



Newsletter

Vol. 12, No. 3

March 2002

The Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project aims to enhance the educational services provided to all children and youth, birth through 21 years, who have dual sensory impairments by providing technical assistance to families and involved agencies.

Providing Cues to Enhance Expressive Communication

By MaryAnn Demchak, Charmaine Rickard & Marty Elquist

Purpose of this Article

The purpose of this article is to provide you information on:

- The different functions, or purposes, of expressive communication
- The different forms, or ways, of expressing messages
- Strategies to enhance expressive communication of children with severe, multiple disabilities.

What is Communication?

Communication is made up of two parts: receptive and expressive communication. **Receptive** communication is what a listener receives from a communication partner and understands. Providing cues to enhance receptive communication was the topic of our last newsletter. (Refer to the contact information on the bottom of page 2 to receive past editions of our newsletter.) **Expressive** communication is what one person tries to convey to another by gesturing, speaking, writing, or signing. Meaning can be added to expressive communication by using specific body language or vocal inflection.

What Is Expressive Communication?

Expressive communication involves a message one person tries to convey to another by gesturing, speaking, writing, or signing. Meaning can be added by using specific body language or vocal inflection. Expressive communication evolves from basic expressions to more complex social expressions as individuals develop.

Early Functions of Expressive Communication

- To protest or to reject
 - "I don't like that!"
 - "Stop!"
- To request continuation
 - "I want more to eat."
 - "More bouncing!"
- To make a choice
 - "I want a drink." (not more to eat)
 - "I want that toy." (not the other one)

Later Functions of Expressive Communication

- To greet others or to make social comments
 - "Hi!" "Bye!" "Thank you."
- To make offers
 - "Would you like some?"
- To provide comments
 - "The table is dirty."
- To reply to another's comment
 - "Okay."
- To get more information
 - "Where are we going?"
 - "What's next?"

Communicative Behaviors

It is very important to remember that a positive, nurturing relationship with the communication partner is essential to encourage communication. Negative relationships can be barriers to meaningful interactions and the development of both receptive and expressive communication.

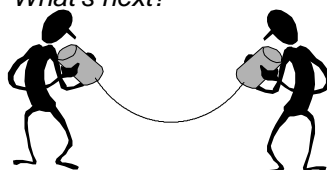
It is also important to remember that children with multiple disabilities communicate in ways that can be hard to recognize and understand. A child communicates in many ways prior to using formal communication, including behaviors often times referred to as challenging or unwanted. We must first recognize these early (pre-symbolic) forms in order to build up to concrete symbolic and ultimately abstract symbolic forms of communication.

- Pre-symbolic: (These behaviors might not initially be used intentionally as communication.)
 - Vocalizations
 - Body and limb movements
 - Simple actions on people
 - Simple actions on objects
- Concrete Symbolic:
 - Symbolic gestures and vocalizations
 - Tangible symbols—
 - Objects (three-dimensional)
 - Pictures (two-dimensional)
 (Tangible symbols are iconic, permanent, manipulable, and can be indicated through a simple motor response.)
- Abstract Symbolic:
 - Speech
 - Sign language

Cues continued on page 2

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Cues continued from page 1

- Printed language
- Braille
- Abstract shapes
- Abstract graphics

(This article focuses on cues in pre-symbolic and concrete symbolic forms of communication. Therefore, abstract symbolic forms of communication will not be discussed in further detail.)

Enhancing Pre-symbolic Communication

In order to enhance pre-symbolic communication it is essential to use activities that are preferred by and motivating to the child.

