The Importance of Using Routines for Students Who Are Deaf-Blind: Using Structured Activities to Create Access, Encourage Participation, and Target IEP Goals

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Slide 2: Here is a message from New Mexico Public Education Department:

"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."

Slide 3: Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs and the New Mexico Public Education Department.

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Slide 4: Information in this presentation was provided by the deafblind network.

Slide 5: If you have any questions or would like information or training on deafblindness, please contact the project for New Mexico children and youth who are deafblind. Contact information will be shared again at the end of the training.

Slide 6: The importance of Using Routines for Students Who Are Deaf-Blind, using structured activities to create access, encourage participation, and target IEP goals.

Slide 7: Routines help children who are deafblind build communication skills, understand new concepts, and improve their interactions and social skills by providing a sense of security and predictability.

Slide 8: By the end of this training, you will Understand the importance and practical applications of routines in supporting students who are deafblind, identify a routine and break it down into steps that are appropriate for a student, use the educational team to improve routines and target IEP goals, and know how to complete the activity form to ensure routines are consistent.

Slide 9: When talking about students with deafblindness, we are referring to any students with low vision, blindness, progressive loss of vision, or cortical visual impairment AND are hard of hearing, deaf, have progressive loss of hearing, or central auditory processing disorder. Deafblindness limits a persons ability to access consistent visual and auditory information.

Most children with deafblindness have some vision and some hearing.

Additionally, 80-90% of children and youth with deafblindness also have other disabilities. Understanding this, we must recognize that deafblindness encompasses a diverse group of students, each with their own unique strengths, abilities, and interests, requiring tailored approaches to support their learning and development.

If you want to learn more about deafblindness, please check out the Overview of Deafblindness training on the New Mexico Deafblind Projects Website. This training goes into more detail about deafblindness and how it impacts a student in the classroom.

Slide 10: The power of routines with deafblind students lies in their ability to provide structure, predictability, and a sense of security, which are essential for learning and development. By implementing and maintaining consistent routines, educators and caregivers can significantly enhance the quality of life and educational outcomes for students with deafblindness.

Slide 11: Routines provide "a systematic approach that is individualized to meet the child's skills and preferences."

Slide 12: There are many reasons to use routines in the classroom to teach students with deafblindness. Some benefits of routines are that they meet a student where they are. Routines are very flexible and can be broken down into smaller steps. Educators can identify skills that students can do within the routines, and build on them to teach new skills.

Because routines are flexible. They can be used: in many situations to support students in variety of environments to teach a variety of skills

Let's talk about the benefits of utilizing routines in the classroom for our students who are deafblind.

Slide 13: **Access to Information**

Deafblindness impacts a student's access to auditory and visual information in the environment. Think about how much information about the environment a student receives through hearing and vision. Where are activities located in the classroom? What about a schedule of the day that is posted so the student knows what is coming next? What about information about a meal time…is there information that student accesses that inform of them upcoming activities?

Routines are great opportunities for students to participate in the steps of the activity and can now access information that they may otherwise miss. For example, if a student has a favorite activity, such as playdough, staff or peers may know this and bring the student playdough for them to explore. But if the student does not participate in the steps of getting the playdough, they may not know where the playdough is located. When the student is done with the playdough, someone may clean up the playdough for the student in the spirit of kindness, or helping things go quickly, or even just out of habit. Now the student may not learn what to do when they are done with the activity. Think about how much information is missed when a student is not participating in routines.

Now think about what information the student is gaining when they do participate in the routine. The student wants to play with playdough, they know the routine of picking out the activity and they now know where the playdough is located. The student brings it to their desk or table, with or without assistance, so they can explore the playdough and enjoy it. When they are done, they know where the playdough goes. What if the play dough is dry? The student can participate in the routine of throwing it away because it is no longer usable. Even if a student is not able to complete steps of the routine independently, they can still learn and participate in the routine and access information they would otherwise not have access to.

Slide 14: Participation: When educational teams utilize routines for students with deafblindness, they create opportunities for meaningful participation in activities that are relevant and functional to the student.

