Chapter 2

A History of Federal Support for Students with Deaf-Blindness

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Prior to 1933, no formal education programs existed for people with deaf-blindness. In fact, in 1928, the Bureau of the Census reported that there were only 169 people with deaf-blindness in the United States (a figure likely to be more reflective of an error in measurement than of the actual number of people). From the 1930s to the 1950s, several states instituted programs in the form of residential schools for students with deaf-blindness. However, it remained for the emergence of federal support to spur the growth of such programs to other states, the initiation of research and demonstration projects to improve the quality of educational services, and the widespread availability of technical assistance to assist states and programs in serving students with deaf-blindness. This chapter traces the evolution of this federal support and illustrates how the partnership of federal, state, university, and school district programs have fostered the continual growth and refinement of services to individuals with deaf-blindness from the early 1950s to the early 1990s. Table 1 summarizes U.S. legislation discussed in this chapter.

EARLY DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD OF FEDERAL SUPPORT: 1950–1969

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, most educational programs for children with deaf-blindness were provided at state residential schools for children who were either blind or deaf. These programs were few in number and scattered widely across the United States. Additionally, the few programs available typically limited their enrollment to those children who were perceived to be of average or above-average intelligence.

The general reluctance to enroll children with deaf-blindness who also had other serious disabilities can be appreciated when considering the complex challenges in providing educational services to these children. Waterhouse (1977) observed that in deaf-blindness, the resulting compound disability is different from, and greater than, the sum of the component disabilities. Schein (1978) further emphasized that “the presence of a second handicapping condition does not add to the handicapped person’s problems, it multiplies them” (p. 4). Conlon (1991) noted
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public law (PL)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>U.S. code</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Principal provisions relating to children with deaf-blindness</th>
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<tr>
<td>PL 89-10</td>
<td>Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1955</td>
<td>20 U.S.C. §241 et seq.</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>• Provided grants to States to assist local school districts to meet special educational needs of educationally-deprived children in low income areas. (Children with disabilities in low income areas also eligible.)</td>
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<td>PL 90-247</td>
<td>Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1967</td>
<td>20 U.S.C. §877b</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>• Established the Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program, including provision of diagnostic services for and programs for the adjustment, orientation, and education of children with deaf-blindness and consultative services to their parents and other service providers.</td>
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<td>Reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Programs</td>
<td>20 U.S.C. §1401 et seq.</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>• Established Part C, to include regional resource centers, centers and services for deaf-blind children, and early education for handicapped children and applied authority for each of these programs to conduct research, development and demonstration, training of personnel, and dissemination activities.</td>
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- Established Office of Special Education with Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, with responsibility to administer programs for children with disabilities.
- Established a National Advisory Committee on the Education of Handicapped Children and Youth.
- Established provision regarding architectural barriers.
- Authorized a grant to provide technical assistance to all states and multi-state projects for children with deaf-blindness and a grant to provide technical assistance to states to facilitate the transition of individuals with deaf-blindness from education to employment and other postsecondary options.


- Established Handicapped Infants and Toddlers Program; amended Preschool Grants Program; amended provision of services to Native American children with disabilities; added responsibility for evaluation of programs to the Secretary.
- Authorized issuance of awards for extended school-year projects in Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program.
- Expanded authority under Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program to support research, development and demonstration, training, and dissemination activities for children with other severe disabilities.


- Added definition of deaf-blindness.
- Authorized award of a national clearinghouse on deaf-blindness and award of "pilot projects."
- Clarified that program services could be extended to infants and toddlers.
- Deleted program authority to award extended school year, Statewide Systems Change projects, and projects serving children with disabilities other than deaf-blindness.
- Added more flexibility in provision of services to facilitate transition from educational to other services by making "adolescents" and "young adults," as opposed to only "youth, upon age twenty-two," eligible for services.
that during this period, children born with deaf-blindness entered "a world ill-equipped to provide for them. They were born into families that had not known persons with such disabilities. They were living in communities where appropriate medical assistance and immediate, appropriate interventions were not available" (p. 42).

School-age children with deaf-blindness who functioned below-average intellectually were most often placed in residential schools or "asylums" where they were typically provided only custodial and life-sustaining services. Many of the schools serving these children were physically located in remote areas or at isolated sites in cities where the students (often termed "inmates") could be obscured from the view of the general public. During this period, personnel trained to instruct children with deaf-blindness were few in number, and opportunities for personnel inservice training and acquaintance with new methodology and teaching materials were very limited. The nation's teacher training programs for addressing the learning needs of children with disabilities were just being developed, as were standards for teacher certification.

