

# COMPETENCIES FOR TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF-BLIND

## DEAF-BLINDNESS

### Knowledge Of:

- ❖ The critical roles of vision and hearing in all learning.
- ❖ Challenge of communication, concept development, motor development and movement.
- ❖ Challenges in assessing information.
- ❖ Diversity due to etiologies, age of onset and additional disabilities.
- ❖ Isolating effect and limited opportunity for incidental learning.
- ❖ The emotional impact and possibility of depression associated with progressive loss.
- ❖ Impact upon personal relationships at a time in life when friends are of the utmost importance.
- ❖ The potential impact of attachments / bonding between students and teachers / residential staff.
- ❖ Development of a positive self-esteem.
- ❖ Visual, auditory and tactile adaptations that enhance social, communicative interactions between the student who is deaf-blind and others.
- ❖ Importance of non-linguistic modes of communication.
- ❖ The possible communicative function of behaviors.
- ❖ Development of vocabulary and literacy.
- ❖ Formal and informal communication assessments that are appropriate for students who are deaf-blind.
- ❖ Communication devices and technology adapted for students who are deaf-blind.
- ❖ Awareness that every moment is a teaching moment.
- ❖ Effective use of support personnel: audiologists, low vision specialists, O&M specialists, technology specialists, therapists, social workers etc.
- ❖ The history of “best practices” for the education of students who are deaf-blind.
- ❖ Knowledge of resources on the local, state and national levels.

## **Awareness and Sensitivity:**

- ❖ Assess and explain the effects of combined vision and hearing loss upon relationships.
- ❖ Establish a trusting relationship with the student that is nurturing but does not foster dependency.
- ❖ Use of touch to accommodate for lack of visual and/or auditory information.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for the student to develop confidence by making choices.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for the student to practice self-advocacy.
- ❖ Allow the student to learn from naturally occurring successes and failures.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for the student to meet and establish relationships with other students and adults who are deaf-blind.
- ❖ Provide “life lessons” in preparation for adulthood.
- ❖ Teach significant peers and adults to communicate with the student. Enable the students to teach friends, teachers etc how to communicate.
- ❖ Use appropriate distance between you and the student for optimal visual accuracy.
- ❖ Supply environmental information including conversation, persons entering or leaving the room etc.
- ❖ Reduce or eliminate unnecessary visual, auditory and tactile clutter in the environment.
- ❖ Modify existing reading material when necessary.
- ❖ Cooperatively with the student design communication cards and teach the most effective method of utilizing them.
- ❖ Implement strategies to accommodate for and to improve the student’s visual and auditory functioning.
- ❖ Teach the student how to maintain hearing aids, FM systems, glasses, contact lenses, low vision devices etc.
- ❖ Adapt the environment to suit the needs of the student.
- ❖ Access the devices and appliances that will enable the student to live as independently as possible.
- ❖ Provide information and skills training to family members, team members and colleagues.