One way to ensure authentic participation is by using the hand-under-hand technique. This approach allows the student to be involved in the steps of the routine, observe with their hands, and actively participate through touch.

Routines provide a structure that enables students to use their strengths and abilities to engage in activities. While a student may not be able to complete the entire routine independently, involving them in the steps gives them access to information, allowing them to choose how they want to actively learn and participate in the process.

Slide15: Anticipation: When a student participates in classroom routines, they gain access to information about upcoming steps. Students with deafblindness may miss cues about future events and activities. Consistent routines help these students become familiar with the sequence of steps. By being included in these routines, they can anticipate what comes next, making classroom activities more predictable and creating structure throughout the day.

When a student can anticipate the next step in a routine, they have the opportunity to initiate that step. Another important aspect of developing anticipation is that it allows students to predict daily events and activities, creating a more stable and predictable day. This helps students feel less overwhelmed by randomness and uncertainty.

Slide 16: Independence: When you break down a routine into small steps, the student has opportunity to learn the steps it takes to complete a task. The student now has information to learn what routine is being completed and doing the steps of the routine. This supports that ability to be more independent with an activity.

For some students, this means that they may now be able to independent with some routines that are in the classroom.

Slide 17: Concept Development: In education, "concept development" refers to the process by which students build and refine their understanding of abstract ideas. For students who are deafblind, access to information may be inconsistent or unreliable, meaning many experiences must be directly taught.

Some concepts a student may learn involve ideas like cause and effect or the purpose of various objects. Concepts can also relate to orientation and mobility, such as how things are arranged in a classroom and how to navigate the space

There are also important concepts for all students, but especially for those who are deafblind. Self-concepts and social concepts significantly impact students. An important self-concept for a student is understanding that they can communicate their needs and have unique ideas about the world. A social concept might be that communication involves taking turns and sharing interests.

By incorporating daily routines in the classroom, students are naturally exposed to these different concepts in meaningful ways. For example, students can participate in retrieving materials from the cabinet for an activity and putting them away afterward. They can hand out materials to other students and understand that everyone is completing a task together. This exposure ensures they don't miss out on valuable information, which can happen when others complete tasks for them.

Slide 18: Framework for Learning: Routines can provide a framework for learning. Routines require less energy and greater efficiency in terms of brain function. When you do the same steps over and over, these steps can become more automatic. When the steps become more automatic, now the student has opportunity for complex thinking.

Slide 19: Complex skills.: When a student is familiar with a routine and complete steps to a routine more automatically. The routine can now be expanded upon to teach more complex skills. Completing the steps of a routine from start to finish is a great skill, but once the student has mastered it, the routine can include more steps, more participation, more complexities. More targeted skills and IEP goals can be added to the routine.

Slide 20: Let's review: So why do we utilize routines with our students who are deafblind? It provides access to information that may otherwise be missed by a student who is deafblind. It creates opportunities for genuine participation in the classroom for important activities. It provides opportunities to build anticipation for a student who may not know what is coming next. It provides information and opportunity for a student to be more independent. Routines support concept development in the classroom. Routines create framework for learning in the classroom. Routines create opportunities to teach more complex skills at the students own pace.

Slide 21: Instructional routines: Now you know why utilizing routines is important for our students with deafblindness. In this next section, we will talk about important factors in determining what routines should be utilized and what questions are important to answer.

Slide 22: Instructional Routines: Instructional routines are typically structured in the following way: They use the same objects and materials every time the routine is conducted. They have a clear beginning and ending. They always take place in a consistent location. They involve a sequence of specific steps. They are done with a designated partner.

Slide 23: Same Objects: Students who are deafblind often recognize objects used in their everyday routines. Familiar objects can be highly motivating, especially when they are associated with preferred activities. For these students, recognizing and interacting with objects that they know can enhance their engagement and participation. By incorporating familiar objects into routines, educators can provide meaningful and motivating experiences that support the students' learning and involvement in their daily activities.