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. PL 89-40**

In the early 1960s, the U.S. Congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This act was created in response to a growing public demand for federal assistance to support education programs for children with special needs. This landmark legislation authorized the awarding of funds to assist state and local school districts in meeting the special academic needs of educationally deprived children in low income areas. Although not so specified in the legislation, children with disabilities, including those with deaf-blindness, who lived in low income areas were considered to be "educationally deprived" and consequently were eligible for services under this program.

**ESEA Amendments of 1966 and 1967**

Despite its general application to national education programs, a significant number of children with disabilities participating in state-operated and state-supported schools did not fall within the purview of the new ESEA statute. Congress corrected this oversight with the passage of PL 89-313 on November 1, 1966, which established eligibility for state agencies that are "directly responsible for providing, on a non-school-district basis, free public education for handicapped children" to receive annual appropriations based on the numbers of such children served (PL 89-313, §16(a)(3)).

Congress further amended ESEA with PL 89-750. Enacted November 1, 1966, this legislation established Title VI—Education of Handicapped Children—"for the purpose of assisting the States in the initiation, expansion, and improvement of programs and projects . . . for the education of handicapped children . . . at the preschool, elementary and secondary school levels" (ESEA, Title VI, §601). Section 609 of PL 89-750 provided for the establishment of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped "for administering and carrying out programs and projects relating to the education and training of the handicapped, including programs and projects for the training of teachers of the handicapped and for research in such education and training" (PL 89-750, §609).

Section 103(a) of this law authorized federal support to state education agencies for establishing or improving programs for children of migratory agricultural workers, while Section 104(a)(c) authorized federal payments based on the number of children in the school districts ages 5–17 who were living in the community with their families, living in institutions for children who are neglected
or delinquent, or children being supported in foster homes with public funds. Early records indicate that a few children with deaf-blindness who also met the criteria of being migratory, neglected, or delinquent were served by funds under this amendment.

On April 3, 1967, Congress reauthorized ESEA with an amendment that established regional resource centers, promoted the recruitment of personnel through the dissemination of information concerning educational opportunities for people with disabilities, and created Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, designating this title as the Education of the Handicapped Act.

Results of ESEA and Its Early Amendments
Reflecting on the 1968–1969 accomplishments of these newly authorized federal programs, the U.S. Office of Education reported on activities supported under ESEA (as amended) and under PL 89-313 in three documents: 1) Resumes of Projects for Handicapped Children Funded under the PL 89-313 Amendment to Title I, ESEA—Fiscal Year 1968, which described the nature of the children served and the types of services provided in PL 89-313—funded projects; 2) Selected Projects for Handicapped Children under PL 89-313 and Title VI-A, ESEA-Fiscal Year 1968, with similar information on 164 Title VI-A and 66 PL 89-313 projects; and 3) a summary document of educational accomplishments of children served under both programs, Better Education for Handicapped Children (1968).

Although the actual number of children with deaf-blindness who participated in these projects was not reported, a limited number of such children participated in early programs at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts, and the state Schools for the Blind in Michigan and California.

Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Programs PL 90-247
In spite of significant national interest throughout the later 1960s in the needs of children with disabilities, the unique needs of children with deaf-blindness remained largely unrecognized during this period. Danae (1977) observed that:

It took the devastating and catastrophic force of the rubella epidemic that swept across the United States in 1964 and 1965 to bring about an acknowledgement of the neglect and indifference that had for so long characterized public attitudes toward deaf-blind and other severely handicapped children. (p. 172)

Thus, while the ESEA amendments were under consideration by Congress, the disastrous results of the 1964 and 1965 rubella epidemic gained national attention. This epidemic left in its wake approximately 2,500 children with deaf-blindness who would be in need of extensive, special educational services beginning by school year 1969. Theodore Ellenbogen, then Assistant General Counsel, Division of Legislation for the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), forwarded a first draft of the Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children program to be inserted in Senate Bill 1123 (H.R. 7819) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1967. The draft proposed the establishment of centers for children with deaf-blindness that would provide for their adjustment, orientation, and education by integrating all professional and allied services. The program also stipulated support for the development or demonstration of new or improved methods, approaches, or techniques contributing to the adjustment of these children.

James M. Frey, Acting Assistant Director for Legislative Reference, Budget Bureau, expressed serious doubts as to the need for and desirability of the proposed amendment.
suggesting that any special program for such children should be an integral part of the regional resource centers program (J.M. Frey, departmental memorandum, October 2, 1967). The HEW countered Frey’s rejection of their proposal and continued with strong support for the proposed services.