- Teach requesting "more"
 - Play turn taking and "contingency" games
 - Wait and observe for subtle child responses
 - Resume the activity when the child produces the specific behavior
- Initiating rejection
 - Provide an opportunity to reject something that is disliked
 - Present the disliked food, object, or activity
 - As soon as the child produces a negative behavior (turning away, grimacing), say "Okay, you don't like _____. No more _____."
 - Follow this procedure only a few times in a 2-week period
 - Avoid causing frustration or anger
 - Do not use this procedure with required activities (e.g., taking medicine)
 - Acknowledge the child's discomfort

- Increasing initiations
 - Use a pleasurable, predictable activity
 - Present the cues leading up to the activity
 - Briefly delay the activity (up to 2 or 3 minutes) and wait expectantly (stay close)
 - Observe the child carefully
 - Respond to any behavior interpreted as a request for the activity
- Intentional Attention Getting
 - After a child learns to request "more," set up the activity, but delay the start
 - Engage in another activity somewhat removed from the child (but close enough to hear and see child's response)
 - When the child engages in a signal behavior (vocalizing, banging), respond immediately.

Problem Behaviors

When addressing problem behaviors remember that ALL behavior can be communicative. Behavior does not have to be intentional to be communicative and understanding communicative messages can be complex.

- Four Primary Communicative Messages
 - Tangibles
 - "I want _____." (thing/event)
 - Attention
 - "I want _____." (attention/interactions)
 - Escape/Avoidance
 - "I don't want _____."
 - "I want to take a break now."
 - Sensory Motivated
 - "I'm bored."
 - "I'm stressed/anxious."

- Viewing Problem Behaviors as Communication
 - Look for hidden communication messages in problem behaviors
 - Teach alternative communication responses
 - Teach a better way to communicate the same message
 - The alternative way should be as easy and as effective as the problem behavior

Enhancing Concrete Symbolic Communication

When is a child ready for object symbols? If the child does not use pre-symbolic behaviors **intentionally** and **reliably**, continue to teach those behaviors. The child must understand that he/she can control another's behavior through pre-symbolic means.

When the child has **intentional** fine or gross motor behavior that can be used to indicate a symbol (e.g., pointing, picking up, eye pointing, touching), he/she is ready to build upon pre-symbolic communication to a more concrete level. Do not expect the child to immediately use all concrete forms of communication for all behaviors. Many behaviors may remain at the pre-symbolic level, while others are at the concrete level. If the child can already use a more abstract symbol reliably, do not ask him/her to use a lower level of communication.

There are several other points to keep in mind when enhancing concrete symbolic communication:

- Identify highly motivating activities that occur frequently and regularly

Cues continued on page 3



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For past editions of our newsletter, visit our website.

<http://www.unr.edu/educ/ndsip>



This project is supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the U.S. Department of Education.

- Be prepared to identify new motivating activities/materials
- Ensure that you are perceived as a valuable communication partner
- Select an “indicating” response that the child can make easily and that is clear to communication partners
 - *Pointing, touching, picking up and giving, eye pointing*
- Be sure the child’s communication partners know the child’s indicating response
- Strategies to encourage expressive communication:
 - Make desired items inaccessible
 - Have items in view but out of reach
 - Use materials that the child will need help to use
 - Provide only a small amount of the desired item
 - Provide a short turn at an activity
 - Use interesting, motivating materials and activities
 - Ensure that the object symbols are continuously available to the child
 - Provide choices whenever possible

Teaching Choice Making

1. Select choice options based on the child’s “likes”
2. Identify and define a choice response
3. Choose routine activities in which to present choice pairs
4. Provide an opportunity for the child to experience each option
5. Offer the choice options and direct scanning or looking
6. Ask “Do you want ___ or ___?” or “Which one do you want?”
7. Wait 5 to 10 seconds for a response
8. Respond immediately if an independent choice response occurs
9. Prompt the choice response if an independent response does NOT occur
10. If the child refuses an option, take the choices away. Do not force a choice.
11. Repeat the steps for another choice opportunity.
12. Continue as long as child is receptive
13. Vary the positions on each trial.