Slide 24: Clear Beginning, Middle and End: Routines need a clear beginning, middle, and end to effectively support students who are deafblind. Structuring routines this way helps students learn to categorize events and activities, facilitating smoother transitions from one activity to another. For example, if a routine ends with the student putting away magnets before moving to the art table for a craft, this clear ending provides the student with important information in a meaningful way, preparing them for the change. Organizing routines with distinct start and finish points also supports the student's understanding of the concept of "finished," making their daily experiences more predictable and manageable.

Slide 25: Location: Consistently performing a specific routine in the same location helps establish a known destination, which is crucial for students who are deafblind. This predictability provides motivation for the student to move about their environment and fosters their ability to navigate independently. Additionally, it offers valuable opportunities to learn and reinforce consistent travel routines, making it easier for students to understand and anticipate their

movements within the space. By maintaining a routine in a familiar location, students gain confidence and improve their spatial awareness, contributing to a more organized and supportive learning experience.

Slide 26: Sequential Steps: It is important for routines to have a sequence of several consistent steps because this structure helps students become more independent. Repeated use of the routine allows students to familiarize themselves with each step, eventually enabling them to move to the next step of the activity on their own. This consistency not only fosters independence but also provides a clear method for assessing the student's learning progress. For instance, noticing that a student begins to transition to the next step independently indicates growth and understanding of the routine. This structured approach supports both skill development and progress monitoring, making it a key component of effective teaching strategies for students who are deafblind.

Slide 27: Guidelines for Routines: When choosing a routine, there are a few guidelines that can support you to utilize the routine effectively. Sometimes when thinking about a routine, you think of mundane daily tasks that need to happen. Although these routines can absolutely be utilized, it is also important to think about activities that a student enjoys and might already participate in. Another way to incorporate routines is by reinforcing and expanding routines that are done at home. For some of our students, this gives more opportunity to practice and participate in a routine that is familiar and functional in both the home and classroom. Another important piece of utilizing routines is using them to create opportunities to interact with peers. Some of our deafblind students miss opportunities to socialize and communicate with other students during instruction.

Slide 28: Choosing a routine: Here is a brief description of an event that happens regularly for a student: The student is led to the table and is placed at the table. A plate of food is placed in front of them. The teaching staff feeds the student using a spoon. When the food is finished, the staff puts the spoon away and cleans up the food. The staff leads the student away from the tables to continue to the next activity.

How can we utilize this daily routine to increase participation and target skills?

Slide 29: Lets break it down into steps so we can increase participation and target goals for this student.For beginning learners, routines should be kept to 5 to 7 steps. For this routine, there are 6 steps.

The first step for the student to touch the spoon and feel their partner sign "eat." In this routine, the IEP goal has also been listed. The goal is for the student to imitate the movements demonstrated through hand-under-hand support.

Step 2 is for the student to walk to the dining table while carrying their spoon.

Step 3 is for the student find a chair and sit down.

Step 4 is to look for the plate when it is tapped on the table. The IEP goal for this student is that they use touch to explore the space to locate objects. You can see how important this skill is, but also how it is incorporated into the routine that is meaningful to the student.

Step 5 is for the student to scoop food from the plate and bring the spoon to their mouth. This skill is being targeted through the IEP goal that the student will imitate movements demonstrated through hand-under-hand.

Step 6 is for the student to put the spoon in the finished basket at the end of the meal. The IEP goal is for the student to communicate that they are finished by using gestures.

This a great example of how a routine can be utilized and the person completing the routine with student can follow each step consistently every time the student has a meal.

Slide 30: Let's ask some of the questions to identify if this routine is being utilized appropriately.

In this routine, are the same materials designated for the routine? It is clear from this description that a spoon is being used, and a finished basket

Does the routine have a clear beginning, middle and end? Yes! The routine starts with the spoon and the sign for eat. It finishes when the spoon is placed in a basket designated for "finished."

Is the routine being completed at the same location every time? Yes, this routine is being completed at the same table every time.

Are there specific steps to the routine? Yes, there are 6 distinct steps to be completed every time.

Is the routine done with a specific partner? From this example, there is no specific partner designated. But it is important to identify who is completing the routine with the student.