Considerations for Congress The growing public support at this time for programs serving children with deaf-blindness soon found an audience with congressional committees. Committee members in discussions for the proposed new Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program observed that the majority of the nation’s children with deaf-blindness were receiving no special education and training services and, furthermore, that many were thought to be remaining at home without any education or intervention (U.S. Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, Report No. 726, November 6, 1967). The Senate passed a bill on December 11, 1967, essentially endorsing a bill approved by the House (H.R. 7819), that added a new Part C, Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children, to the ESEA. Through a limited number of model centers for children with deaf-blindness, the bill provided

a program designed to develop and bring to bear upon such children, beginning as early as feasible in life, those specialized, intensive professional and allied services, methods, and aids that are found to be most effective to enable them to achieve their full potential for communication with and adjustment to the world around them, for useful and meaningful participation in society, and for self-fulfillment.


The bill authorized the Secretary “to make grants to or contracts with public or non-profit private agencies, organizations, or institutions to pay all or part of the cost of establishment (including, when necessary, construction) or operation, or both, of centers for deaf-blind children (House Resolution 7819, Part C, §609[b]). The centers to be funded under this bill were to provide: 1) comprehensive diagnostic and evaluative services for children with deaf-blindness; 2) a program for the adjustment, orientation, and education of children with deaf-blindness; and 3) effective consultative services for parents, teachers, and others who play a direct role in the lives of these children. The HEW Secretary was authorized to support costs of:

1. Research to identify and meet the full range of special needs of children with deaf-blindness
2. Development or demonstration of new, or improvements in existing, methods, approaches, or techniques
3. Training (either directly or otherwise) of professional and allied personnel engaged or preparing to engage in programs specifically designed for children with deaf-blindness
4. Dissemination of materials and information about practices found effective in working with children with deaf-blindness

Adoption of Legislation The legislation resulting from this extended congressional action was signed by President Johnson on January 2, 1968, as PL 90-247. With the passage of this legislation, the Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program finally became a reality. Originally, eight centers were funded with 1 million dollars, with the number of centers being increased shortly thereafter to 10. These regional centers were located in Alabama, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington. The centers began by identifying existing services and determining what additional services were needed. As mandated by the law, these services included comprehensive diagnostic and evaluative services; a
program of adjustment, orientation, and education; and consultative services for parents, teachers, and relevant others. The program's regional structure in these early years proved to be effective in the delivery of early direct services and technical assistance to children with deaf-blindness. However, few state education agencies recognized at first their individual responsibilities for assuring strong, independent state services delivery systems.

FEDERAL EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: 1970-1985


The ESEA was further modified by PL 91-230, enacted April 13, 1970. This significant law amended ESEA to include a new Title VII—Education of the Handicapped (EHA). It defined “handicapped children” as children who are “mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, crippled, or other health impaired children who by reason thereof require special education and related services” (20 U.S.C. §1401). The act established the Bureau for Education of the Handicapped within the Office of Education and assigned to the Bureau the responsibility for administration of programs relating to the handicapped (20 U.S.C. §1402).

Part C of this legislation became the repository for several EHA programs providing benefits and services to persons with disabilities, including Section 621—Regional Resource Centers, Section 622—Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children, and Section 623—Early Education for Handicapped Children. Section 624 of this legislation extended benefits across each of the programs under Part C, by authorizing support for research, innovation, personnel preparation, and dissemination of program information and findings. Part D of this act provided support for the training of personnel for the education of people with disabilities, Part E addressed research and demonstration projects, Part F supported instructional media for people with disabilities, and Part G addressed special programs for children with specific learning disabilities (20 U.S.C. §1411 et seq.).

Modifications to the EHA

With the inclusion of the program of services for children with deaf-blindness as a component under Part C of EHA, an overlap of project funding eligibility for programs serving children with deaf-blindness under EHA provisions and the deaf-blind centers program became evident. This overlap issue was not immediately addressed by the Congress in its legislation or by the HEW in its regulations.

Regulations responding to changes affected by PL 91-230 were published in the Federal Register as a notice of proposed rule making on October 11, 1973 (Vol. 38, no. 196, pp. 28230-28247). Final regulations for the program were incorporated as Part 121c of Title 45—Public Welfare of the Code of Federal Regulations, and were published in the February 20, 1975 issue of the Register (Vol. 40, no. 35, p. 7414).