Checking the Understanding of Object Symbols

When a child is using concrete object symbols for communication, it is important to ensure that the symbol is comprehended and not just viewed as some-

thing that you give that results in something positive happening. For example, we want the child to understand that when she hands a communication partner a card with a pretzel glued to it that she will receive the bag of pretzels. We want to teach the 1:1 correspondence between the symbol (i.e., the card with the pretzel on it) and its referent (i.e., the bag of pretzels). That is, we want the child to understand that the object symbol of the pretzel on the card represents only pretzels and not just any snack. There are two basic ways that you can check for comprehension or understanding of object symbols:

1. Objects first, then symbols
 - Offer a choice of objects
 - After the learner indicates the object he wants, offer a choice of symbols for the same objects
 - If the learner chooses the symbol that corresponds to the chosen object, this shows comprehension and not random choice
 - If the learner chooses wrong symbol, do not give chosen object
 - Show the correct symbol and set up new choice
 2. Symbols first, then objects
 - Offer a choice of symbols
 - After the learner indicates the symbol he wants, offer a choice of objects for the same symbols
 - If the learner chooses the object that corresponds to the chosen symbol, this shows comprehension and not random choice
 - If the learner chooses wrong object, do not give it to him
 - Show the correct object and set up a new choice
- Continue comprehension checks until it is clear the child understands the meaning of the symbol
 - Eliminate comprehension checks when understanding is clear
 - Comprehension checks can continue for new symbols

Regardless of whether the child is at the pre-symbolic or concrete symbolic level of communication, it is always important to think about “what’s next?” There can be an emphasis on both expanding at the current level (e.g., incorporating new functions or new vocabulary) as well as moving to the next level (e.g., moving from pre-symbolic to concrete symbolic communication).

Where do we go from here?

- Expand the child’s vocabulary
- If the child uses a display, increase size of display
- Target generalization of the child’s communication behaviors to new communication partners or new settings
- Target new communicative functions
 - Encourage social responses (greetings, please, thank you)
 - Encourage comments
- Encourage the child to use multi-symbol utterances
- Change the type of symbol the child is using (e.g., move to a more abstract symbol)

Encouraging Consistency

As the child’s expressive communication system is being developed, it is important to document how the child communicates (e.g., using pre-symbolic behaviors, object symbols) as well as what the child’s communicative behaviors mean. For example, when the child turns his head away, that means “no more” or vocalizing “mmmm” means “I want more.” Similarly, the object symbols used by the child should be listed and their corresponding meaning specified.

It is important that everyone who interacts with the child understands the child’s expressive communication system. Documenting the child’s communication in this manner is sometimes referred to as a “communication dictionary.” As the child’s system is expanded using the strategies discussed above, it is important to modify the child’s communication dictionary by adding new information to it and deleting any information no longer relevant.

The educational team invests much time and effort into developing and expanding the child’s communication system. Too often, this information is not documented in any way and is then lost when the child moves on to a new teacher or educational setting. Thus, creating confusing and frustrating interactions for both the child and the new team members. Creating a communication dictionary is a simple way of documenting a child’s pre-symbolic and concrete symbolic expressive communication to make the child’s transition to a new teacher more successful.

References & Resources on Page 4

References

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- Demchak, M., & Bossert, K. (1996). Assessing problem behaviors. *Innovations*, 13. Washington, DC: American Association on Mental Retardation.
- Demchak, M., & Elquist, M. (2001). "Could you please tell my new teacher? A parent/teacher guide to successful transitions. Reno, NV: University of Nevada, Reno.
- Klein, D. M., Chen, D., & Haney, M. (2000). *Promoting learning through active interaction: A guide to early communication with young children who have multiple disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Rowland, C., & Schweigert, P., (2000). *Tangible symbol systems. Making the right to communicate a reality for individuals with severe disabilities*. Portland, OR: Oregon Health Sciences University.