Slide 31: Routines can be designed around a student's interests and classroom activities. The routine *does not* need to be targeted for the student to complete it independently. A routine can provide access to information and opportunity for engagement.

Because every student has different interests and different levels of participation, there is no one routine that needs to be utilized.

Here are some examples of routines that may be targeted. Making playdough with a student, picking out an activity and putting it away, preparing supplies for an art project, washing dishes, reviewing a daily object calendar, delivering mail to the office, getting ready to go home.

There are so many routines in the day that a student can be engaged it, and each student will have their own interests. Be sure to identify potential routines that you feel would be appropriate to expand on for your student.

Slide 32: Lets Review

For effective training with students who are deafblind, routines should incorporate several key elements. Using the same objects and materials each time helps provide consistency and predictability. Each routine should have a clear beginning and ending, always take place in a consistent location, and involve a sequence of specific steps. Additionally, having a designated partner for the routine can enhance engagement and support. To maximize effectiveness, choose motivating activities, incorporate familiar tasks from home, expand on current conversation topics, and include opportunities for peer interaction. Breaking down the routine into 5-7 manageable steps ensures clarity and facilitates learning

Slide 33: Routine Documentation: Collaborating with the IEP team to individualize the routine.

Slide 34: Routines support and organize learning by compensating for sensory gaps, providing a framework for assessment and intervention, and helping students to make progress. Let's talk

about other important factors that might impact a student's participation in a routine and how to ensure the routine is being performed consistently.

Slide 35: Although we have reviewed some routines, you have may have a deafblind student in mind. The routines described may not be motivating or accessible to the student. Be sure to ask yourself questions to ensure that the routine identified is appropriate for your student.

List considerations: What level of support does the student need to participate in the routine? What IEP goals/objectives will be infused into the routine? What additional skills are being targeted? What language will be targeted? Are there any special modifications or adaptations needed? What materials will you need?

Slide 36: In order to document all the necessary information about a routine, Open Hands Open Access Training has created a form that can be completed by an individual or team to ensure that the routine is being implemented consistently and student is able to access step of the routine. Although this form is very beneficial, you can adapt the form to meet your students needs or find a different method of documenting important details that are important to the routine itself.

This form is also located on the UNM Deafblind website under resources/team. If you are not able to access or find this document, please email the project and a pdf will be shared with you.

You can also use the QR code to available to access the website to find the form.

Slide 37: When documenting a routine, it's crucial to identify key details, such as the specific routine being targeted and the individual or team responsible for implementing it. Consistency is important; the same person or group should complete the routine with the student each time.

It's also essential to specify when the routine occurs. This doesn't have to be a specific time, like 10:45, but should indicate the general timing, such as the events that precede or follow the routine. For example, if targeting a handwashing routine, you might note that it occurs when the student comes inside from recess.

Another vital aspect is listing the materials needed for the routine. These should be prepared and easily accessible when the routine is scheduled. Additionally, detailed instructions should be provided for each step, ensuring the routine has a clear beginning, middle, and end.

An important feature of the routine is the use of an object cue to signal its start. This cue doesn't need to be chosen right away; once the routine has been completed a few times, you can select a meaningful object cue for the student.

Slide 38: Here is the routines portion of the form. The activity routine form includes spaces to fill out each step of the routine, as well as important information about any adaptations and modifications needed to ensure the student can fully access the routine. Another valuable feature of the form is the space for IEP goals that are being targeted during the routine.

Targeted vocabulary is also crucial for helping the student understand the context and meaning of signs, words, and cues they may be introduced to or working on.

Additionally, the form has space for comments and data, which can be used to track whether the student is learning from the routine or if adjustments are needed—whether due to the routine being too complicated or the need for different accommodations.

This form should be completed by more than just the individual participating in the routine; input from the entire educational team is important.

Slide 39: When considering the supplies needed for a routine, it's essential to include items used to adapt or modify the routine to make it accessible for the student. For instance, if you're targeting mealtime, you may need to have food or dishes readily available. It's ideal to store materials in an area where the routine occurs, allowing the student to access them independently. However, this setup may not always be appropriate for the routine or classroom environment. In such cases, you might need a container with the necessary materials placed near the routine's location to ensure quick accessibility.