Included in the revised regulations was a definition of children with deaf-blindness as: children who have auditory and visual handicaps, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems that they cannot properly be accommodated in special education programs solely for the hearing handicapped child or for the visually handicapped child. (U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, 121c.17)
Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975: PL 94-142

Congress completed another major educational action with the passage of the strongly worded PL 94-142, entitled The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975. (Note: the acronym “EHA” has been officially used to designate both the Education of the Handicapped Act and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which amended the original EHA.) Part B of this legislation, Assistance for Education of All Handicapped Children, mandated the provision by the states of a free, appropriate public education to children with disabilities as a condition for receipt of federal funding. Over the next few years, states were to come into compliance with the Part B mandate, extending the age of children eligible to receive Part B, EHA services, down toward birth and upward toward age 21. The gradual assumption of mandated responsibility by states to provide educational services for more and more of their children with disabilities brought increased awareness of the overlap of funding programs serving children with deaf-blindness, from both the Part B, EHA and the Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program.

Amendments to EHA

As the states began their phase-in of services mandated under Part B, EHA, Congress and the U.S. Department of Education directed attention to legislative changes needed in the discretionary programs of EHA, including the Services to Deaf-Blind Children and Youth Program. Concerns regarding this program centered on an anticipated increase in the number of children with deaf-blindness, as well as a recognition of the complexity of their needs.

Estimates on the incidence of these children varied. A National Communicable Disease Center (CDC) report of 1969 indicated that as a result of the national rubella epidemic of 1964–1965 (which resulted in 12,500,000 cases of rubella), approximately 3,580 children now had both visual and hearing impairments. A 1971 survey by the National Center for Health Statistics reported that there were 9,596,000 persons with visual impairments and 34,491,000 persons with hearing impairments at all age levels living in the United States, with 2,559,000 of these (10.6%) having both vision and hearing impairments. A 1976–1977 survey by the Office of Demographic Studies, Gallaudet College, indicated that there were 4,247 students who were deaf with concomitant visual impairments enrolled in 14 different types of programs. Furthermore, the October 6, 1982 House Report (No. 98-410) referenced an unpublished study by Dr. Chelinsky of the Institute for Program Evaluation, U.S. General Accounting Office, which affirmed that there was an absence of information on the exact number of children with deaf-blindness in the nation, the number of such children being served, and the impact of the services being provided. Chelinsky also reported that the extent and nature of services available to these children after they reach the age of 22 years was unclear.

Concerning the complexity of needs, a special study directed by Hanley (1981), Executive Director, Mountain Plains Regional Center for Deaf-Blind children, was presented as testimony before the Subcommittee on the Handicapped on May 21 and 23, 1983. Hanley reported that a majority of the nation’s population with deaf-blindness also had severe and multiple disabilities and thus required even more specialized services than was previously recognized. The House Committee, responding to this information, stated that its intent was that the program should emphasize provision of technical assistance to those serving children and youth with
deaf-blindness, along with preservice or inservice personnel training in the replication of exemplary practices and enhancement of parental involvement in services provided by the program (U.S. House of Representatives, House Report 3435). In its hearings, the Senate Committee emphasized that its intent was that children with deaf-blindness "be educated with their non-handicapped peers to the greatest extent possible while still receiving special education and related services according to their unique needs" (Senate Report No. 98-191, p. 16).

Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1983: PL 98-199

PL 98-199 was signed into law on December 2, 1983. This legislation authorized support for two technical assistance awards: one to provide technical assistance to state agencies in building their capacity to assure that children and youth with deaf-blindness received a free, appropriate public education, as had been mandated under the companion Part B-EHA legislation, and the second award to promote the capacity of states to facilitate the transition of youth with deaf-blindness who have reached the age of 21 from school to postschool and adult living and working environments.

Revision of Program Regulations

Proposed program regulations, published in the Federal Register on April 30, 1984 (Vol. 49, no. 84, pp. 18418-18423) and followed by final regulations published in the Federal Register on July 11, 1984 (Vol. 49, no. 134, p. 28160) responded to Congressional committee recommendations and suggestions from service providers across the country, including representatives from six regional deaf-blind centers, six state departments of special education, and three universities. The revisions established two top priorities for use of program funds: 1) the provision of services to children and youth with deaf-blindness and 2) the provision of technical assistance to states to build their capacity to expand services to children with deaf-blindness. Additionally, the regulations established geographical regions for the conduct of projects, specified types of technical assistance to be made available by the two newly authorized technical assistance providers, described the dissemination activities authorized under the program, and authorized the collection and analysis of data on the number and nature of children served by the program and their service providers. The regulations shifted the program emphasis from provision of direct services to children with deaf-blindness to provision of technical assistance to develop state education agency capacity to serve children and youth with deaf-blindness. Authorized awards to states to operate programs independently from a regional center, and authorized awards of research and demonstration projects to improve practices and techniques in educating children and youth with deaf-blindness.

