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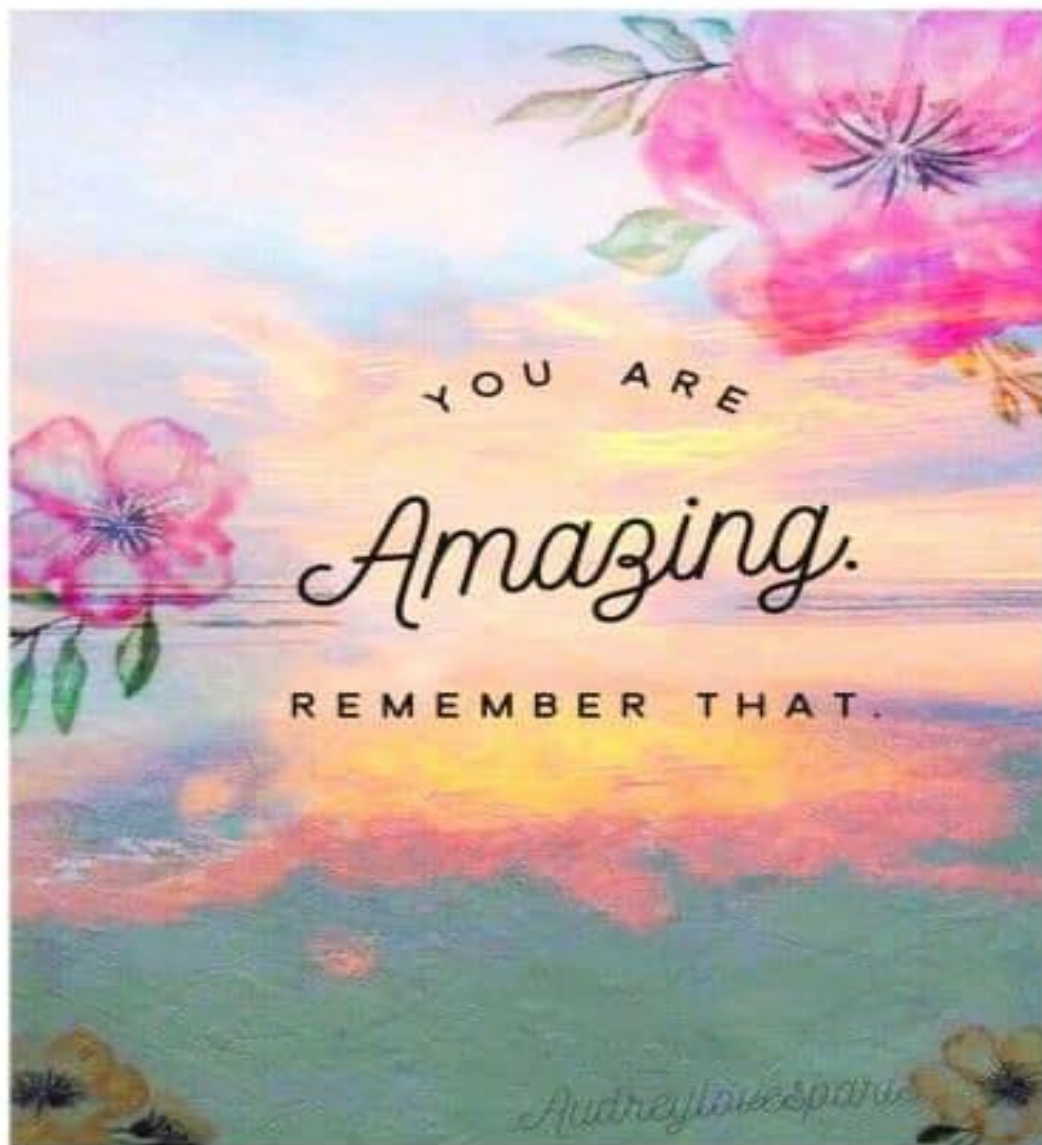
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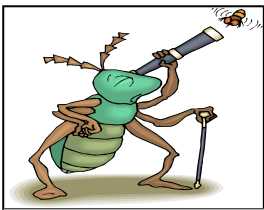
# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers  
of Colorado Children with Blindness, Low Vision CVI, or Deaf-Blindness  
January—March 2025

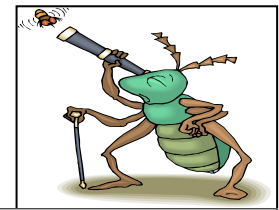


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# LOW VISION NEWS



## Metro Regional Low Vision Clinic



By Roberta Curtis  
Statewide LVE Clinic Coordinator

The Denver Metro Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held on February 19-21, 2025, at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. Twelve students from six administrative units (Brighton, Cherry Creek, Douglas County, Littleton, and Mapleton School Districts) received evaluations. Eleven parents and eight TVIs attended the evaluation with their students.

