

# IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness



**Developed by**      **Texas Deafblind Outreach**  
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## IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

**Federal Definition of Deaf-Blindness (Special Education): Deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness. 34 CFR 300.8 (c) (2)**

[Texas Education Agency, TEA, Chapter 89, Subchapter AA:](#)

(2) Deaf-blindness. A student with deaf-blindness is one who has been determined to meet the criteria for deaf-blindness as stated in 34 CFR, §300.7(c)(2). In meeting the criteria stated in 34 CFR, §300.7(c)(2), a student with deaf-blindness is one who, based on the evaluations specified in subsections (c)(3) and (c)(12) of this section:

(A) meets the eligibility criteria for auditory impairment specified in subsection (c)(3) of this section and visual impairment specified in subsection (c)(12) of this section;

(B) meets the eligibility criteria for a student with a visual impairment and has a suspected hearing loss that cannot be demonstrated conclusively, but a speech/language therapist, a certified speech and language therapist, or a licensed speech language pathologist indicates there is no speech at an age when speech would normally be expected;

(C) has documented hearing and visual losses that, if considered individually, may not meet the requirements for auditory impairment or visual impairment, but the combination of such losses adversely affects the student's educational performance; or

(D) has a documented medical diagnosis of a progressive medical condition that will result in concomitant hearing and visual losses that, without special education intervention, will adversely affect the student's educational performance.

**The term “Individualized Education Program” (IEP) should be understood to include assessments and evaluations, student performance documentation, the entire IEP document (including goals and objectives, minutes, etc.), and other relevant records.**

**Purpose:** This document is designed to help educational teams develop appropriate IEPs for students with deafblindness. Indicators not present may indicate a training need for the team. The presence of these indicators demonstrates a well-designed IEP in areas related specifically to the impact of *deafblindness*. Other factors indicating a quality IEP *in general* are not covered here.

**Instructions:** After reading the introduction for each of the ten areas, look in the student’s IEP for the listed quality indicators. If the indicator is present in the IEP, circle “Y” on this form in the column to the right of the list of indicators. Circle “N” if the indicator is not present. If the item is not applicable for this student, circle N/A, and make a note in the comments section explaining why the indicator is not relevant at this time. The three columns to the right can be used over time to measure progress in IEP development.

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**Texas Deafblind Outreach: (Revised 03-09)**

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**Ten content areas:** Etiology  
Access to Information  
Social Issues  
Communication  
Calendar System  
Behavior  
Orientation and Mobility (O&M)  
Related and Supplemental Services  
Transition Planning  
A Teaming Process Plan

<p><b>IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness</b></p> <p><b>ETIOLOGY</b></p>	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Date of IEP:	Date of IEP:	Date of IEP:

**1. Etiology** – There are a number of syndromes that result in both a vision and hearing loss. This may have bearing on the best educational approaches to use with the student, or give direction to long-term medical follow-up. For example, a student with CHARGE Syndrome may be behind in experiential development due to numerous early hospitalizations, and may be at risk for retinal detachment associated with Coloboma.

**Please Circle Your Answer:**

**Y: for Yes**  
**N: for No**  
**N/A: for Not Applicable**

1.1 The student’s etiology is indicated in the evaluation and assessment documents.

Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
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1.2 Impact of the etiology on the student’s educational needs is addressed during the development of the IEP.

Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
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1.3 The student’s etiology has been reported on the annual Deafblind Census.

Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
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**Comments on Etiology:**

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<b>IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness</b>  <b>ACCESS TO INFORMATION</b>	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Date of IEP:	Date of IEP:	Date of IEP:
<b>2. Access to Information</b> – For a student with deafblindness, the combined effects of the vision and hearing loss create a barrier that significantly impedes the ability to gather information from the environment. This causes chronic difficulties with incidental learning and concept development. Students cannot learn what they do not detect, and they may be unaware of what they are missing. Access to information is a primary issue for all students with deafblindness, and should be addressed in each IEP.	<b><u>Please Circle Your Answer:</u></b>  <b>Y: for Yes</b> <b>N: for No</b> <b>N/A: for Not Applicable</b>		
2.1 <i>Sensory</i> access is appropriately assessed and clearly defined for the student in sensory and communication reports, present level of performance, and in the IEP document.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
2.2 The IEP includes strategies to systematically develop the use of sensory information (e.g. functional vision and hearing, as well as alternative sensory information).	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
2.3 The student’s instructional programming includes effective strategies and approaches that teach environmental information that the student is missing (e.g. thematic units, activity-based instruction, scripted routines, active learning).	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
2.4 An intervener is considered based on the student’s needs as addressed in 2.1 through 2.3.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
2.5 The impact of environmental factors on accessing information is addressed (e.g. lighting, noise, space/distance/rate/pace of instruction, etc.). For instance, a visually impaired student who signs needs instructional accommodations to access an interpreter and modifications to access printed information.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
2.6 Appropriate AI/VI/DB technology is reviewed, evaluated, and recommended as needed.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
2.7 For any device selected for use by the student, there is a plan to introduce it, maintain it, and teach the student to use the new information it provides.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
<b>Comments on Access to Information:</b>  <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>			

## IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness

### SOCIAL ISSUES

Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____

**3. Social Issues** – Deafblindness impacts the ability to form relationships and respond to interactions with others in typical ways. For example, a lack of environmental information makes it difficult to identify people, locate them, know what they are doing, or understand what they want. Many ordinary interactions may seem threatening, negative, or confusing to the student. In turn, the student’s need to gather information by close viewing and/or touch can offend others. It is not unusual to see withdrawal and problems with bonding. It is important to consider that social problems for a student with deafblindness are often the result of an on-going lack of essential information. The psychological impact of changes in vision and hearing experienced by a student with deafblindness may need to be addressed in the IEP.

**Please Circle Your Answer:**

**Y: for Yes**  
**N: for No**  
**N/A: for Not Applicable**

3.1 When evaluating social skills, the team considers the effects of deafblindness and lack of information before developing intervention strategies to address delays in social skills.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
3.2 The IEP includes a method to orient the student to new individuals.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
3.3 The IEP addresses a way to locate and identify people in the environment.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
3.4 The IEP acknowledges the student’s need to bond and build trust in order to learn and addresses whether there is a need for assigning an intervener to the student.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
3.5 Strategies are developed to increase the number and quality of interactions and relationships for the student.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
3.6 Strategies are developed to improve the ability to initiate meaningful and socially appropriate self-directed activities during free time.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
3.7 The IEP addresses how deafblindness affects sexuality, including: language related to sexuality and body parts; needs unique to gender; sexual health; and appropriate touch.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A

**Comments on Social Issues:**

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## IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness

### COMMUNICATION

Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____

**4. Communication** – A combined vision and hearing loss can profoundly impact the development of both receptive and expressive communication. A lack of informal and/or formal communication creates a barrier affecting all areas of learning. Many students with deafblindness have difficulty finding and engaging potential communication partners without support from someone (e.g. intervener, interpreter, DB teacher) who can bridge between the student’s unique communication system and typical speakers. Without this support the student is cut off from accessing both instruction and conversational interactions that are key to learning.

**Please Circle Your Answer:**  
  
**Y: for Yes**  
**N: for No**  
**N/A: for Not Applicable**

4.1. An appropriate communication evaluation has been completed.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
4.2. The IEP incorporates communication evaluation and strategies that appropriately reflect the student’s developmental level in the areas of:			
a. <u>Communicative Forms</u> – (touch cues, object symbols, pictures, gestures, sign, speech, print, Braille etc.);	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
b. <u>Social Aspects</u> – functions (request, reject, label, report, etc.) and social interactions (bonding with primary caregivers, initiating interactions, maintaining joint attention, turn taking, etc.);	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
c. <u>Vocabulary</u> – targeted vocabulary reflects the student’s conceptual understanding;	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
d. <u>Content</u> – topics (gym, eating lunch, music, etc.), meaning categories (objects, actions, people, places, etc.) and contexts (here and now, the next activity, something occurring	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
4.3. Literacy issues are considered, including the following elements:			
a. are alternative static communication forms (objects, tactile symbols, pictures, print, etc.) used for a variety of functions (lists, letters, experience books, etc.)?	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
b. can the student spell or fingerspell?	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
c. if Braille is used or considered, is Grade One taught to fingerspellers?	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
d. is language complexity right for student whose primary language is sign, not English?	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A

