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## AODD/ PREPARING THE CLASSROOM: CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR STUDENT WHO IS DEAFBLIND



# A Message from NMPED

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“Evidence-based interventions for individuals with deafblindness are not universal. Although these are evidence-based interventions, they should be individualized for a particular student. In the education setting, the IEP team will develop the plan for that student. The IEP team shall review an IEP at least on an annual basis.”



# Preparing The Classroom

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CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR  
STUDENT WHO IS DEAFBLIND

# Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

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



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# DEAF-BLIND NETWORK

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACROSS THE NATION



# Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

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# Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deaf-Blind



No two children with deaf-blindness are alike. As such, preparing an environment for a child who is deaf-blind must be highly individualized and based on a thorough assessment of the child's unique sensory, cognitive, and physical needs.

Nationaldb.org







# Outcomes

- You will be able to identify the steps to create and maintain an organized and predictable learning space for students who are deafblind.
- You will be able to ensure clear, safe pathways to promote mobility and independence for individuals who are deafblind in various environments.
- You will know the importance of identifying adaptations and modifications to enhance accessibility and support students who are deafblind.
- You will know the steps to ensure the classroom arrangements meet the students accessibility needs.
- You will know how to identify if the student is able to access the classroom based on the classroom setup.



# Organized and Predictable Learning Spaces

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# Designated Workspace



- Permanent location
- Identifier cue (e.g. sign, object, photo)
- Maximize hearing and vision
- Uncluttered
- Items available are within reach



# Support Independence

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Materials are organized and placed in consistent location for student to access as independently as possible





# Peer Interactions

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Plan for how student will be provided with space and materials to meaningfully engage in group activities and peer interactions





# Natural Environments

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- Enhances skill transfer
- Ex: Bathrooms, kitchen areas etc.



# Safety

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- Adaptations and modifications that ensure safety
- Dedicated space for adaptive strollers and other assistive devices
- Non-slip mats, clearly identified steps





# Learning Spaces

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- Mark entrances to learning spaces with identifier cues
- Easily recognized and understood







# Clear & Safe Pathways

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# Clear Pathways



Pathways within and between learning spaces must be free of clutter



# Landmarks and Cues

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- Pathways within and between learning spaces are identified with landmarks and cues
- Easily recognized and understood (different flooring, different colored walls)





# Consistent Routes

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Establish consistent routes  
between learning spaces





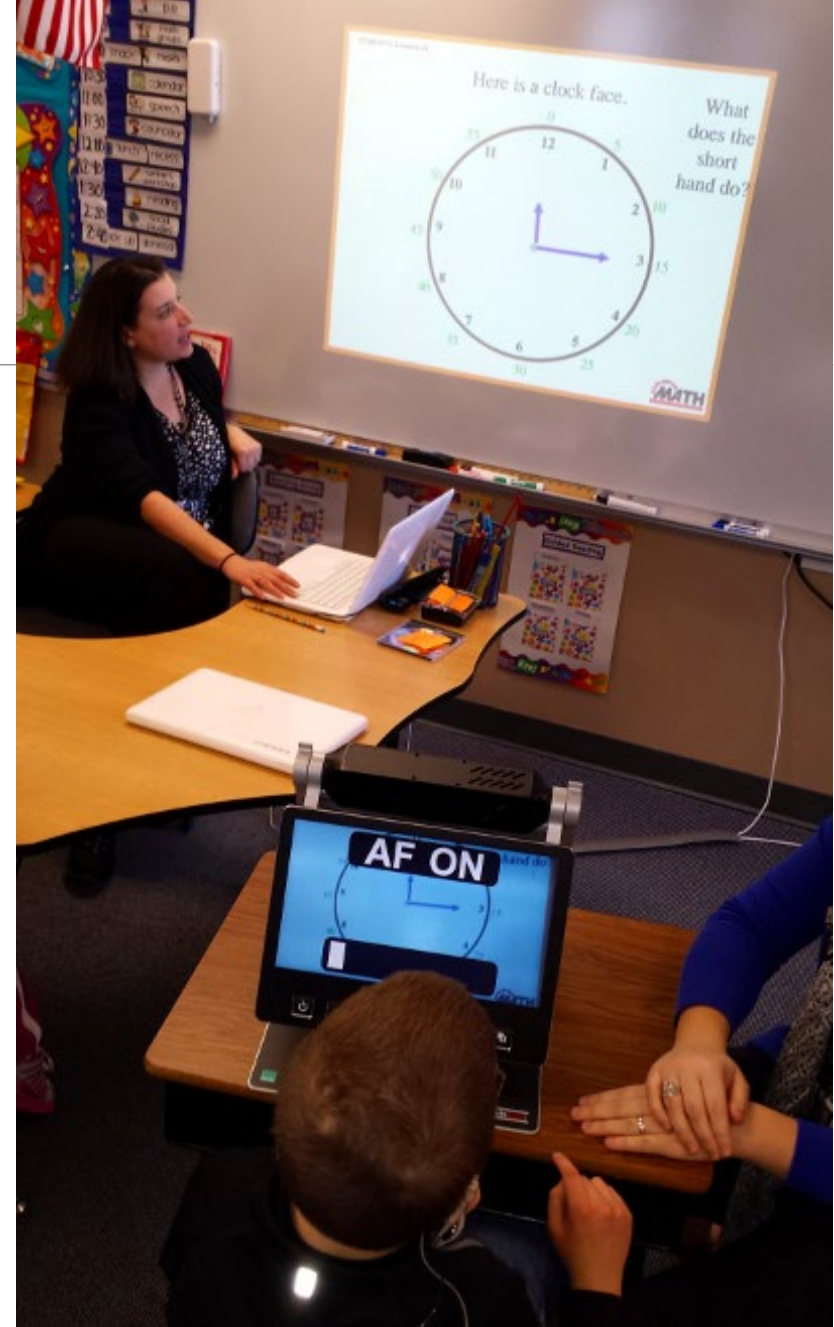
# Environmental Adaptations and Modifications