The Clinic team would like to thank Anchor Center for Blind Children for hosting the event, and Kaitlin Lombardi, Jeannie Lei, Morgan Harrington, Margaret Moldane, Anahit LaBarre, Sasmita Bisoi, Jennifer Campbell, and Anitha Muthukumaran for bringing students.

This was our last regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinic of this school year. We thank our amazing LVE Team: Dr. Kara Hanson, Dr. David Simpson, Jim Olson, Karin Hensel, and Roberta Curtis. Also thank you to our site coordinators: Angela Sims, Erin Schroeder, Jim Olson, Samantha Thuis, and Roberta Curtis. It truly takes a village to organize and host the clinics. We are grateful for another year of funding and the chance to serve over 40 students.

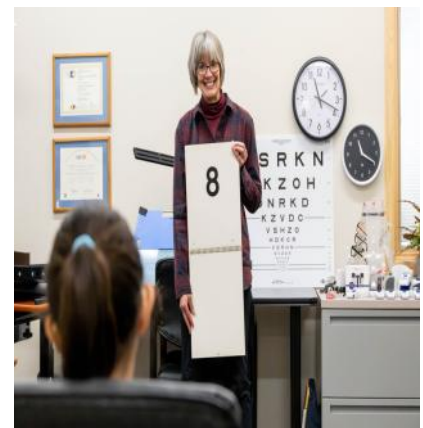
Check out a [CDE field trip celebration of the Northern LVE Clinic](#) complete with a narrative and pictures.



Karin Hensel, CDE Low Vision Therapist, helps a child hold an occluder to the left eye.



A child uses an handheld magnifier to enlarge print



Dr. Kara Hanson holds an eye chart for a student to read.

## Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

**Project Purpose and Staff:** The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project) is beginning its second year of its federally-funded five-year grant cycle. The purpose of the project, awarded to every state and U.S. territory, is to identify children and youth with deaf-blindness and provide free technical assistance (TA) to the identified children, their families, and service providers. Key project activities are to maintain an annual Child Count process, host professional learning events that include an annual webinar series and the long-offered Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs, and to provide tiered and customized technical assistance to families and/or service providers. The project has four broad goals: (1) timely identification, (2) family networking, training, and TA support, and (3) professional training and TA support, and 4) intervener recruitment and training / support.



The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force. The project has four CDE employees (Tanni Anthony, Gina Herrera, and Jessica Meisel) and a contracted Family Engagement Specialist Cindy Colwell. We are working to fill the position recently vacated by Roberta Curtis, our program support assistant. For training, support documents and resources, please [check out the Deaf-Blind website](#).

**Child Find Count of Colorado Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness:** As you identify new children in Colorado with deaf-blindness, please reach out to Tanni Anthony ([anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)) or Gina Herrera ([herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)) to complete the Child Count Form at any time of the calendar year. Thanks to all who have turned in the December 1, 2024 Child Count paperwork—due NOW! We must submit our report by March 15. Our thanks for all you do to ensure our learners with deaf-blindness are properly identified across Colorado!

### Colorado Deaf-Blind Project Offers Intervener Training

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project) offers intervener training and coaching. A new cohort began in August and a 2nd cohort began January 2025. There is no charge for the training, if candidate are working with a student who is registered on the CO Deaf-Blind Child Count. The program is designed to provide the background knowledge needed for working one on one with students who are deaf-blind and leads to National Intervener Certification.

Here is what is included in the intervener training program through the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project:

- An online course of study using the National Center on Deafblindness' (NCDB) Open Hands Open Access Intervener Learning modules. Candidates will complete each module using NCDB's Moodle web platform with supplemental information.
- Feedback on all assignments, individual or group office hours, consultation, and mentoring from Colorado DB Project specialists.