**Comments on Communication:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CALENDAR SYSTEM</b></p>	<p>Date: _____ Date of IEP: _____</p>	<p>Date: _____ Date of IEP: _____</p>	<p>Date: _____ Date of IEP: _____</p>
<p><b>5. Calendar System</b> – Calendars provide contexts in which students with deafblindness can develop meaningful communication and time concepts. Calendars and calendar discussions also support deafblind individuals emotionally through the security that comes with anticipation of upcoming events, knowledge about changes in routine, and trust in an adult’s commitment to follow through on scheduled activities.</p>	<p><b><u>Please Circle Your Answer:</u></b></p> <p><b>Y: for Yes</b> <b>N: for No</b> <b>N/A: for Not Applicable</b></p>		
<p>5.1 The student has a calendar system that incorporates developmentally appropriate components related to:</p> <p>a. <u>Time frame</u> - (anticipation of “next step” in familiar routines, anticipation of next event, daily, weekly, multi-weekly, monthly);</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>
<p>b. <u>Representational Symbols</u> - (objects, parts of objects, drawings of objects, pictures, print, tactile symbols, etc.);</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>
<p>c. <u>Calendar-Related Concepts and Language</u> - (time, sequencing, choice making, etc.).</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>
<p>5.2 The calendar is used as a methodology to support goals and objectives in curricular areas such as communication, social/emotional, recreation/leisure and behavior.</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>	<p>Y N N/A</p>
<p><b>Comments on Calendar System:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>			





## IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness

### BEHAVIOR

Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____

**6. Behavior** – For students with deafblindness, issues of challenging behavior are usually closely tied to sensory access and communication. Behavior is often the result of coping with situations that seem confusing or threatening due to lack of information available from others or from the environment. It can also be the result of frustration about being ineffective in communicating about important topics in more socially acceptable ways. The student’s difficulty in recognizing, trusting, and bonding with others can have an impact on behavior. Additionally, behaviors may result from the student’s need to stimulate or regulate sensory input, or they may be in response to pain associated with medical conditions like glaucoma or ear infections.

**Please Circle Your Answer:**

**Y: for Yes**  
**N: for No**  
**N/A: for Not Applicable**

6.1 Evaluation of behavior includes a functional behavior analysis addressing the sensory needs met by the behaviors in question and/or their communicative intent.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
6.2 The team has evaluated whether discomfort related to medical conditions or features associated with the student’s etiology are impacting the behaviors in question.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
6.3 When behavior is a concern, the IEP includes goals for improving the student’s ability to communicate ideas and concerns in more socially acceptable ways.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
6.4 When behavior is a concern, the IEP includes strategies for providing the student with more understandable information about activities, surroundings, and expectations.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A

**Comments on Behavior:**

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## IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness

### ORIENTATION & MOBILITY (O&M)

Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____

**7. Orientation and Mobility (O&M)** – Deafblindness affects the ability of students to know where they are, and how to go from place to place. Certified O&M Specialists (COMS) will find that working with this population may require some changes in instructional approaches. Students with deafblindness get less information from the environment, and have a lower motivation to explore. Deafblindness affects the identification and use of sound cues. Students need more orientation to environments, and strategies to gather information about their surroundings.

**Please Circle Your Answer:**  
  
**Y: for Yes**  
**N: for No**  
**N/A: for Not Applicable**

7.1. The student’s level of exploration and movement is evaluated in light of the effects of deafblindness.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
7.2. O&M evaluation and programming reflects the effects of hearing loss on the student's ability to localize and identify sound cues.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
7.3. The IEP reflects a plan for the Certified O&M Specialist to receive support from the team (i.e. support from an interpreter, intervener, or teacher of the deafblind) in utilizing the student's communication system during instruction.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
7.4. Instruction as reflected in the IEP provides adequate information for the student to establish a destination and recognize a particular route (use of a communication system to establish a destination, use of the calendar conversation, additional time to explore the salient parts of the route).	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
7.5. Instruction as reflected in the IEP provides supplemental information about the environment to offset the lack of incidental learning (what is a mall? Or a bus?) by experientially teaching concepts and related vocabulary.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A

**Comments on Orientation & Mobility:**

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## IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness

### RELATED AND SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____
_____	_____	_____

**8. Related and Supplemental Services** – Certain related services and supports are designed for students with sensory impairments, and should be considered for all students with deafblindness. For example, an intervener is a paraprofessional with special skills and training who is designated to work individually with a student who is deafblind. Sign language interpretation and O&M are also examples of specialized services. Additionally, the effects of deafblindness should be taken into account in assessments, evaluations and delivery of all related services provided to the student. For example, optimal positioning for communication access should be considered by the physical therapist. Counselors may need to address changes in vision and hearing experienced by a student with deafblindness.