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# Primary Seating

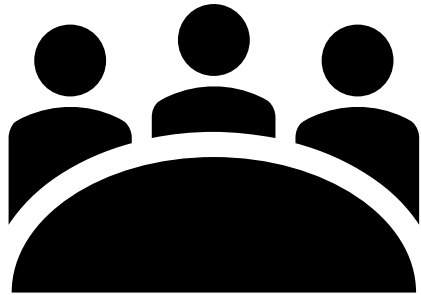
- Refer to assessment results to determine ideal primary seating location
- Available vision, available hearing, and other sensory and assistive technology needs





# Collaborate

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- Work with educational team to determine needs
- O&M Specialists, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Teacher of the Deaf, Occupational Therapists, etc.
- Amplification, magnification, adaptive positioning, assistive devices/supports





# Optimize Lighting

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- Optimizes lighting to maximize the child's usable vision
- Some students are light sensitive, others need increased illumination, nearly all will benefit from reducing glare

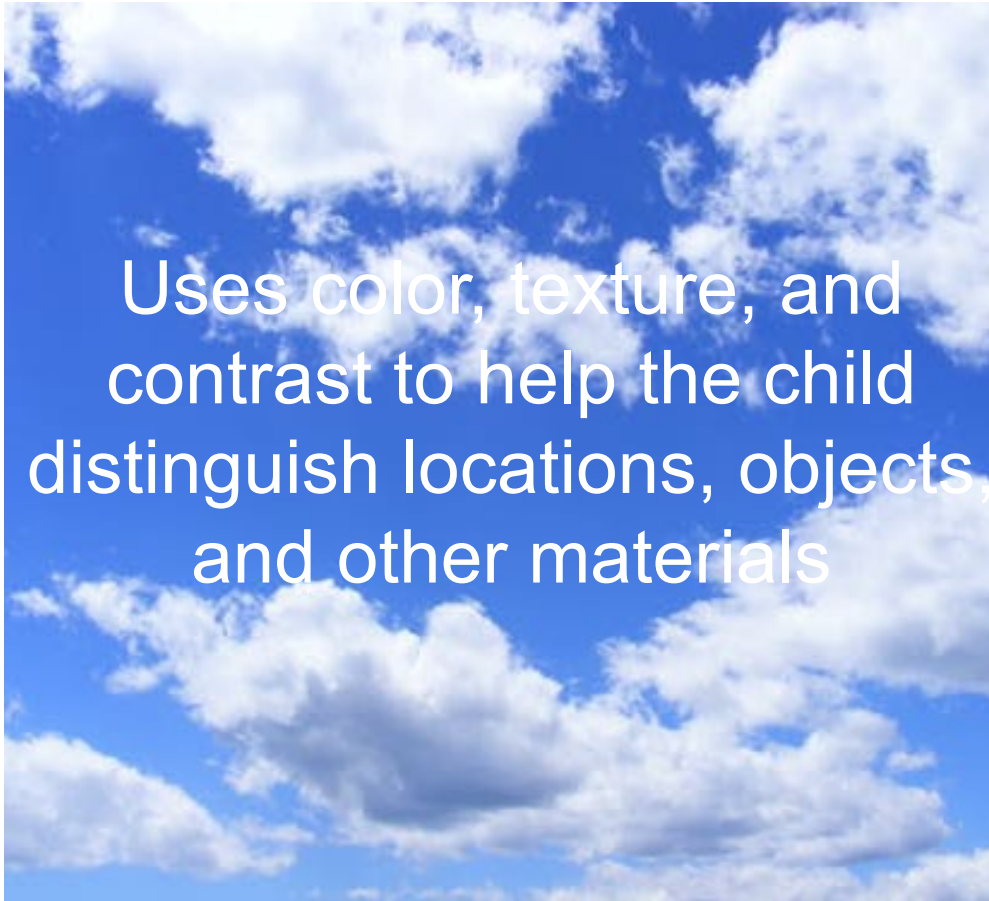




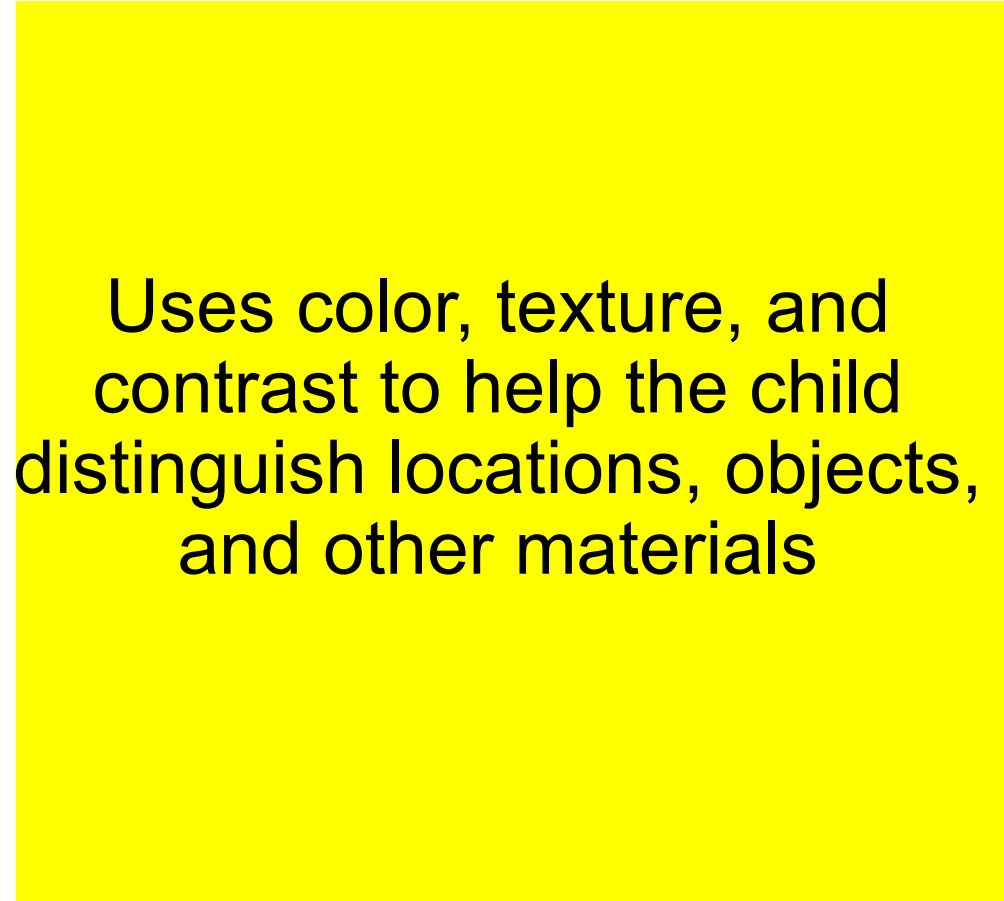


# Contrast

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Uses color, texture, and contrast to help the child distinguish locations, objects, and other materials