New program trends emerged as a result of the revised regulations and included:

1. Focus on provision of technical assistance with a reduction of direct services.
2. Withdrawal of many states from the former so-called "regional centers" projects to become individual single state projects.
3. Increased emphasis on funding demonstration and research projects promoting effective program practices.

The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) was the successful grantee to provide technical assistance in building state capacity to provide services to school-age children, while the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) was the successful grantee to address the needs of youth transitioning into postschool settings. A third special award
was granted in 1984 to the Gallaudet University in support of a nationwide project for the dissemination of information concerning the nature, needs, educational programming practices, and other service delivery project information.

Impact of Legislation

The legislative period of 1970–1985 is one of contrasts. It began with educational practices principally formed on an individual, teacher-intuitive basis. It bridged a time of sharing, with service providers exchanging information on best practices verified for effectiveness. Blea and Overbeck (1977) described the beginning picture as one where "empirical research focusing specifically upon the development and education of the deaf-blind child, per se, [was] practically nil" (p. 256).

Wolf, Delk, and Schein (1982), in conducting a needs assessment of services to individuals with deaf-blindness, concurred with this observation and summarized that the "two most critical areas, aside from employment, [were]: communication and transportation" (p. 71).

This period was distinguished by the initiation in 1978 of program support for innovation. Three exploratory model projects designed to develop improved, effective services were funded. These projects included:

1. Teaching Research of Monmouth, Oregon, which demonstrated that students with deaf-blindness, ages 12–21, could be educated in a typical general education classroom
2. The Frederic Burk Foundation, San Francisco State University, which documented success in providing nonsegregated services to children with deaf-blindness ages 5–12
3. Deafness Research and Training Center, New York University, which developed procedures for providing comprehensive assessment and educational services to children with deaf-blindness, ages 3–18, either in their homes or in custodial institutions.

The period of 1970–1985 was also marked with increased interest in providing services to children with multiple disabilities, including deaf-blindness. In response to this interest, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH) organized a task force to consider the educational needs of these children, urging the committee to propose strategies implementing

a new bureau-wide objective in the 1974–1978 Five-Year Plan: to enable the most severely handicapped children and youth to become as independent as possible; thereby reducing their requirements for institutional care and providing opportunities for self-development. (Thompson, Wilcox, & York, 1980, p. 1)

In an effort to promote a greater exchange of information in the fields of deaf-blindness and other severe disabilities, BEH convened a national conference in 1978: Innovation in Education for Deaf-Blind Children and Youth. Dr. Ed Martin, Commissioner of Education, addressing the convened educators and directors of projects from these two significant fields, stated the following:

This is a marvelous and dignified kind of work that has attracted you and we are glad that the federal government has been of help in behalf of some of the most vulnerable people in our society. In 1969, when the first centers were funded, less than 100 children were served by six or seven programs. Today there are nearly 300 programs throughout all the states and territories, serving 5872 deaf-blind children, and probably 5000 people, including parents, teachers, and medical personnel, have lent their skills to providing these services.

Of these 5872 children, nearly 2300 are served entirely with non-VI-C monies, and the remainder receive services through Title VI-C and other federal, state, and local funds. Today's budget of $16 million represents $3 of other money for each VI-C dollar, and this
funding pattern has been established without a mandate that states must match the federal contribution. (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare: 1978, p. 1)

ENHANCEMENT AND EXPANSION PERIOD: 1986–1992

By the mid-1980s, programs addressing the needs of children with disabilities had markedly expanded both in number and comprehensiveness. Refinements in methodology, an increase in the variety and extent of resources to meet instructional needs, and the numbers of trained personnel had also improved. With this expansion, however, the nation became aware of even greater needs of this population, including infants and toddlers at risk of developmental delays and disabilities, preschool children evidencing complex problems resulting from parental drug addiction and alcohol abuse, secondary and postsecondary children and youth failing to transition effectively into changing community living and working environments.

Education of the Handicapped
Act Amendments of 1986: PL 99-457

Public Law 99-457 was legislated in response to the growing need for services. It established a new Handicapped Infants and Toddlers Program and amended the Preschool Grants Program. Specific to the Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program, PL 99-457 authorized extended school-year demonstration programs for children and youth with severe disabilities, including children and youth with deaf-blindness, and expanded the range of disabilities of children eligible to be included in research, development, or demonstration projects, as authorized under the Program for Severely Handicapped Children. PL 99-457, however, disregarded a recommendation of the Budget Office of the U.S. Department of Education that the Centers program be merged with the Program for Severely Handicapped Children.