Additionally, you may need object symbols or pictures to help the student identify the start of the routine. Some students might also require accommodations like a slant board to assist them during the routine.

Slide 40: There are numerous adaptations and modifications that can be implemented to support students who are deafblind and have multiple disabilities. These adaptations often involve the use of visual, motor, and communication supports tailored to the individual needs of the student. For instance, visual supports might include optimizing lighting to enhance the student's remaining vision, while motor supports could involve providing a bumpy cushion for the chair to help with seating and posture. Communication supports might include techniques like tactile hand-under-hand guidance, which allows the student to feel movements and actions through touch, or the use of a sighted guide to assist with navigation. These adaptations are crucial for creating an accessible and supportive learning environment that accommodates the unique needs of each student, allowing them to engage more fully in their routines and activities. This must be documented to ensure that the adaptations and modifications are used every time the routine is completed.

Slide 41: Collaborating with others when creating or modifying routines makes them stronger because they are based on input from a variety of individuals with knowledge about the student. Collaboration ensures that individuals who interact closely with a student follow the scripted steps and procedures for the routine.

An educational team could be any combination of teachers and therapists. It is important to get input from anyone who could support the routine chosen.

What IEP goal are you targeting? How do you accomplish this in the routine? Is this the appropriate routine to target? Can we alter the routine to ensure the student is participating in most of the steps? Is there vocabulary that needs to be targeted? What educational team members should you collaborate with to create access and participation for the student?

Slide 42: This form provides a valuable tool for collecting data to ensure that the student is benefiting from the targeted routine. By documenting observations and writing comments about how the routine is progressing, the team can determine whether adjustments are needed or if the student has mastered the routine and can complete it independently. Additionally, various factors, such as the time of day, the level of noise in the classroom, or other environmental influences, can affect the student's participation and should be noted.

The form is also an essential resource for reviewing the routine with team members who can offer valuable insights. Parents, as integral members of the educational team, should be included

in this process. They might be implementing the same routine at home and can collect data and observations that are beneficial for the school staff. Collaboration between home and school ensures a consistent approach, providing the student with the best possible support to succeed.

Now that you know what needs to be included in the activity form, lets review a completed form using the snack routine.

Slide 43: This form is completed for Marianne. The routine is snack time. The implementer is Shenise. The time this routine occurs is at the morning snack, which is roughly 10am. The materials needed for this routine is the spoon, space at the table and a chair. Other materials that need to be prepared are the scoop plate, finished basket and the blended food container. This list ensures that pertinent information about the routine is identified and available. An object cue has not yet been identified for this routine. Let's look at the at the steps of the routine.

Slide 44: This routine is the same task from the previous section, so lets focus on other aspects of this routine. Adaptations and modifications have been identified for some of the steps of the routine. For the first step, the child is to touch the spoon and feel the sing for "eat." The adaptations for this student is that tactile hand-under-hand signing is used for the student to access the word. This first step is also targeting the IEP Goal, which is that the student will imitate the movement demonstrated with the use of hand under hand. The targeted vocabulary for this student is the sign for "eat."

For the second step of the routine, it is identified that when the student walks to the dining table bringing a spoon, they have support from a sighted guide.

Information about this routine is clearly stated and organized. This ensures that the routine remains consistent and the student now has opportunity to learn the routine, participate in important steps, anticipate upcoming steps and potentially complete steps independently or even the entire routine independently.

In addition to the routine steps, this form has more spaces to share information about how the routine is being implemented, information about how the student is participating, and important data that might inform changes in the routine.

Slide 45: For Marianne, detailed information was collected about how she participated in each step of her routine. For example, in the second step, it was noted that she used the correct grip to navigate her way to the table. In step five, it was recorded that she ate four bites without any assistance. This kind of information is incredibly valuable for sharing with the educational team, as it provides concrete examples of Marianne's progress and areas where she may need further support. Additionally, this documentation serves as an excellent place to collect data on targeted goals, ensuring that the student is making consistent progress. Tracking these specific actions not only helps in evaluating Marianne's development but also guides the team in making informed decisions about potential adjustments to the routine or further individualized support.