Do you have a new intervener who needs this training? Are you still looking for an intervener who will need this training? For more information, please contact Jessica Meisel at [Meisel\\_j@cde.co.state.us](mailto:Meisel_j@cde.co.state.us). To register, please complete the [DB Intervener registration](#).

# Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

## Free Technical Assistance for Learners with Deaf-Blindness

Technical assistance is the term that field uses to mean “support” or “information” for individuals providing support to children and youth (ages 0-21) with deaf-blindness. TA recipients include Colorado families of children and youth who are deaf-blind, early intervention and school personnel, and agencies providing services to identified children and youth.

Technical assistance may also include:

- personalized on-site consultation with family members / early intervention agency staff / school staff
- in-service training customized to the team’s needs
- workshops sponsored by the project across the state
- family support service, such as Parent Retreats, coffee hours, family outings etc.



We are here to support you! **To request a school or home visit**, complete our e-Technical Assistance Request Form located [here](#). Return this form as an email attachment to Gina Herrera at [Herrera\\_G@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_G@cde.state.co.us) or call at 303-253-0451. Or [fill out our new Google Form for Technical Assistance](#).

## Community Intervener Program

The Community Intervener Program is under the Colorado Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind (CCDHHDB). The program offers Colorado infants, children and young adults who are DeafBlind 14 hours per month of 1:1 services with a trained Community Intervener. Some DeafBlind adults are also eligible for the program under certain specifications and guidelines. Services can be utilized within the home or out in the community, and the DeafBlind individual can participate in ways they have not been able to before. For more information or to sign up, please contact Program Manager Elli Streifer at [elli.streifer@state.co.us](mailto:elli.streifer@state.co.us)

## NCDB Communication Modules Released!

The National Center on Deaf-Blindness has just released a series of Communication modules. You can find all modules here:



**National Center  
on Deaf-Blindness**

[Teaching Children Who are Deafblind: professional development for educators](#)

We are thrilled to share that our very own **Jessica Meisel** is in one of the modules - you can find her:

[Communicating With Children Who Are Deafblind](#)

- Lesson 2, Part 2 at 8:05 minutes
- Lesson 2, Part 3 at 2:11 minutes

## Call for Proposals

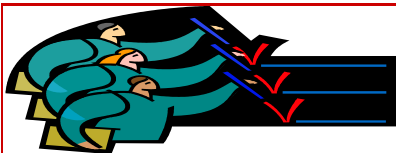
DbI invites scientists, practitioners and/or family members to submit research proposals that focus on the education of children with deafblindness in Africa, Asia and Latin America & the Caribbean. Research proposal submission is open from January 16, 2025 to March 15, 2025. [More information here.](#)

[The National Center on Deaf-Blindness \(NCDB\)](#) released a flyer to help spread the word about the importance of vision testing for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

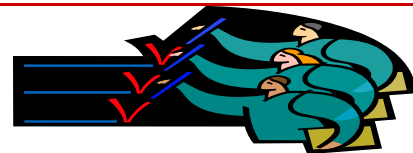
[Get Their Vision Tested, Too!](#) explains how identifying combined hearing and vision loss can activate referral to important specialized services and supports. The flyer is available in both color and black and white PDFs, suitable for printing or electronic dissemination.

NCDB’s [Recreation and Leisure Factsheet](#), originally published in 2008, has been updated and redesigned.





# CHECK IT OUT!



## Southwest Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT) Program

CATT offers complimentary training in Assistive Technology for Teachers, parents, and students. CATT's emphasis is on the "train the trainer" approach, with a special focus on products tailored for individuals with visual impairments or blindness. For more information or to book a training, visit <https://seeitourway.org/services/catt/> or call 602-337-8243. Our regional CATT contact is Niraj Parikh.

## APH ConnectCenter's Latest Content

[Browse APH ConnectCenter's Latest Content](#)



- [Incidental Learning Opportunities for Children Who Are Blind or Low Vision](#)
- [Types of Braille Displays and Notetakers](#)
- [Eleven Tips to Maximize Your Job Search](#)
- [Eye-Pressing in Children Who Are Blind or Low Vision](#)

## Learn More About the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

[OSEP](#) is leading the nation's efforts to improve outcomes for children with disabilities from birth through age 21 and their families, ensuring access to fair, equitable, and high-quality education and services. Our vision is for a world in which individuals with disabilities have unlimited opportunities to learn and lead purposeful and fulfilling lives.

