What is Dual Sensory Impairment, or Deafblindness?

Individuals with combined vision and hearing loss do not have access to full information from their distance senses of seeing and listening. This combination can make it difficult to understand what is happening in the environment, to learn concepts and daily routines, to access the educational setting, and to build trusting relationships with others.

Individuals with combined vision and hearing loss rely on a unique combination of touch, smell, movement, and any residual vision and hearing to learn and truly connect with their world. Thoughtful use of specialized techniques throughout the individual’s day will create meaningful access and lead to rich learning opportunities.

Contact VSAP

To request Project assistance complete a Referral Form at www.uvm.edu/~cdci/iteam or Contact Emma Nelson Project Coordinator: emma.nelson.1@uvm.edu

In collaboration with the Vermont I-Team &

Vermont Sensory Access Project

VSAP serves children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss or deafblindness and their families through...

Training and Information
Family Support
Assistance to Education &
Early Intervention Teams

Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Special Education Programs, under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), assisting State Education Agencies in developing their capacity to adequately serve children who are deafblind.

2016
How Our Project Can Help

• Assist local teams in identifying children birth to twenty one with combined vision and hearing loss (deafblind).
• Onsite and distance collaborative consultation.
• Provide support and networking opportunities for families, which can include one-to-one contact, home or school visits, and web-based support.
• Workshops and in-service training to teams and families in the areas of transition planning, IEP development and implementation, Sensory Access/Deafblindness, interveners, and access to the grade level general education curriculum.

How to Identify and Refer Children and Youth:

• Advocate for accurate and current assessment of vision and hearing for all children and youth with intensive special needs.
• Help identify and report to the project children who have combined vision and hearing loss.
• Share information with others about VSAP.
• Visit the VSAP website for more information about eligibility and project services.

To Learn More

Vermont Sensory Access Project (VSAP): www.uvm.edu/~cdci/db/

NCDB: National Consortium on DB http://nationaldb.org/

Helen Keller National Center http://www.hknc.org/

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind http://nfadb.org/

New England Consortium of Deafblind Projects: http://www.nec4db.org/

VSAP Personnel:

- Susan Edelman, Ed.D., PT, Project Director. Over 35 years experience in Special Education, focusing on sensory access, Dual Sensory Impairments and Cortical Visual Impairment. Email: susan.edelman@uvm.edu
- Emma Nelson, MS Ed, Project Coordinator. Certified Early Childhood Special Educator with specialty in Deafblindness and Cortical Visual Impairment. Email: emma.nelson.1@uvm.edu
- Barbara Miles, Deafblindness Educational Consultant. Over 35 years experience in the field of deafblindness, editor/author of Remarkable Conversations. Email: barbara.miles@uvm.edu

Family Resource Consultants:

- Jolene Blanchard (Northwest VT) Has 23 years experience parenting a daughter who had deaf blindness and high tech medical needs. Email: jolene.blanchard@uvm.edu
- Donna Gillen (Southern VT) Over 14 years experience with I-Team and 7 with Vermont Children’s Integrated Services (formerly Family, Infant and Toddler) Email: donna.gillen@uvm.edu
- Paula Manzi (Northeastern VT) Over 17 years experience with I-Team. For several years Paula was the Family Support Consultant through Parent to Parent of Vermont for the Northeast Kingdom. Email: paula.manzi@uvm.edu
- Tammy Willey (Central VT) started with the project in 2009 after 10 years of community service, including Special Olympics and Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. Email: tammy.willey@uvm.edu