Eligibility Criteria for the area of Deaf-Blind
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Eligibility Criteria For Deaf-Blind

MISSION STATEMENT

The Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative defines its mission for students with deaf-blindness as that of empowering students to become responsible, increasingly self-sufficient, and creative citizens by offering them individually developed, success-based learning environments focusing on the student’s affective as well as academic needs in the least restrictive environment. The Cooperative also strives to promote the dignity and respect of all students by advocating for public policies, research, and services which advance individual choices and human rights.

“DEAF-BLIND” DEFINITION

Deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they [the children] cannot be accommodated in special education programs designed solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.
34CFR, Part 300, Subpart A, 300.7 (c)(2)

REQUIRED COMPONENTS FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Four types of vision impairments may contribute to deaf-blind:

1. Loss of visual acuity
2. Loss of visual fields
3. Loss of ocular motor control
4. Loss of visual processing (neurological or cortical visual impairment)

Three types of hearing impairments to consider for deaf-blind:

1. Sensorineural loss
2. Conductive loss
3. Mixed loss (combination of sensorineural and conductive losses)

If the student does not have sufficient vision to compensate fully for a hearing impairment, or does not have sufficient hearing to compensate fully for a visual impairment, the student may be determined eligible as Deaf-Blind.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

A student is eligible as Deaf-Blind when (1) both hearing and visual impairments are present; and (2) the impairments together cause severe communication, developmental, and educational needs that cannot be addressed in a program designed for either students who are blind or students who are deaf.

EXCLUSIONARY FACTORS

An individual will not be considered eligible for services under Deaf-Blind if:

1. The student is blind or visually impaired in one eye, but the better eye has a best corrected acuity of 20/25 to 20/60.
2. The vision impairment or hearing impairment, is determined by a qualified medical profession (MD, DO, OD, ENT) to be temporary, and the duration of the loss will not substantially or permanently impact learning or academic performance (i.e. scratched cornea, swollen eye, pink eye, otitis media, wax impactation).
3. The disability is more accurately described by another category of eligibility (i.e. hysterical blindness may qualify under E.D.).
4. The student has visual acuity or hearing within the normal range, but has visual perception or auditory processing difficulties adversely affecting their education, which may qualify as LD, OHI, or another disability category.

EXIT CRITERIA

1. A student would meet exit criteria from Deaf-Blind eligibility if either of the sensory deficits were remediated through surgery or other methods and the student no longer met the eligibility criteria for Deaf-Blind.
2. The vision impairment or hearing impairment no longer exists, as documented by a medical professional (MD, DO, OD, ENT); or
3. The student accepts a standard high school graduation certificate upon completion or required goals/objectives and credits; or
4. Student completes the school year in which he/she reaches the chronological age of 21 years.

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

Students identified as Deaf-Blind must be served in the least restrictive environment as defined by federal and state law and rules. Service delivery options vary and should be based on the student's individual skills and needs in the educational setting. Services may include:

- Consultative services and/or assessment services from a state-assigned Deaf-Blind Specialist.
- Consultative services from a teacher of the hearing impaired and/or visually impaired on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Itinerant instructional services from a teacher of the hearing impaired and/or visually impaired for a portion of the school day (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.).
- Part time instruction in a classroom for students with visual impairments, hearing impairments, or deaf-blind students and part time participation with non-disabled peers (in either regular or special education classroom) in a public school building.
- Full time instruction in a classroom for visually impaired and/or hearing impaired students in a regular school building.
- Private placement in a school for students with visual impairments, hearing impairments or deaf-blind.
- Residential public school (state school) for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind.

Although each IEP team must determine services for a student on an individual basis, the following general guidelines may assist teams in determining the level of services appropriate for students with an eligibility of Deaf-Blind.

SERVICE AND PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

Service and placement decisions must be guided by goals and objectives written by the IEP team to address the need for specially designed instruction to allow the child to participate in the general curriculum within the least restrictive environment. The discussion of intensity and characteristics of service for the student must be made in light of the student's holistic development. The availability of other services (speech-language therapy, interpreting, tactile media instruction, counseling/social work support) should also be considered in developing an integrated program for the student with Deaf-Blind eligibility. The goal is always to provide the child with an appropriate educational menu to ensure participation and progress in the general curriculum.

PLACEMENT DETERMINATION: CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Students who are Deaf-Blind should be educated with their peers who are nondisabled to the fullest extent possible. Services may be provided within any of the following placements ranging from the least restrictive option to most restrictive option.

a.) Special Education instructional and/or related services provided for 20% or less of the pupil’s school day OUTSIDE the regular education classroom (i.e., Consult, Speech Only, services provided in Reg. Ed./REI, Inclusion)

b.) Special Education instructional and/or related services provided for 21% to 60% of the pupil’s school day OUTSIDE the regular education classroom (includes pull-out services, resource or self contained, 21-60%)

c.) Special Education instructional and/or related services provided for more than 60% of the pupil’s school day OUTSIDE the regular education classroom (includes Full Time Class in Reg. School Building)

d.) Full time class is Special Public Day School
e.) Private Day Program
f.) Private or Public School Residential
g.) Other (*specify*)