

# Quarterly Newsletter

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**Alaska  
Deafblind  
Project**

## **Interveners**

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To help prepare for our October 2026 Webinar on Interveners, I thought I might share some important information. “What is an “Intervener”? The term Intervener refers to a specifically trained individual who provides one-on-one support to a deafblind child or student in various settings like home, school, and the community. Intervening for deafblind students involves facilitating access to visual and auditory information connecting them to the world around them.

While the concept of personalized support for deafblind individuals is not a new one, what sets it apart now is the formal use of the title “intervener” for someone with specialized training in deafblindness skills, consistently working with one child or student.

Intervener services are provided by an individual, typically a paraeducator, who has received specialized training in deafblindness and the process of intervention. An intervener provides consistent one-to-one support to a student who is deafblind (ages 3 through 22) throughout the instructional day.

Some components of Intervener training might include:

Coursework or trainings on deafblind intervention aligned with the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) standards. Because an intervener’s communication skills must align with their student’s skills. As such, they should receive training in their specific student’s methods of communication, if not already proficient. Supervised experience, such as a practicum or coaching by a professional with expertise in deafblindness. Typically, the intervener candidate must be working with a child or student who is deafblind in an educational setting.

Working under the direction of a student’s classroom teacher or other individual responsible for ensuring the implementation of a student’s IEP, an intervener’s primary roles are to:

- Provide consistent access to instruction and environmental information usually gained by students through vision and hearing but unavailable or incomplete to an individual who is deafblind.
- Facilitate concept development.
- Provide access to and/or assist in the development and use of receptive and expressive communication skills.
- Facilitate the development and maintenance of trusting, interactive relationships that promote social and emotional well-being.
- Provide support to form relationships with others and increase social connections and participation in activities.

Having an intervener for deafblind students is crucial for facilitating their access to education and promoting their overall well-being. An intervener serves as a bridge between the student and their environment, providing essential support tailored to the individual's unique needs.

First and foremost, an intervener ensures effective communication by using various techniques such as tactile signing, visual aids, and auditory cues, thereby enabling the student to access information and interact with others. This fosters language development, socialization, and cognitive growth, laying the foundation for academic success.

Moreover, an intervener plays a vital role in facilitating independence and autonomy. By offering guidance and assistance in daily tasks, mobility, and navigation, they empower the student to actively participate in activities both inside and outside the classroom. This fosters a sense of agency and self-confidence, essential for the student's personal and academic development.

Additionally, an intervener provides crucial advocacy and support within the educational setting, ensuring that the student's needs are understood and accommodated. They collaborate with teachers, administrators, and other professionals to create a supportive learning environment that maximizes the student's potential.

Overall, having an intervener for deafblind students is not only beneficial but often essential for their educational success and holistic development. It ensures that they have equal opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive, ultimately fostering inclusivity and diversity within educational settings.

#### **Additional Resources:**

##### **[Intervener Services and Interveners in Educational Settings: Definition](#)**

A national definition developed by NCDB based on literature and input from families and experts in the field of deafblind education (originally published in 2013 and updated in 2021)

##### **[Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who is Deafblind?: An IEP Team Discussion Guide](#)**

Designed to help IEP teams make informed decisions about interveners

##### **[Tools to Employ and Support Interveners](#)**

A collection of resources to help schools and families make decisions about and support interveners

##### **[Office of Special Education Programs Letter on Interveners as a Related Service](#)**

Informal guidance from OSEP addressing qualifying characteristics for related services included in the IEP

##### **[Recommendations for Improving Intervener Services](#)**

Developed by NCDB in 2012 in response to challenges faced by states and schools regarding the provision of intervener services for children who are deafblind

##### **[Qualified Personnel for Children with Low-Incidence Disabilities: Focus on Deaf-Blindness](#)**

Historical timeline of activities related to intervener services and teachers of students who are deafblind up to 2017 (developed by NCDB)

#### **References:**

Information for this article and more found at:

<https://www.nationaldb.org/search/?terms=intervener>