### Careers & Canine Connections

Ready to shape your future? Join Guide Dogs for the Blind and APH CareerConnect for Careers & Canine Connections, a FREE weeklong program for young adults (18–24) who are blind or have low vision. From July 28 to August 2, 2025, you'll explore career options, learn about vocational resources, and discover how a guide dog can enhance your mobility and independence. Held at the beautiful Hull Foundation & Learning Center in Sandy, Oregon, this program offers hands-on experiences with guide dogs, networking opportunities, and plenty of time to connect with peers.

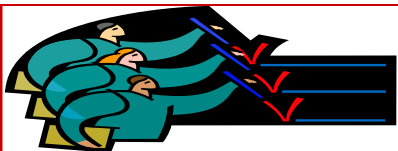
Participants must be independent in daily living activities, with blindness/low vision as their primary disability. Transportation to and from the Portland area is not included, but financial assistance may be available. Don't miss this chance to grow, learn, and make lifelong connections. Spots are limited—apply today!

[Download the application here.](#)

### National Federation of the Blind's 2024 Thank You Video

The NFB has released a thank you video acknowledging their 2024 supporters.

[View it on YouTube here.](#)



## CHECK IT OUT!



### **Recruiting Field Testers for a New Math App, Cosmic Number Lines**

APH is seeking teachers to evaluate and test Cosmic Number Lines, a math game for iOS devices. The app is designed to help early elementary school students with blindness or low vision—specifically, second and third graders—learn numeracy concepts and skills through interactive number lines. Some of the foundational skills your students will learn include constructing a number line, locating points, comparing numbers, finding distances, and solving addition and subtraction problems. This app would be a great supplement to classroom instruction by strengthening all students’ understanding through fun gameplay, regardless of their level of vision. Testing will begin in March 2025. If you have an iOS device and are interested in testing this app with your second and third grade-level students, please fill out an application form by February 14th, 2025 [here](#). Should you have any questions, contact Li Zhou at [lzhou@aph.org](mailto:lzhou@aph.org).

### **Survey: PD Needs of Individuals Supporting Students who are Braille Readers in STEM Education**

Dr. Tina S. Herzberg and Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum University of South Carolina Upstate is looking for professionals who work with students with blindness or low vision to complete a 10-20 minute survey on their professional development needs. [Check it out here](#).

### **The U.S. Department of Education Releases Dear Colleague Letter on Seclusion and Restraints**

The Department released a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) on the negative impact that the use of restraint and seclusion have on children, promoting instead the use of positive, proactive practices in schools and early childhood settings to support and respond to children’s behavioral needs.

### **The U.S. Department of Education Releases Dear Colleague Letter on Building and Sustaining Inclusive Educational Practices**

ED released guidance on [inclusive educational practices](#) and a joint [Dear Colleague Letter](#) from Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative (OSERS) Assistant Secretary Glenna Wright-Gallo and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Adam Schott.

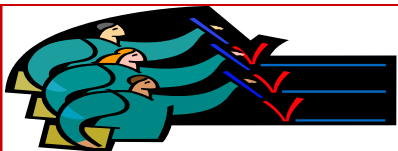
The guidance can help states and school districts create educational systems intentionally designed and implemented to support inclusive educational practices, while still recognizing there’s a time and place for intensive instruction and intervention for any student with a disability who needs it.

### **The U.S. Department of Education Releases Dear Colleague Letter on Special Education Personnel Retention**

The Department released a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) highlighting the critical importance of retaining special educators in their positions, and the crucial role principals play in retaining special education personnel. In partnership with the [LEAD IDEA](#) and [CEEDAR Centers](#), the Department announced the release of the [Principal Navigator: Special Educator Retention](#), which includes high leverage practices and actionable steps that can be used immediately by local administrators to improve retention of special education personnel.

### **Colorado Educator Support:**

Need some emotional support? This is a platform dedicated to supporting Colorado's educational workforce. Explore their collection of FREE mental health resources designed to assist you in navigating the challenges of the school year. Proudly affiliated with the University of Colorado Anschutz Department of Psychiatry. [Colorado Educator Support – Colorado Educator Support – We Can Help](#)



## CHECK IT OUT!



### OSEP Releases TWO New Fast Facts

The federal Office of Special Education has released two new Fast Facts: (1) [OSEP Fast Fact: Educational Environments of Children with Disabilities Served under IDEA Part B Section 619](#) and (2) [OSEP Fast Fact: Part B Personnel](#). These Fast Facts spotlight the IDEA 618 data on personnel and educational environments of children with disabilities in early childhood settings. They are packed with visualizations that help make IDEA 618 data easy to interpret and share.