Additional Resources

Books

- Huebner, K. M, Prickett, J. G, Welch, T. R, & Joffee, E. (Eds.) (1995). Hand in Hand: Selected reprints and annotated bibliography on working with students who are deaf-blind. New York, NY: AFB Press.
- A collection of 27 journal articles on the topics of communication, orientation and mobility, functional skills, implications of various etiologies, and instructional strategies and intervention issues, accompanied by a description of more than 160 important print and audiovisual resources and information on how to obtain them.
- Huebner, K. M, Prickett, J. G, Welch, T. R, & Joffee, E. (Eds.) (1995). Hand in Hand: Essentials of communication and orientation and mobility for your students who are deaf-blind, (Volume I & II). New York, NY: AFB Press.
- This two-volume series explains how students who are deaf-blind learn. It also focuses on essential communication and mobility skills. Includes self-study questions and answers, resources, and references. Has accompanying **CLOSED CAPTIONED VIDEO**.

Miles, B., & Riggio, M. (Eds.) (1999). Remarkable conversations: A guide to developing meaningful communication with children and young adults who are deafblind. Watertown, MA: Perkins School for the Blind.

This book addresses the needs of children of all abilities, from those who use nonlinguistic forms of communication such as objects and body movements to those who use linguistic forms such as sign language and writing.

Prickett, J. G, Joffee, E., Welch, T. R, & Huebner, K. M. (1995). Hand in Hand: A Training Guide. New York, NY: AFB Press.

An in-service training guide that gives structured information and suggestions for using the Hand in Hand material.

Bloom, Y. (1990). Object Symbols: A Communication Option. North Rocks, Australia: North Rocks Press.

Defines object symbols and the functions of communicative behavior. Provides a model for developing requesting behaviors using object symbols.

Creel, C. S. (1990). Expressive communication. Adapt-A-Strategy Booklet Series for Parents and Teachers of Infants/Young Children with Multiple Disabilities. Hattiesburg, MS: University of Mississippi.

This manual will discuss the early forms of communication that precede language (speech/manual signs).

Hussey-Gardner, B. (1988). Understanding my signals. Palo Alto, CA: VORT.

Warm and practical photo booklet to help parents of premature infants.

Korsten, J. E., Dunn, D. K., Foss, T. V., & Francke, M. K. (1989). Every move counts: Sensory-based communication techniques. (Video - 10 min.) Tucson, AZ: Therapy Skill Builders.

Provides teachers and parents with practical strategies to implement effective sensory-based communication for their students and children. Includes everything you need - assessments, intervention strategies, activities, record keeping forms, and carryover materials. Informational video included which presents the theory in action.

Matthews, J. (1990). Interaction and play. Adapt-A-Strategy Booklet Series for Parents and Teachers of Infants/Young Children with Multiple Disabilities. Hattiesburg, MS: University of Mississippi.

Throughout this booklet, strategies are listed to encourage interaction and play with your child. Interactions with people and objects are discussed.

The INSITE Model (1989). Logan, UT: SKI*HI Institute.

A two-volume manual containing the INSITE Curriculum for home-based programming for families of children who are deafblind & multi-sensory impaired. The first volume contains information for parent-advisors and the communication and hearing programs of the INSITE curriculum. The second volume contains the vision, cognition, and motor impairments program of the INSITE home visit curriculum.

A resource manual for understanding and interacting with infants, toddlers and preschool age children with deaf-blindness. (1995). Logan, UT: SKI*HI Institute.

This resource manual contains information and activities and is a training curriculum written specifically for nonprofessional people who work with infants and young children with deaf-blindness and other handicapping conditions.

Videos

Bringing Out the Best: Encouraging Expressive Communication in Children with Multiple Handicaps (1989).

Produced by The Oregon Research Institute Producer, Elizabeth Cooley. The video illustrates how to assess a child's current level of expressive ability, build on that ability, then gradually work toward more advanced communication. 24-minutes. Includes workbook.

Hand in Hand: Essentials of Communication and Orientation and Mobility for Your Students who are Deafblind. (60:00)

A one-hour introduction to working effectively with individuals who are deaf-blind. Designed as both an overview and a reinforcer of the self-study text, this video can be used as a whole or in sections for parents and regular educators, as well as in the community. Includes a discussion guide.

