDBS Network of Family Support Providers, Pacific Palisades (Los Angeles County)

Sandra Suitor, parent and member of the CDBS Network of Family Support Providers, Sacramento

Joanne Whitson, Project Director, Wyoming Deaf-Blind Project

Dr. Stuart Wittenstein, Superintendent, California School for the Blind



CDBS Announces the New Intervener Training Initiative

by Maurice Belote, Project Coordinator

There are a number of important training initiatives that California Deaf-Blind Services (CDBS) will implement during the new five-year funding cycle. Among these is the Intervener Training Initiative that will include two key activities:

- ❖ Training for interveners throughout California who are serving specific children who are deaf-blind
- ❖ Training local and regional trainers who can offer on-going training as staff changes, new students enter programs, etc.

This training initiative addresses a need that has been identified by families, teachers, and administrators throughout California. Intervenors provide a vital service to many infants, children, and young adults who are deaf-blind, and we believe that student outcomes will improve if intervenors are provided comprehensive training and support.

This initiative is linked to the activities of the National Intervener Task Force, and CDBS staff will collaborate with others throughout the U.S. who are also addressing intervener issues. Training plans developed will reflect the Task Force's *Recommendations on the Training of Intervenors for Early Intervention and Educational Settings* and training content will reflect the Task Force's *Competence for Training Intervenors to Work With Children/Students With Deafblindness*.

The following questions and answers should help to clarify the specifics of this initiative and provide a rationale for its inclusion in the new CDBS service delivery model.

What is an intervener?

CDBS is using the term intervener so that we can align our initiative with other national activities, but in California the position is usually called something else, such as one-on-one aide, paraprofessional, paraeducator, classroom assistant, etc. An intervener is assigned to work primarily with one child who is identified as having both hearing and vision problems. The intervener is trained to bring the world of ideas, experiences, and language to the child and, conversely, to bring the child to the world of ideas, experiences and language that surrounds him or her.

The role of the intervener is to:

- ❖ Facilitate access of environmental information usually gained through vision and hearing, but which is unavailable or incomplete to the individual who is deafblind;
- ❖ Facilitate the development and/or use of receptive and expressive communication skills by the individual who is deaf-blind;
- ❖ Develop and maintain a trusting, interactive relationship that promotes social and emotional well-being (see NTAC briefing paper by Alsop, Blaha, and Kloos below).

How will the training be conducted?

CDBS field staff is currently conducting interviews and focus groups with intervenors and educational teams throughout California. The goal of these interviews and focus groups is to find out what is working and what is needed. In addition, CDBS wants to know how and why these intervenors and teams are effective so that we can disseminate this information to other sites around the state that might benefit from this knowledge and experience.

Based on all of the information we gather, CDBS staff will assemble training materials, develop local and regional training plans, conduct training activities, and set up systems for on-going support. As part of this initiative, CDBS will set up a way for intervenors throughout the state to communicate with one another for the purposes of information and strategy sharing. We know that being in the role of an intervener can be isolating—team members may not have a clear idea of what the intervener does and doesn't do, and many intervenors do not ever have contact with other intervenors with whom they can share encouragement and support.

Why is CDBS training trainers?

It is not enough to simply train intervenors who are currently serving children who are deaf-blind. Local educational agencies—whether school districts, county offices of education, or non-public schools—need systems

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Meet the CDBS Staff

Maurice Belote – Project Coordinator

Maurice came to CDBS in 1992 and has served as an Educational Specialist and Project Coordinator since that time. Prior to CDBS, he taught for many years at the California School for the Blind and for school districts and non-public schools around the state. Maurice is particularly passionate about communication issues; his dream is that every child who is deaf-blind will have an effective receptive and expressive communication system.



Barbara Franklin, Ph.D. – Principal Investigator



Barbara is a Professor in the Department of Special Education at San Francisco State University, and is also a state-licensed and ASHA-certified clinical audiologist. Over her 34-year tenure at SFSU she has served as coordinator of teacher training programs in deaf-blindness (1970–1982) and deaf/hard of hearing (1993–2001). Barbara has been the recipient of numerous grants related to research, training, and personnel preparation.

Lori Goetz, Ph.D. – Project Director

Lori is a Professor of Special Education at San Francisco State University where she co-directs the teaching credential program in moderate/severe disabilities. She is also co-director of the California Research Institute



which is composed of research, technical assistance, and personnel preparation projects. Lori's writings and research projects have added a tremendous amount of knowledge to the field of deaf-blindness.

Jackie Kenley – Family Specialist



Jackie first joined the CDBS staff in 1996 as an office assistant. Her daughter Laura had been served by the project for years. Jackie decided it would be helpful to be a part of the organization when the CDBS northern office relocated to San Francisco State University. After four years as an office assistant, Jackie became a CDBS Family Specialist. She is very interested in the issues surrounding transition to adult services as that is what is in the near future for Laura. Jackie loves to sing (her former occupation), coordinate COPE D-B events, talk to other parents, and share dreams about our kids' futures.

Meet the CDBS Staff

Gloria Rodríguez-Gil – Educational Specialist

Gloria has served as a bilingual English-Spanish Educational Specialist with CDBS since 1998. Her main interest is to improve the quality of education and life of children who are deaf-blind by providing training and technical assistance to families and service providers, both nationally and internationally.