OSEP Fast Facts is an ongoing effort to display data from the 12 data collections authorized under IDEA Section 618 ([Data Profiles - Department of Education Open Data Platform](#)). Visit the [OSEP Fast Facts page](#) for existing and future Fast Facts.

### Camp Abilities Four Corners

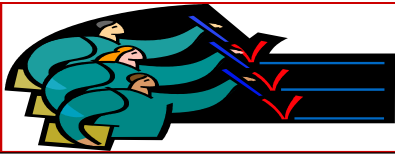
Camp Abilities Four Corners registration for students is open! Just go to the camp website [here](#) and click on Student Registration and fill out the "Interest Form". The DEADLINE for registration is April 15th!! The camp is June 9-14th and will be held in Cameron, Arizona.

We are looking for a few adults to be one-on-one coaches at camp. The job description for coaches and instructors is on our website. If you are interested, email Vicki at the camp email address: [campabilitiesfourcorners@gmail.com](mailto:campabilitiesfourcorners@gmail.com)

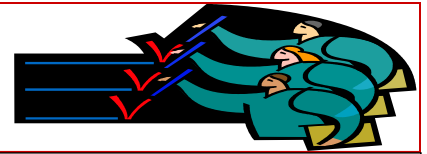
### NFB Youth STEM Program

Program dates and registration for Youth STEM program are now available. The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is dedicated to improving opportunities for blind students in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Blind youth are invited to embark on a transformative day of discovery and innovation as we dive into the world of the scientific method. Participants in STEM2U will engage in hands-on, accessible experiments that harness the power of observation, prediction, and testing to solve real-world challenges. From physics and technology to chemistry and engineering, this year's activities are designed to inspire curiosity and ignite a love of STEM. This unforgettable opportunity for exploration is available in various states on different dates.

For more details and to sign up, please visit the [NFB STEM2U webpage](#).



# CHECK IT OUT!



## A Few of the OSEP-Funded TA Centers

### \*\* Early Childhood

The [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#) is providing State Part C and Part B, Section 619 programs with the [latest information](#) on funding and guidance.



### \*\* NCSI

The [National Center for Systemic Improvement's](#) website has a wealth of information to support educators and outcomes for children with disabilities.



### \*\* Learners Who Are Deaf-Blind

The [National Center on Deaf-Blindness](#) has compiled and organized [Resources for Providing Technical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). It covers OSEP guidance, distance TA, resources for families and service providers, and online learning for proficient communicators who are deaf-blind. The page is being regularly updated with input from state deaf-blind projects and national partners.



### \*\* Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

[TIES Center](#) has launched a distance-learning series that provides a framework for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to get through these new transitions, engage fully in academics online, and interact with their teachers and peers, a critical component of well-being. TIES Center is regularly adding resources to the distance learning series that offer the following recommendations to support the inclusion and engagement of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Current resources include:



### \*\* Accessible Materials and Technologies

The [National AEM Center at CAST](#) has provides TA, coaching, and resources increase the availability and use of educational materials and technologies for learners with disabilities across the lifespan.



### \*\*\* Professional Learning Modules

The IRIS Center is a national center dedicated to improving education outcomes for all children, especially those with disabilities birth through age twenty-one, through the use of effective evidence-based practices and interventions



### \*\*\* Center for Parent Information & Resources (CPIR)

CPIR is the hub of valuable information and products specifically designed for the network of Parent Centers serving families of children with disabilities







**Tuesday, March 18, 2025, 3:00 – 4:30 PM EST**

**Duxbury Braille Translator: Working in an Existing Document and Using Microsoft Word, Part 2 of 4**

What is a practical workflow for transcribing using Duxbury Braille Translator? Attend this second in a series of four webinars which provide a structured introduction to Duxbury answering the essential questions, like: Which file do I need? What does Microsoft Word have to do with Duxbury? and How many ways can I use six-key entry with Duxbury? Through step-by-step instruction, you will learn how to save and navigate braille files efficiently. [Register Here for Duxbury Braille Translator: Working in an Existing Document and Using Microsoft Word](#)

**Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 3:00 – 4:00 PM EST**

**Master Engaging Math Learning with Cosmic Number Lines & Cedric's Cartesian Quest**

Join us for an exciting webinar showcasing two innovative math apps — Cosmic Number Lines and Cedric's Cartesian Quest — designed to make learning math concepts engaging and fun!