Uses color, texture, and contrast to help the child distinguish locations, objects, and other materials



# Noise

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- Determine how background noise, including ambient sounds impact the student
- Fans, air-conditioning, open windows, other people talking





# Support Staff and Technology

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- Considers space needed for practitioners
- Interveners, interpreters, paraprofessionals, brailleists
- Assistive equipment/technology

# Let's Review...



- Designated Workspace
- Support Independence
- Peer Interactions
- Natural Environments
- Safety
- Clear Pathways
- Landmarks and Cues
- Consistent Routes
- Primary Seating
- Collaborate
- Maximized hearing
- Maximized vision
- Support Staff and Technology



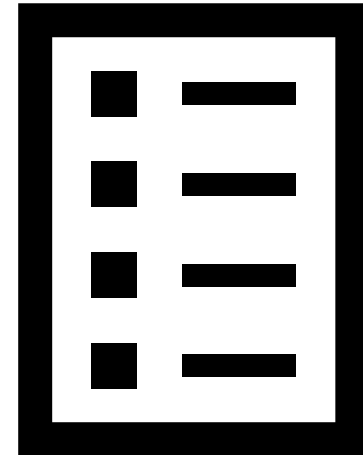
# Observation and Documentation

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# Safe and Secure

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- Monitor the child
- Do they feel safe and secure?
- Do they show interest and active engagement in the learning environment?





# Needs and Abilities

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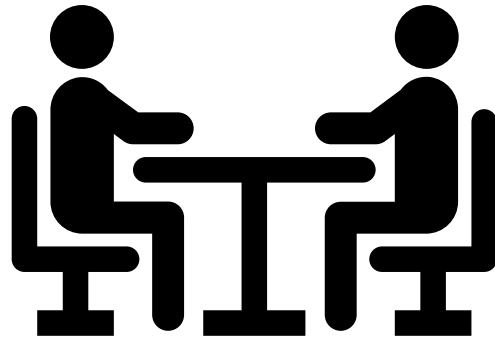
Make appropriate changes to learning environments based on observation of the child's changing needs and abilities.



# Documentation

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- Document the students environmental needs
- Ensure all staff working with the student are aware of those needs







# How do I know if it's working?

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# Confident in Learning Environment



- The student is comfortable and secure
- The student is confident working in and moving within the learning environment and functions as independently as possible



# Accessing the Environment

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The child is better able to recognize, reach for, and distinguish objects and materials in the learning environment.





# Anticipation

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The child can better recognize patterns and make predictions due to the consistent order and structure of the learning environment.



# Free of Obstacles

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The environment supports the students learning and does not become an obstacle to it.



# Let's Review...



- Safe and Secure
- Needs and Abilities
- Documentation
- Confident in Learning Environment
- Accessing the Environment
- Anticipation
- Free of Obstacles



# Deafblindness in New Mexico

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# Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

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Deafblindness has its own unique challenges.

It is important that anyone working with an individual with deafblindness have training to understand this rare disability.







# Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

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**Technical assistance (TA) and training** — For families, service providers and educators of children and youth who are deaf-blind. Provided through distance technology, in-home, classroom, telephone or email consultation. 3 levels of TA available: Universal, Specialized and Intensive.

**Annual trainings/workshops** —To increase our state's capacity to meet the unique needs of children and youth who are deaf-blind. Trainings are usually at no, or low cost, to participants.



# Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

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**Early childhood and school-aged transition support and consultation**

**Resource dissemination** — On various topics in the field of deaf-blindness including distance-education and online learning opportunities.