Regulatory Revisions to PL 99-457

The development of revised program regulations complementing PL 99-457 extended over a 24-month period. Proposed regulations were published in the Federal Register in November of 1988 (Vol. 53, no. 225, pp. 47406–47410, 1988); final regulations followed 5 months later (Vol. 54, no. 72, pp. 15308–15313, 1989). In the revisions, the Department of Education addressed the funding inequity for the state awards by specifying four factors to be used in establishing award levels:

1. The number of children and youth with disabilities in the state
2. The number of children and youth with deaf-blindness in the state
3. The relative cost of providing services authorized under the program to children and youth with deaf-blindness in the state
4. The quality of the application submitted

The use of child-count data in the award determination for the state and multi-state projects improved reporting of children with deaf-blindness. Attempts in previous years to "centrally collect information about the deaf-blind population was done on a voluntary basis and resulted in a general undercounting of the population nationwide" (Baldwin, 1991, p. 2). Under PL 99-457, applicants for the program were required to submit an annual report of the number of children with deaf-blindness being served. Based on a study by Baldwin (1991), who estimated an incidence ratio of approximately 2 students with deaf-blindness per 1,000 students with disabilities, it could be further estimated that there were from 7,214 to 10,958 children with deaf-blindness in the nation as
of 1989. Responding to the new evaluation criteria, applications submitted for state and multi-state projects, as well as for demonstration projects, evidenced marked improvement in the comprehensiveness and overall quality of project activities.

1990 Reauthorization of EHA

In 1990, considering the reauthorization of the Education of the Handicapped Act, the Department of Education once again proposed to congressional committees that the Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program be merged with the Program for Severely Handicapped Children. The department’s view reflected recommendations of certain professional educators advocating for educational services based on behavior and learning similarities between children with deaf-blindness and those with other serious disabilities. This proposed merger of the two programs generated a prompt response, both enthusiastic and negative, from the field. Representing opposition to such a merger, Collins and Marshall (1989) testified before Congressional committees on behalf of the National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness. They proposed that

1. A definition of deaf-blindness be included in the regulations
2. Seventy percent (70%) of the program funds be used to support single and multi-state centers for children with deaf-blindness
3. Authority authorizing the use of 622 (Services for Deaf-Blind Children) funds for 624(d) (Program for Children with Severe Disabilities) activities be deleted
4. Eligibility of children for services under the program be restricted to only those children with deaf-blindness

The deletion of authority to include children with severe disabilities from projects supported by the program became a major concern for other national interest groups and individuals. These organizations also appealed to Congress. They contended for the educational advantages offered by projects including children with deaf-blindness to also be made available to those with other severe disabilities.

Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990: PL 101-476

House bill H.R. 1013, and Senate bill S. 1824 reflected Congressional response to the input received from the various interest groups concerning reauthorization of the EHA. However, because of significant differences between these two bills, a conference committee was convened to seek a mutually acceptable resolution. The resulting legislation, the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990 (PL 101-476) was signed by President George Bush on October 30, 1990.

These amendments reauthorized the discretionary programs under Parts C through G of the EHA and made certain changes to Parts A, B, and H. This law renamed the EHA as The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It changed the term handicapped children to children with disabilities, added two new categories of disability: autism and traumatic brain injury, defined transition services, created the Program for Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance, and authorized provision of services in most discretionary programs to include infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Changes affecting the Services for Children with Deaf-Blindness Program responded to many of the recommendations of the National Coalition and other organizations serving this population. Among these changes, the new legislation

1. Added local education agencies (LEAs) and Part H lead agencies to state edu-
cation agencies (SEAs) as program beneficiaries.

2. Included infants and toddlers and early intervention services to the scope of the program.

3. Provided services to facilitate transition from educational to other services by allowing adolescents and young adults (as opposed to the previous restriction of only “youth, upon attaining age 22”) to become eligible for such services.

4. Provided a definition of children with deaf-blindness, including in that definition infants and toddlers identified as having deaf-blindness.

5. Authorized support for pilot supplementary services by single and multistate projects as well as a national clearinghouse for children with deaf-blindness.

6. Authorized funding for pilot, research, development or demonstration, or replication projects, preservice and inservice training, and parental involvement activities; children with severe disabilities other than deaf-blindness become ineligible for project participation.