Cosmic Number Lines targets early elementary students, helping them build a strong foundation in numeracy through interactive number line activities. Students will learn essential skills such as constructing number lines, locating points, comparing numbers, measuring distances, and solving addition and subtraction problems — all through immersive gameplay. Cedric's Cartesian Quest is designed for middle school students to develop and strengthen their understanding of the Cartesian coordinate plane. Through game-based learning, students will practice locating points, drawing polygons, and solving problems using symmetry across the x- and y-axes and the origin.

Both apps serve as powerful classroom supplements, providing students with interactive practice to deepen their understanding of math concepts while having fun. [Register Here for Master Engaging Math Learning with Cosmic Number Lines & Cedric's Cartesian Quest](#)

**Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 3:00 – 4:00 PM EST**

**You've Got Mail – Monarch Version 1.2 Has Arrived!**

Join Greg Stilson and Jason Martin from APH to learn all about what is new with the first software update to arrive on the Monarch. An all new email app, updated multiline braille web browser and support for the game changing eBraille standard are just a few of the new features in this software update. Lastly you won't want to miss a demo of APH's new app called Wing-It, which will be launching shortly, providing teachers and students a brand new way of creating impromptu tactile graphics in real-time. [Register Here for You've Got](#)



**Thursday, March 27, 2025, 4:00 – 5:30 PM EST**

**APH CareerConnect: Meet Blind and Low Vision STEM Professionals**

Join APH ConnectCenter and Learn Earn & Prosper (LEAP) for a webinar connecting attendees with blind and low vision professionals, including STEM experts.

[Register Here for APH CareerConnect: Meet Blind and Low Vision STEM Professionals](#)

# Resources and Materials

## Visual Impairment and Deafblind Education Quarterly, Volume 69, Issue 4: Assistive Technology Issue

The Fall 2024 newsletter from the Council for Exceptional Children is available [here \(webpage\)](#) and [here \(PDF\)](#). This edition has lots of great information on educators' implementation of assistive technology in a variety of settings, including both the classroom and the workplace. The list of issues in all available formats can be found [here](#).

## New e-Book Specific to STEM

Dr. Yue-Ting (Ting) Siu has published an e-book entitled: *Build Your Child's Ability to Succeed in Life Through Learning STEM: The Ultimate Collection of Crucial STEM Online Resources for Children Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision*. This e-book provides 50 resources (with 52 clickable links) that each has a brief and concise introduction for parents to effortlessly access STEM online resources that suit their children's needs.

If you know any parents or students who might be interested or benefit from this e-book, please share the information with them. [Here](#) is the link to learn more about the book. The cost is \$25.

## New Online Module from IRIS and Bookshare

IRIS has made changes to its resource offerings and site navigation

- Improved accessibility for the Wraparound Content Maps—now Wraparound Resources
- Secondary Transition: Helping Students with Disabilities Plan for Postsecondary Settings
- Universal Design for Learning: Designing Learning Experiences That Engage and Challenge All Students
- Classroom Behavior Management (Part 1, Elementary): Developing a Behavior Management Plan
- Classroom Behavior Management (Part 2, Secondary): Developing a Behavior Management Plan

Visit the IRIS Center Newsletter for the [full list of changes](#).

## 2024 Colorado School Guide

School District Publishing has released their 2024 Colorado School Guide. This complimentary resource is available to anyone who is interested and may be distributed freely. The guide can be found [here](#).

## Discover APH ConnectCenter's Getting Started Guides

The guides are designed to support children and adults diagnosed with a recent eye condition.

- **FamilyConnect's Getting Started Guide Birth to 3rd Grade:** Dive into information about visual development, navigating IFSPs and IEPs, home support tips, braille literacy, and more. [Open the Getting Started Guide Birth to 3rd Grade](#).
- **FamilyConnect's Getting Started Guide 4th to 12th Grade:** Access valuable insights on vision in children, IEP navigation, home strategies, technology, transition planning, and additional resources. [Open the Getting Started Guide 4th to 12th Grade](#).
- **Getting Started 2020: A Guide for Adults New to Vision Loss:** Recently diagnosed with an eye condition? Find tools, information, support systems, and guidance to help you navigate this new journey. [Open the Getting Started 2020: A Guide for People New to Vision Loss](#).