Additional Resources continued on Page 5

PLAI: Promoting Learning Through Active Interaction (Spanish Version Available!) (27:00)

This training video depicts real interactions between young children with multiple disabilities and their families in natural settings. It demonstrates to students, practicing professionals, and families the techniques and goals described throughout the PLAI program, such as understanding children's cues, identifying preferences, establishing predictable routines, establishing turn taking, and encouraging initiation.

Tangible Symbol Systems (2000) (75:00)

The techniques described in this video and accompanying manual may be appropriate for non-speaking individuals of all ages—including youngsters at home, children and youth at school and adults at home and work. The video and manual discuss the use of tangible symbols for communication throughout the day.

Upcoming Conferences

Community and School Awareness for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Marriott Hotel
Albuquerque, NM
April 12, 13, 14, 2002

Target Audience:

Parents, educators, support personnel, and interpreters who work with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind children and adults, and members of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind communities.

For more information:

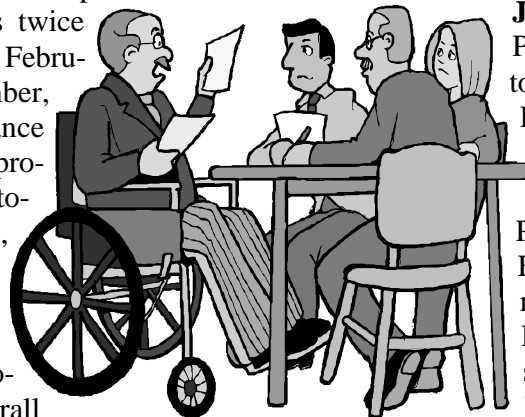
Educational Resource Center on Deafness
New Mexico School for the Deaf
1060 Cerrillos Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-827-6738
joyce.horvath@nmsd.k12.nm.us



For more Upcoming Conferences, please see page 6.

The Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project Advisory Committee

The Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project is required by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education to have an advisory committee to help ensure that the educational needs of children who are deafblind are being met. We feel that the committee is an essential component of the project, and has been providing valuable input and direction since the project's inception in 1990. The group meets twice a year, usually in February and September, to provide guidance and to assist the project with day-to-day activities, workshops and conferences, resource development, special projects and overall grant performance.



The group was selected to represent a broad range of agencies, schools, services, and individuals who are aware of the unique needs of individuals who are deafblind. The group was also selected to represent both rural and urban areas of Nevada, each contributing different perspectives about education and related services in our state.

We would like to thank the committee for their hard work and dedication to the Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project. The current Advisory Committee members include:

Kelleen Cross, Bureau of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired

Gloria Dopf, Director, Office of Special Education and Diversity Programs, Nevada Department of Education (member since program inception)

Peg Hellman, Clinic Manager, Special Children's Clinic, Reno (member

since program inception)

JoAnn Johnson, Director of the Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Research & Educational Planning Center, University of Nevada, Reno

Terry Johnston, Teacher of students with severe multiple disabilities, Carson City School District (member since program inception)

Janelle Mulvenon, Part C Administrator, Department of Human Resources, State of Nevada

Thomas Pierce, Professor, Special Education Department, College of Education, University of Nevada-Las Vegas

Charmaine Rickard, Early Intervention Supervisor, Special Children's Clinic, Reno

Ginger Sak, Teacher of students who are deafblind, Clark County School District

Donal Silvestri, Parent of a child who is deafblind

Mary Ellen Stephen, Program Manager, First Step Program, Las Vegas

Dennis Uken, Associate Professor, Speech Pathology & Audiology, University of Nevada, Reno (member since program inception)

Ken Vogel, Executive Director, Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (member since program inception)

Karen Watson, Director of Special Education, Lyon County School District

Fred Woodard, Advocate for parents of children and for children who are deafblind

Upcoming Conferences

Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project **10th Annual Parent Conference** May 2 & 3, 2002 University Inn University of Nevada, Reno

Potential Sessions include:

- Communication strategies
- Coping/Stress management
- Wills & guardianships
- Developing play in children
- Others topics requested by parents.