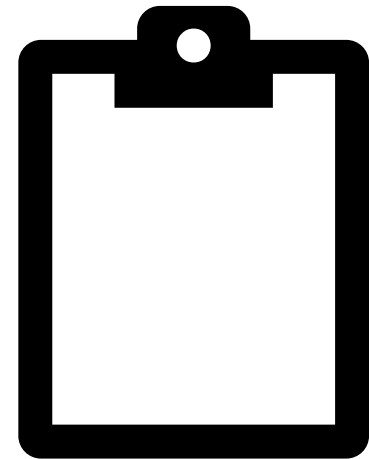
**Involvement** — Local, state and national initiatives and committees to advance the understanding of the needs of children/youth with deaf-blindness.



# Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

The National Child Count of Children and Youth who are Deaf-Blind provides extensive information on the population of children identified with deaf-blindness in the U.S, aged birth through 21. Data includes state and national information on:

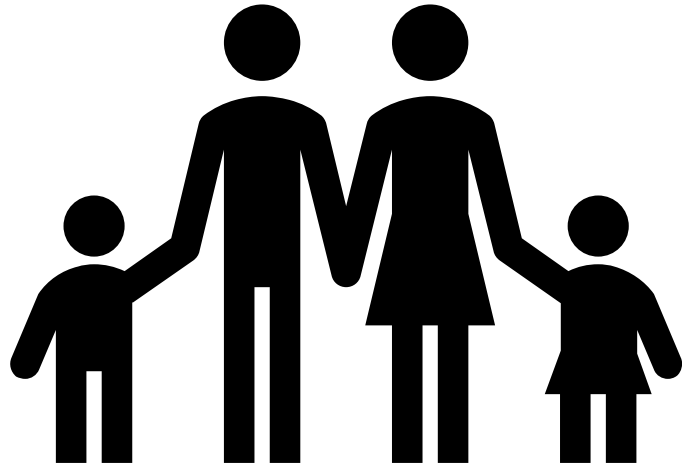
- Population demographics (age, ethnicity, gender)
- Type and severity of vision and hearing loss
- Causes of deaf-blindness
- Presence of additional disabilities
- Educational setting
- Living setting





# Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

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If you know an individual who is deafblind, please reach out to the project to ensure they have access to the resources provided and their information can be included in the annual census.

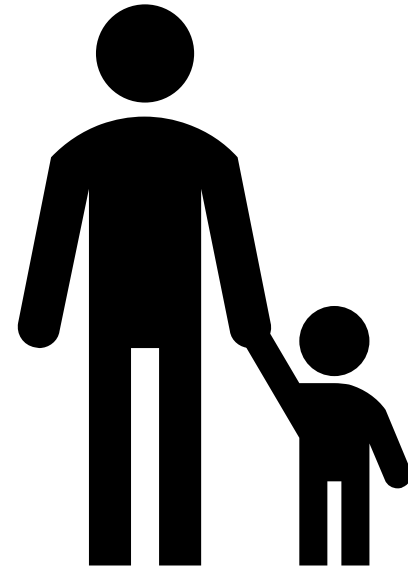


# Who Can Refer?

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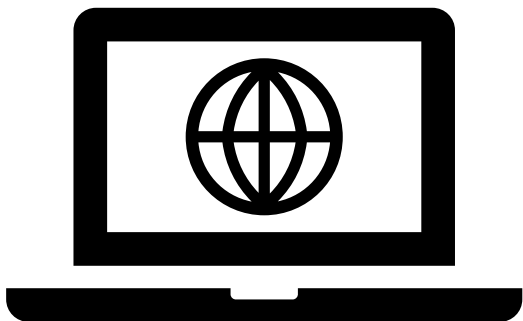
Anyone who knows or works with a child with deaf-blindness, including:

- Families
- Teachers
- Early childhood staff
- Physicians
- Nurses/discharge planners
- Physical/occupational and speech therapists
- Social workers/case managers





# Want More Info?



Project for New Mexico  
Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind

<https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/other-disability-programs/deafblind/>



**Project For New Mexico Children  
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**Center for Development and Disability:**  
[UNM CDD](#)

**CDD Library:**  
[CDD Library - Center for Development & Disability](#)

**CDD Information Network:**  
[Information Network | Other Disability Resources | Center for Development & Disability | UNM Health System | Albuquerque, New Mexico](#)  
P: 505-272-8549

# References

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