



**National Center
on Deafblindness**

NORTH CAROLINA
DeafBlind Project



Innovation, Resources, and Collaboration:

Ways to Increase Capacity in Teachers of Young Children with Complex Needs

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Welcome & Introductions

- Introductions
- Who is in the room?



Objectives

- Participants will:
 - Increase knowledge of resources available to increase the capacity & skills of teacher candidates and early intervention providers in teaching infants and toddlers with complex needs including deafblindness.
 - Develop one action step of how you can work toward accomplishing this in your state.

Building a Shared Understanding

Complex Needs: What does it mean to you?



Setting the Stage



[Part 1: Experiencing the World](#)

Access & Skill Development

- Children with combined vision and hearing differences can lack access to information about their environment.
- This gap in access can impact the child's learning in the areas of communication, social emotional, conceptual, and physical development.
- Developing these key skills across domains requires unique techniques



It Takes a Village!

- Partnering is critical because of limited time and funding
- We're better together!

How can we partner to increase capacity in providers so that children get the services and supports they and their



Central Question

- Given that:
 - Most special education teacher preparation programs do not include content on deafblindness, specifically those with complex needs
 - AND that many teachers need additional capacity building in this area

How can we increase capacity to promote learning outcomes for all children, including those who have complex needs?



North Carolina PLC

Overview: NC Professional Learning Community

- Collaborative effort between the NC DeafBlind Project and the NC Early Learning Sensory Support Program as part of the 5 year grant cycle
- The National Center on Deafblindness (NCDB) Modules are embedded into a canvas course combined with virtual live sessions that run from September to May.
- Role release model-Beginning with NCDBP facilitating, moving towards ELSSP ownership

Nuts & Bolts: The Process

- Participants engage in pre-learning through the canvas course
- Live sessions include guided questions and discussions based on that month's assigned content
- Utilized activities provided by NCDB to help build live session content
- Reviewed pre-learning content expectations for the next session

Current Status

- Currently in year 3
- Continuing to build capacity in ELSSP providers
- 44 Teachers of the Deaf, SLPs, TVIs have participated in the PLC
- Expanding to offer an additional PLC for other early learning professionals in 2026-2027 utilizing The National Center Modules

Discussion & Next Steps

1. How can we expand workforce capacity to increase learning outcomes for all children, including those who have complex needs?
2. How can we partner to increase capacity so that children get the services and supports they and their families need?



Resources (1 of 2)

- National Center on Deafblindness
- State and Multi-State Deafblind Projects
- Technical Assistance and Information Dissemination Centers
- Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
- Serve Birth - Age 21
- [2024 Deafblind Child Count](#)

Resources

- Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind: Professional Development for Educators ([module web page](#))
 - [Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind](#)
- National Center on Deafblindness: [“For Families”](#)
- [Deafblind Overview \(web page\)](#)
 - [An Overview of Deafblindness- an online infographic](#)
 - [An Overview of Deafblindness- a printable fact sheet](#)
- [Get Their Vision Tested, Too! \(Flyer\)](#)



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