Myrna Medina – Family Specialist

Myrna has been working for CDBS for the past four years as a Family Specialist. She is a native of Mexico and has lived in Southern California for the past 19 years. She is the mother of two children—nine-year old Deloris and seven-year old Norman. Norman is a beautiful and happy boy who is deaf-blind. He has taught Myrna many things in life, and is the reason she became a Family Specialist.



David Brown – Educational Specialist



David joined CDBS in August 2000 after working for almost 18 years with Sense (the National Deafblind Association) in London, England. As a British Early Years specialist, he has found the Californian context, the transition to a birth to age 22 caseload, and the public transport system both challenging and exciting (and also very tiring!). In this new grant cycle David, the recipient of a new three-year visa, looks forward to a greater emphasis on one of his great enthusiasms—staff training and professional development.

Rebecca has been the I.T. Specialist at CDBS since 1997, after working two years on other special education projects at San Francisco State University. With 20 years of computer experience and a passion for the Macintosh computing platform, Rebecca stays on the cutting edge of high tech and brings her enthusiasm to CDBS by way of user training, hardware and software updates, network administration, website maintenance, database management, and desktop publishing. She maintains the California deaf-blind census, produces *reSources*, fact sheets, flyers and presentation materials, and currently is working on a complete re-vamp of the CDBS website. Rebecca believes that tools, be they high tech or low, are all about empowerment.

Rebecca Randall – Information Technology Specialist



Intervener Training Initiative (from page 3)

for training interveners in the future. New interveners will always be needed due to staff turnover, additions to services through IEP processes, and new students moving into programs. The goal of this initiative is to provide systems for on-going training so that services to individual children are consistent and of the highest quality regardless of changes in personnel, transitions from one program to another, etc.

Who qualifies for training? Intervenors must be serving children who meet the following functional definition of deaf-blindness used by CDBS to assess eligibility for CDBS services:

If an individual (birth through age 21) has combined hearing and vision problems that are significant enough to require considerations (such as specialized adaptations, modifications, and strategies) when presenting information or interacting with the child, then that child, along with family members and service providers, is eligible to receive services from California Deaf-Blind Services.

For more information about interveners:

The Winter 2002 issue of *reSources* is devoted entirely to the issue of interveners, and can be downloaded at: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~cadbs/News.html>

The NTAC briefing paper, *The Intervener in Early Intervention and Educational Settings for Children and Youth with Deafblindness* by Linda Alsop, Robbie Blaha, and Eric Kloos can be downloaded from: <http://www.tr.wou.edu/ntac/publications.htm>

For more information about this training initiative, contact Maurice Belote at mbelote.pacbell.net or at 800-822-7884 ext. 23 (voice/TTY).



Mark your 2004 calendar for these family events!

Saturday, May 22, 2004

Comunicación Táctil para Niños con Discapacidad Múltiple y/o Sordoceguera (Tactile Communication for Children with Multiple Disabilities and/or Deaf-Blindness) — in collaboration with Project SALUTE, California State University, Northridge (Los Angeles)

Summer Picnics sponsored by COPE-DB (Coalition of Parents and Educators Deaf-Blind) — in collaboration with CDBS and local sponsors:

Saturday, June 19, 2004
Earle Baum Center of the Blind
Santa Rosa (Sonoma County)

Saturday, August 28, 2004
Foundation for the Junior Blind
Los Angeles

Saturday, September 18 or 25, 2004
Central California/San Joaquín Valley
(date and location specifics
to be announced soon)

The Network of Family Support Providers

One of the key features of the CDBS service delivery model is the Network of Family Support Providers. Family Support Providers are volunteers who provide family-to-family support by telephone or email through their local Family Resource Centers' support network. CDBS supports the members of the network throughout the year with resources and semi-annual meetings and workshops. CDBS also supports the Family Resource Centers that host our network members by providing training to Family Resource Center staff on issues related to deaf-blindness.

Each Family Support Provider is the parent of a child who has both vision and hearing problems. In addition, they have all received training in family support and communication skills. Some of the Network members have moved beyond their role of Family Support Providers and have also joined the paid staff of related organizations and advocacy groups that serve with individuals with hearing and vision problems and their families.

CDBS is looking for individuals to join the Network of Family Support Providers, particularly at Family Resource Centers that do not yet have family members of children who are deaf-blind in their family-to-family support networks. If you are from one of these regions of the state, you may be hearing from Myrna or Jackie with an invitation to join this vital group.

Network Members

Jackie Kenley and Myrna Medina
CDBS Family Specialists and
Co-Coordinator of the
Network of Family Support Providers

Martha Alvares, Madera

Teresa Becerra, North Hills (Los Angeles County)

Nancy Cornelius, San Diego

Martha De La Torre, Long Beach

Casey Fisher, Cobb (Lake County)

Patricia Frias, Petaluma (Sonoma County)

Josie Garro, Chino (San Bernardino County)

Faye Groelz, San Jose

Michele Hatfield, Bakersfield

Wendy Keedy, Riverside

Sandy Lockett, Rancho Santa Margarita
(Orange County)

Anita Malani, Fremont (Alameda County)

Alba Marquez, Los Angeles

Herlinda Rodriguez, Downey (Los Angeles County)

Stacey Rogers, Oakland

Bethany Stark, Pacific Palisades
(Los Angeles County)

Sandra Suito, Sacramento

Pearl Veasart, Los Osos (San Luis Obispo County)

California Deaf-Blind Services

reSources

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