This conference is open only to parents of children with impairments in both vision and hearing who live in Nevada. If parents wish, they may ask one of their child's teachers, early interventionists, or therapists to attend this conference with them. For professionals to attend they **must** be invited by parents *and* attending with the parents.

Funds for hotel, meals, airfare/transportation are available for all parents who wish to attend. Funds for service providers are available for hotel and airfare/transportation, however; these funds are limited and requests will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

For more information:

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E-mail: mad@unr.edu

Marty Elquist

E-mail: marty@unr.nevada.edu

(775) 784-6471 in the Reno area

(877) 621-5042 toll-free in Nevada

Nevada Department of Education 2002 Mega Conference

Annual Professional Development Opportunity
April 26-28, 2001 • Hyatt Regency, Lake Tahoe

For more information: Rorie Lackey

Nevada Dept. of Education, Education Equity
775-687-9215 • rorie@nsn.k12.nv.us

Target audience: teachers, counselors, administrators, policy makers, university personnel, regional & site trainers, family members, paraprofessionals, speech therapists, OTs, PTs, psychologists.

Usher Syndrome: Types, Genetics, and Up-to-Date Research

Presented by:

Boys Town National Research Hospital and California Deafblind Services

Saturday, April 13, 2002 • Riverside California

For more information: Maurice Belote

415-239-8089 ext. 23 • mbelote@pacbell.net

Target audience: school-age consumers (to age 22); family members and friends of persons from birth to age 22 with Usher Syndrome; Educators; Department of Rehabilitation Personnel; and interested others.

23rd National Institute on Legal Issues of Educating Individuals with Disabilities

Co-sponsored by: LRP Publications & Special Ed Connection

May 5-8, 2002 • Tampa, FL • Tampa Bay Convention Center

For more information: LRP Productions • 1-800-727-1227

Target audience: State & local special education directors, school & parent attorneys, superintendents, school psychologists, principals, education specialists, teachers/professionals, parent/student advocates, state agency personnel.

2002 California Conference on Deaf-blindness

"California Coming Together"

California Deaf-Blind Services and Project NEEDS

May 16-18, 2002 • San Diego, CA

Keynote speaker: Dr. Jan Van Dijk

For more information: Maurice Belote

415-239-8089 ext. 23 • mbelote@pacbell.net

The conference will include three age-specific workshop strands: Early intervention, school age education, and transition from school to adult life. Workshops & large group sessions will be led by state & national leaders in deaf-blindness.

Western Regional Early Intervention Conference

"Services for Children with Sensory Disabilities"

Co-sponsored by: WY, AZ, CO, ID, NV, NM, & UT Sensory Impaired Early Intervention

Programs • Wyoming Department of Education • SKI*HI Institute

Montana Deaf-Blind Services

June 14-15, 2001 • Jackson Hole, Wyoming • Snow King Resort

For more information: Joanne B. Whitson

307-324-5333 • jwhits@educ.state.wy.us

Target Audience: Families and professionals providing services to young children with sensory impairments. REGISTRATION DEADLINE: May 10, 2002

13th Deafblind International World Conference on Deafblindness

Sponsored by: The Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association & Deafblind International

August 5-10, 2003 • Mississauga, Ontario Canada

For more information: 1658-4th Avenue West, Owen Sound, Ontario Canada, N4K 4X4

E-mail: mail@dbiconferencecanada.com,

Website: www.dbiconferencecanada.com,

Phone: (519) 372-2068

Fax: (519) 372-0312





New Lending Library Resources



Videos

Greenfield, R. G. (Producer) (2002). *You & me video series: Transition* [Videotape]. (Available from Robin Greenfield, Idaho Project for Children & Youth with Deaf-blindness, University of Idaho, Boise Center, 800 Park Blvd., Boise, ID 83712 (208) 364-4012).