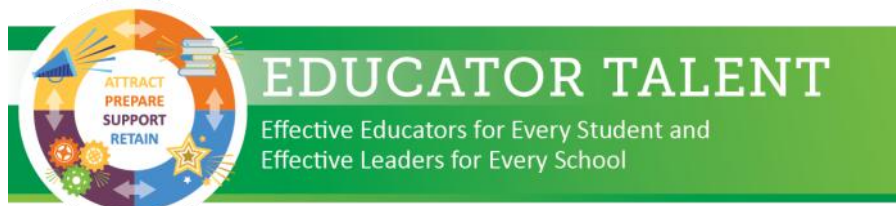
## Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

For information about the endorsement requirements for the Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

<p><b>Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21: (9.02)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Must hold a master's degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution in special education / visual impairment or its equivalent, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education.</li> <li>✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for Special Education Specialists: Visually Impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements.</li> </ul>
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For information about the endorsement requirements for the School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

<p><b>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist Ages 0-21: (11.03)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution.</li> <li>✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists.</li> <li>✓ Completion of practicum or internship, which must be in a school setting and equivalent to a minimum of 350 hours, full-time, and under the supervision of an Academy of Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education (ACVREP) certified orientation and mobility specialist.</li> <li>✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam.</li> <li>✓ Hold a current and valid ACVREP Certified O&amp;M Specialist certificate (<b>for initial and renewal licenses</b>).</li> <li>✓ <b><u>Do not let your ACVREP O&amp;M Certification expire.</u></b></li> </ul>
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Check out the **Educator Talent website**! Their mission is to develop, deploy, and support talent management and human capital development strategies for districts and schools so that the most effective educators are in every school and classroom and all students are prepared for college, career, and life. Check it out [Educator Talent webpage](#) for resources and tools.



## Educators May Add Licenses and Certifications to myColorado App

CDE has partnered with the [myColorado app](#) to provide certified educators access to digital versions of their credentials. Download the myColorado app, create an account and download certificates into the myColorado wallet. [To learn more about myColorado and the Educator Certificates, visit the myColorado FAQ page.](#)

## English Learner Professional Development Requirement for License Renewal

All educators holding an elementary, English language arts, math, science or social studies (or any middle-level) endorsement on a professional teacher license that expires on or after September 1, 2025 must complete English Learner Professional Development (ELPD) prior to renewing their license or they will be unable to renew until they have done so. The ELPD training requirement for these endorsement areas was adopted by the State Board of Education in 2018, allowing teachers time to complete the training until their next full renewal period.

Anyone who holds an ELPD designation on their credential already meets this requirement. Important note: This requirement is based solely on the endorsement(s) held; it is not based on the content area the educator is presently teaching or if they are teaching at all. For example, a teacher who also holds both a science and a music endorsement will be required to complete ELPD even if only teaching music. Individuals who are serving in other positions (as a principal, for example) or not presently employed in education and who still wish to renew their teacher license with one of the identified endorsements must meet this requirement.

The ELPD designation requires 45 hours of training focused on the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Educators may fulfill the requirement via a [pre-approved program](#) or [individual learning that aligns with the ELPD standards](#). District leaders with [COOL access](#) can download a report of their educators who have attained the designation.

More details for educators needing to complete the ELPD requirement can be found on the [ELPD for Educators webpage](#).

Email [educator\\_development@cde.state.co.us](mailto:educator_development@cde.state.co.us) with questions.

## Part C to B Information

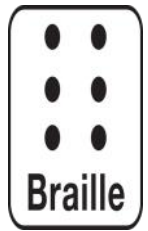
In collaboration with our Part C partners at CDEC, the following information is being provided to child find coordinators to support your efforts with Extended Part C.

As a reminder, the initial third birthday eligibility for the Extended Part C Option remains May 1 through the beginning of the following school year for 2025. Every family with a child who has a birthday between May 1 and the beginning of the school year must be offered Extended Part C. As transition activities approach for these families, I wanted to share [resources](#) to support your efforts with the Extended Part C Option.

The [Transition Nuts and Bolts Webinar](#) provides an overview of Extended Part C starting around minute 31:24, which includes information on the resources available on the CDE and EI websites.