Slide 46: Routines are versatile, evolving, and essential for our students with deafblindness. They provide structure and predictability, making it easier for students to engage with their environment and develop crucial skills. When you complete the activity form with the educational team, you are taking an important step to ensure that the routine is accessible and tailored to the specific needs of the student. This collaborative effort allows you to target individual goals and relevant vocabulary within the routine. Additionally, the data collected

through these forms is invaluable; it helps the team assess the effectiveness of the routine, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions about any necessary modifications. By targeting and adjusting routines based on this data, you are actively supporting the student's progress and ensuring that the routine remains a dynamic tool for learning and development.

To see an example of a routine being utilized, use this QR code to watch a lunch time routine and identify what goals are likely being targeted.

Slide 47: Let's review. In this section, we have covered the importance of documenting a targeted routine to ensure it effectively supports the student. This involves collaborating with the educational team to gather crucial information about the routine, including documenting its steps and any necessary adaptations or modifications to ensure the student can access all parts of the routine. The team should also identify relevant IEP goals within the routine to ensure that the skills being taught are both functional and meaningful for the student. Additionally, the team needs to specify which vocabulary is targeted during the routine. After setting up the routine, data collection is essential to assess whether adjustments are needed to improve the student's access and to track progress toward the targeted goals.

Slide 48: In New Mexico, that project is The Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind. This project provides technical assistance for families, service providers and educators of children and youth who are deafblind. Please contact the project if you are interested in resources, trainings, or support for an individual with deafblindness.

Slide 49: Deafblindness has such unique challenges, it is important that anyone working with an individual with deafblindness in New Mexico have training to understand this rare disability. It is important to utilize their strengths and abilities to create an individualized learning program. In New Mexico, there are approximately one hundred and fifty individuals identified as deafblind from the ages of 0-21. These individuals may have early intervention providers, speech and language pathologists, physical therapists, special education teachers, occupational therapist, O&M Specialists, counselors and paraprofessionals. There are free trainings and resources available to ensure that therapists and educators have the appropriate training to support individuals with deafblindness.

Slide 50: The Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deafblind provides technical assistance and training for families, service providers and educators of children and youth who are deafblind. It is provided through distance technology, in-home, classroom, telephone or email consultation. The project provides annual trainings/workshops to increase our state's capacity to meet the unique needs of children and youth who are deaf-blind, training can be requested to support staff and parents. Trainings are usually at no, or low cost, to participants.

Slide 51: The project can also participate in early childhood and school-aged transition support and consultation. The project disseminates resources on various topics in the field of deafblindness including distance-education, and online learning opportunities. The project is also involved in local, state and national initiatives and committees to advance the understanding of the needs of children/youth with deafblindness.

Slide 52: The Project also completes the National Child Count of Children and Youth Who Are Deaf-Blind. This census provides extensive information on the population of children identified with deaf-blindness in the U.S, ages birth through 21. Data includes state and national

information on population demographics, type and severity of vision and hearing loss, causes of deafblindness, presence of additional disabilities, educational setting and living setting.

Accurate census reporting ensures that our state receives the appropriate funding to meet the specialized needs of the service providers, educators and families of children with deafblindness.

Slide 53: 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.

Slide 54: Anyone who knows or works with a child with deaf-blindness can refer someone to the project. Often, referrals come from families, teachers, early childhood staff, physicians, nurses and discharge planners' physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech therapists, social workers and case managers.

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Slide 56: For information or support for deafblindness, please visit the project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who are Deafblind website.

 Slide 57: To contact the Project for New Mexico Children and Youth Who Are Deaflblind, please call 505-272-0321 or toll free 877-614-4051. Or you can send an email to hsc-NMDB@salud.unm.edu. The UNM Center for Development and Disability has many resources available through the CDD Library and the CDD Information Network.

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