Riley Ford is learning as he transitions from high school into the adult world. The video includes information about his communication system, his orientation & mobility skills, his vocational program, and his daily routine at the YMCA.

Films for the Humanities & Sciences (Producer). (2000). *Technology and deaf culture* [Videotape]. (Available from Films for the Humanities & Sciences, PO Box 2053, Princeton, NJ, 08543, (800) 257-5126)

A look at the implications of cochlear implant technology on the Deaf community. Some portray the implants as miraculous assistive devices and others as a baneful attempt by the well-meaning hearing majority to "fix" the Deaf. 9 minutes.

Books

Batshaw, M. L. (2001). *When your child has a disability: The Complete sourcebook of daily and medical care*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

This book will help you meet the demands of raising your child. Questions are answered and advice is given on pediatric care, behavior, nutrition/feeding, medications, rehabilitation therapies, child development, education & early intervention, genetic counseling, legal rights & benefits, and the transition to adult life. User friendly information for nurturing and caring for children with disabilities.

Downing, J. E. (2002). *Including students with severe and multiple disabilities in typical classrooms* (2nd edition). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

This updated edition gives readers coverage of today's critical issues, including alternate assessment and literacy in all its forms, innovative strategies for inclusive classrooms, case studies from actual classrooms that illustrate practical solutions to challenging situations, and separate

chapters on inclusion in middle & high school.

Kline, F. M., Silver, L. B., & Russell, S. C. (2001). *The educator's guide to medical issues in the classroom*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

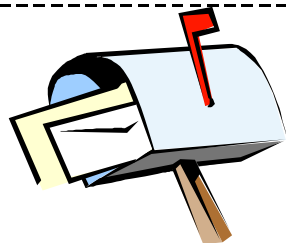
This easy to read guide gives educators facts on how students' medical conditions and their treatments directly affect their classroom behavior and learning ability. Readers will get tips and strategies for creating successful learning environments.

Websites



<http://www.ncpad.org/>
National Center on Physical Activity and Disability

NCPAD is a FREE resource dedicated to promoting healthy, active lifestyles for the more than 54 million Americans who have some type of disability. Fast facts on Recreation and Leisure Activities, Exercise and Fitness Activities, Games and Sports, Specific Disabilities and Conditions, and information on how to make recreation and leisure environments accessible for people with disabilities.



I enjoy your newsletter, and I know someone who would benefit from receiving future issues. I have entered their address below.

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Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

**Return to: Marty Elquist Department of Curriculum & Instruction/282
University of Nevada, Reno Reno, NV 89557**

What do you see first? The Person or the Disability?

By: Patti Nowak

Reprinted with permission from DB Star, Volume 3, Issue 1, Michigan Services for Children and Youth Who are Deaf-blind, Mt. Pleasant, MI

When talking about a person who has a disability, choosing your language carefully is important. It should promote dignity and respect. Your words reflect your values and perceptions, and shape other people's impressions of you and of people who have a disability. Person First Language is an excellent way to demonstrate your understanding that people with disabilities are people first. Your effort to use Person First Language reinforces positive images of people who have a disability. It contributes to society's recognition of independence, abilities, talents, and contributions of people with disabilities.

The following are some suggestions to help you understand what is meant by Person First Language.

Say	Instead of
People with disabilities	handicapped or disabled
Person with a developmental disability	mentally retarded person
Person who uses a wheelchair	wheelchair bound

Say	Instead of
Person with a brain injury	brain damaged
Person with a speech impairment	mute, dumb
Person who is blind; has a visual impairment	blind person; visually impaired person
Person who is deaf or hard of hearing	hearing impaired person
Person who is deafblind; person with vision and hearing impairment	vision and hearing impaired person
*Deaf person	deaf person
*DeafBlind person	deaf-blind person

* Capital "D" and "D-B" indicate people who are part of Deaf culture or DeafBlind culture. In this context, the capitalized letter associates the person with their cultural identity versus their disability.

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