Impact of Legislative Changes
Resulting From PL 99-457 and PL 101-476

The impact of legislative changes resulting from PL 99-457 and PL 101-476 was substantive and pronounced. Funding competitions during this period demonstrate the impact of these laws. The competitions were characterized by formulation of and research pertaining to innovative educational approaches. Specifically, they addressed development of social skills, skills related to the transition to differing education programs and to community living environments, inservice training of personnel, supported employment, and utilization and validation of innovations. Evidence of the success of these projects included a proliferation of professional publications reporting project activities and achievements and presentations of project findings and research results in national and international conferences.

Several particularly significant projects were funded following the enactment of this legislation. In 1990, the American Foundation for the Blind, in a consortium effort with other national service providers, was awarded a 4-year project to develop, evaluate, and disseminate new or improved curricula and materials for the inservice training and self-study use of special education personnel to deliver educational services that meet the unique needs of children and youth with multiple disabilities, including those with deaf-blindness. This project focused specifically on communication and mobility skills. Teaching Research Division was awarded a national clearinghouse for children with deaf-blindness project and a second award to conduct the National Symposium on Provision of Educational and Related Services to Children with Deaf-Blindness. St. Luke’s Roosevelt Hospital Center and the University of Oregon were awarded research projects addressing the social relationships of children and adolescents with deaf-blindness. However, despite these accomplishments, there is still concern that not enough is being done. Collins (1992), in addressing the March 1992 National Conference on Deaf-Blindness, cautioned that the current era is one in which funding is less than adequate and more difficult to obtain.

AN OVERVIEW OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DEAF-BLINDNESS

In March 1887, Anne Sullivan, a graduate of the Perkins School for the Blind, began to teach a 6-year-old with deaf-blindness named Helen Keller. The young Helen frequently demonstrated violent tantrums, but, even with the tantrums, she responded to Anne’s efforts to teach her the names of familiar ob-
jects. At first Helen considered this process to be simply an interesting game. It was not until April 2, 1887, that she first sensed the relationship between objects and language. Spelling "w-a-t-e-r" as it gushed forth from the water pump onto Helen’s hand, Anne had penetrated a void in learning. Anne described this unique experience:

The word coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand seemed to startle her. She dropped the mug and stood transfixed. A new light came into her face. She spelled "water" several times. Then she dropped to the ground and asked for its name. She pointed to the pump and the trellis, and suddenly turning around, she asked for my name. I spelled "teacher." (Braddy, 1933, p. 126)

Helen Keller went on to become the first person with deaf-blindness to receive a bachelor's degree from Radcliffe College. Her exceptional life of humanitarian service in speaking out across the globe as to the dignity of people with disabilities and their rights to full citizenship privileges clearly demonstrates the extended benefits to society of teaching individuals with deaf-blindness. From the spelling of "w-a-t-e-r" in the hand of a wondering Helen Keller first sensing a relationship between words and her world, to the awareness of a nation of parents, siblings, and a vast array of other persons seeking to bring about a similar awakening in others, programs and services for children with deaf-blindness have come a long way.

Prior to 1965, programs for these children were few in number, scattered across the face of the nation, and limitted in their enrollment only to those students who clearly indicated promise of academic achievement. The fortunate few were taught following traditional procedures that their teachers had found successful when instructing children without disabilities. Intuition and initiative were their craft, waged with anxiety and anticipation. Their teaching methods were rarely shared with others in a similar pursuit.

Meeting the educational needs of this population was demanding. Hicks and Pfau (1979) observed:

"It is impossible to plan an effective educational or rehabilitative program for multihandicapped persons simply by understanding the nature of the isolated handicaps and then attempting to eradicate these handicaps one from the other. . . . Multiple handicaps become so intertwined and interlaced that they synergistically compound and compound the problem." (p. 76)

The rubella epidemic of 1964–1965 greatly increased national awareness of the paucity of academic programs for children with multiple disabilities. Many children were emerging from the epidemic with both deafness and blindness to confront an ill-prepared and understaffed resource of trained service providers. Fortunately, the time for realization of this problem was ripe. With the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10), America had just begun to direct certain of its federal treasury to support programs for the educationally deprived.

The Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program began in 1969 with funding of 1 million dollars. By 1976, the federal coffers offered their peak release of 16 million in appropriated funds. The number of students served by funded programs increased from approximately 150 to more than 5,000 before the 1970s had passed into history.