**Please Circle Your Answer:**

**Y: for Yes**  
**N: for No**  
**N/A: for Not Applicable**

8.1. The student’s sensory access to instruction has been evaluated, and the need for an interpreter or intervener to effectively meet IEP goals has been considered.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
8.2. There has been an O&M evaluation that addresses the effects of hearing loss in combination with the vision impairment in determining the need for services. (Refer to Section 7 on Orientation and Mobility.)	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
8.3. The effects of deafblindness have been assessed in a communication evaluation, and services of a speech/language pathologist have been considered.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
8.4. Assessments, evaluations and delivery of all related and supplemental services take into account the effects of deafblindness.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
8.5. The IEP addresses training for the family and staff on issues related to deafblindness.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A

**Comments on Related and Supplemented Services:**

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## IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness

### TRANSITION PLANNING

Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____	Date of IEP: _____

**9. Transition Planning** – As a student enters the teen years and nears graduation, there are considerations for both educational programming and community services. The need for experientially based vocational assessment and instruction in real-world environments is heightened when sensory issues affect access to environmental information and practical experience. The ability to initiate and sustain meaningful leisure activities is impacted by the capacity to learn through modeling and gather environmental cues. Being an effective self-advocate about communication and access to information is essential for success in higher education, employment, and other community settings. Additionally, referrals to community services designed for people with deafblindness lead to better adult outcomes (e.g. community intervener, support service provider, interpreter, specialized residential & vocational support).

**Please Circle Your Answer:**

**Y: for Yes**  
**N: for No**  
**N/A: for Not Applicable**

9.1. Vocational assessment and instruction is based on the student’s language and conceptual development, and includes sampling a variety of job experiences in work settings.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
9.2. The student’s ability to engage in meaningful, enjoyable and productive self-directed leisure activities has been assessed, and the IEP includes goals to improve the student’s ability to make choices and participate in activities during unstructured time as needed.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
9.3. The IEP reflects development of self-advocacy skills related to communication style and sensory needs in education, work, and social settings.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
9.4. The IEP includes assessment and instruction related to communication and travel in various community settings and situations.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A
9.5. The student has been referred to appropriate services, including the deafblind specialist at the DARS- Division of Blind Services, the Deaf-Blind Multiple Disabilities Medicaid Waiver Program, and the Helen Keller National Center.	Y N N/A	Y N N/A	Y N N/A

**Comments on Related and Supplemented Services:**

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## IEP Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness

### A TEAMING PROCESS PLAN

Date:

Date:

Date:

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Date of IEP:

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Date of IEP:

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Date of IEP:

**10. Teaming** – Due to the complexity of needs of students who are deafblind, annual meetings of the IEP team may not be sufficient for planning the educational program. Continuous input from a smaller core group is often needed to guide daily programming. The function of the core team is to review, refine, and direct on-going educational programming. Core team members may include those who daily and weekly interact with the student (e.g. parent, intervener, classroom teacher, teacher of the deafblind, VI teacher, AI teacher). The core team should meet regularly (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or quarterly) based on the student’s needs. An extended team may meet with the core team when expertise is needed in specialized therapy areas (e.g. PT, OT, O&M).

**Please Circle Your Answer:**

**Y: for Yes**

**N: for No**

**N/A: for Not Applicable**

10.1. The IEP includes a Team Management Plan (i.e. identifying core and extended team members; a meeting schedule; responsibilities for meeting arrangements and communication; group norms).

Y N N/A

Y N N/A

Y N N/A

10.2. Daily time is designated for the teacher and support service provider (i.e. intervener; interpreter) to plan together and discuss lesson plans, intervention strategies, and student progress.

Y N N/A

Y N N/A

Y N N/A

10.3. Training in deafblindness for all team members is addressed in the IEP.

Y N N/A

Y N N/A

Y N N/A

**Comments on Teaming Process Plan:**

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## References:

Alsop, L., Robinson, C., Goehl, K., Lace, J., Belote, M., Rodriguez-Gil, G. (2007). *Interveners in the Classroom: Guidelines for Teams Working with Students Who are Deafblind*. Logan, UT: SKI-HI Institute.

Minnesota Deafblind Technical Assistance Project (2005). *Quality Indicators for Students with Deafblindness for IEP Development*.