In 1974, with the establishment of the program for children with severe disabilities, a new profession of educators emerged: a limited, but expanding, battery of professionals determined to address the issue of equal rights to education for these children. Following closely in 1976, the Centers and Services for Deaf-Blind Children Program initiated awards to support development, demonstration, training, and dissemination activities to address the needs of children with additional, complex disabilities. The federal
dollar had demonstrated that children with deaf-blindness could learn and achieve success. Federal funding was being used to prime new developments, take educational risks and validate their effectiveness, and leverage the generation of state and local funds to meet the rising costs for improved services.

In this arena of change, teaching guides and products produced in isolated settings were being reexamined and reevaluated. Traditional procedures were being challenged by evidence of greater promise in alternative practices. National meetings and symposiums were convened to assess the “state of the art” and to define directions for the future. But with all these signs of progress, still too little attention was being given to the compelling needs for counseling and the sustaining of dedicated efforts on the part of parents and families of children with deaf-blindness. Trained teachers were dropping out of service, “burned out” through an overtaxing and overextending of their patient efforts. The training of replacements to the educational force was lagging desperately behind need.

With the passage in 1975 of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), a new national dedication to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities, their parents, and service providers was declared. Spawning from this significant legislation were the amendments of 1983 and 1986 that brought with their implementation in local schools across the country important improvements in the federal programs serving individuals with deaf-blindness. States began accepting and acting upon a greater recognition of their responsibility for these children, while federal dollars were being directed toward carving out new techniques for teaching, researching cause and effect, conducting project assessments, and disseminating and demonstrating strategies for achieving better results. Figure 1 indicates the number and types of services provided to children with deaf-blindness under federal funding from the years 1978 to 1992.

It remained for the enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1990) to bring about the present vista of federal support. The Part H program for infants and toddlers and the IDEA Section 619 Preschool Program for children ages 3–5 combine objectives with the far-reaching Part B Education of the Handicapped program to set new standards of excellence in service for children with disabilities of all ages.

It is upon the strength of these sister programs, refining themselves through application to the realities of ever-increasing need, that the Services for Children with Deaf-Blindness Program, significantly amended by this act, has in like manner moved ahead. A program that began in the 1960s in isolated residential schools has emerged into a program as varied and exciting as the students it was determined to serve. It is now typically located in inclusive programs in neighborhood schools. There has been a reexamination, review, adjustment, adaptation, and modification motivated by a sense of urgency by a program struggling to achieve its mission. Table 2 shows the number of children with deaf-blindness benefiting, numbers and types of activities, and amount of funding provided as a result of the legislation covered in this chapter.

Meyer’s (1991) perceptions of changes in educational programming for children with severe disabilities can be as keenly observed in similar services for children with deaf-blindness:

The major shift in curriculum from a development to an environmental reference and in vocational training from a transition service to a supported employment model both represent examples of how professional practices have acknowledged the fundamental flaw in approaches focusing upon the remediation of individual deficits. The emphasis has unequivocally shifted to support models: the
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Figure 1. Number and types of demonstration, research, and in-service training projects funded under the Services for Children with Deaf-Blindness Program 1978–1992.
Federal Support for Students with Deaf-Blindness

Figure 1. (continued)

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* Projects supported jointly with Program for Children with Severe Disabilities funds.

Table 2. Services for children with deaf-blindness program expenditures: 1969–1992a

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*aFunds are expressed in $1,000. Count of Children served FY 1969–1977 are estimates.
†Includes unexpended funds remaining after award of all grants/contracts.
individual is indeed taught as many new (useful) skills as possible, but the system must also be designed to "fill in" for the absence of any critical skills through support models. (p. 633)

Making these significant changes possible over time in an effort to meet the needs of a comparatively small population of children with deaf-blindness has been the combined success of thousands of parents and service providers whose patient but persistent pursuit of their objectives was not to be thwarted. While much effort was volunteered as a goodwill offering of service, present results could not have been achieved without the expenditure of millions of dollars carved out of strained state and local resources. Undergirding these resources has been a significant federal financial contribution building on the present and reaching out to future fields of accomplishment. It was particularly insightful that Wolf et al. (1982) observed a decade ago that "a continued federal presence is desirable in the education of deaf-blind children and youth" (p. 77).

Today's Services for Children with Deaf-Blindness Program is a strong, vital program, critically looking at itself with both caution and optimism: cautious that what appears to be progress today will be so proven in time; optimistic that the benefits will yet appear. Thousands are now within our circle that were once without, in a world of their own. It is with some savory, yet restrained, satisfaction in the success of these programs, that those who have given much, have gained much. It is in the hope for such success in others yet to benefit that each future effort promises its reward.

REFERENCES


Federal Support for Students with Deaf-Blindness