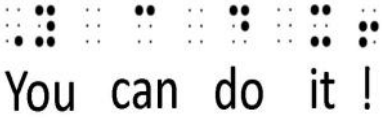
## Licensure Requirements for TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists Colorado Initial Licensure in the Endorsement Area of Visual Impairment



For information about Colorado licensing requirements in the area of Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment and/or School O&M Specialist, please refer to the information contained within Educator Licensing's Endorsement Requirements page at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

### Initial CDE Braille Competency Testing Requirements

**Initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate:** All licensed teachers endorsed in the area of visual impairment, including those individuals employed on a temporary (Temporary Educator Eligibility-TEE) or emergency credential who are completing their university program in visual impairment, must have a valid CDE Certificate of Braille Competency or a CDE Renewal Certificate of Braille Competency on file with their current administrative unit of employment. The initial certificate expires five years from its initial issue from CDE.

 The CDE Certificate of Braille Competency must be earned no later than May 31st of the first instructional year of teacher of students with visual impairments in a Colorado administrative unit. If a TVI moves from one Colorado administrative unit to another, the expectation of first-year braille competency demonstration does not “reactivate” from year-to-year. The testing clock begins with the first day of Colorado employment as a TVI. TVIs must have taken a university-level braille course or have sufficient documentation of UEB training before they can take the initial CDE Braille Competency Test. The initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate expires 5 years from its date of issue.

### Renewal CDE Braille Competency Certificate

There is a one time expectation to renew the initial CDE certificate five years after its initial issue. This is accomplished by completing 15 renewal modules across the five year renewal period. These modules must be taken with one of the CDE Braille Proctors. Candidates who are in the renewal process should plan on completing three braille renewal modules during each of the five year renewal requirement.

For more information about Colorado's braille competency requirements, please go to:  
[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs)

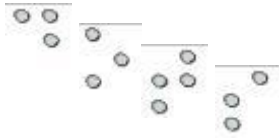


### It is Our Profession!

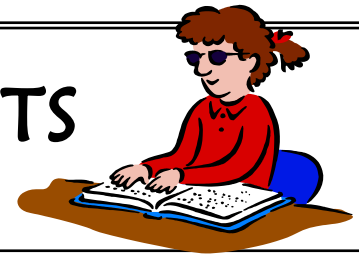
#### CEC Specialty Set Competency Standards

- Initial Specialty Set: Blind and Visual Impairments- <https://dvidb.exceptionalchildren.org/standards/initial-specialty-set-blind-and-visual-impairments>
- Initial Specialty Set: Deafblindness: <https://dvidb.exceptionalchildren.org/standards/initial-specialty-set-deafblindness>
- Initial Specialty Set: Intervener: <https://dvidb.exceptionalchildren.org/standards/specialty-set-special-education-paraeducator-intervener-individuals-deafblindness-pdbi>





# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## Colorado Braille Competency Committee

Please keep this information handy if you are in the process of earning your initial Colorado Braille Competency Certificate or working on your renewal modules. The CDE Braille Competency Committee members serve as part-time employees of the Colorado Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services Unit for their important role in: (a) developing, refining, and reviewing braille competency testing and support materials, (b) proctoring test sessions for initial braille competency and renewal modules, (c) providing approved mentoring to test candidates, and (d) other duties, as needed, to support our UEB competency process across the state.

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

<b>Tanni Anthony</b>	(303) 503-4647	<a href="mailto:Anthony_T@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_T@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Nancy Cozart</b>	(303) 905-4074	<a href="mailto:Cozart_N@cde.state.co.us">Cozart_N@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Christine Maynard</b>	(719) 229-4981	<a href="mailto:Maynard_C@cde.state.co.us">Maynard_C@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Brenda Shepard</b>	(303) 995-7913	<a href="mailto:Shepard_B@cde.state.co.us">Shepard_B@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Julie Wetzstein</b>	(303) 819-7887	<a href="mailto:Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us">Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us</a>

Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor/mentor for initial testing and renewal modules. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor for initial testing and renewal modules. Tanni Anthony is the proctor for initial braille competency testing for the greater metro area. If there is a testing need on the western slope, please contact Tanni.

The Practice Test items have been posted on the braille competency webpage—that information and other resources can be found at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs).

**Thanks for being a steward of braille competency—our students are counting on your expertise for their specially designed instruction and instructional materials.**

## UEB Technical Versus Nemeth Braille Codes

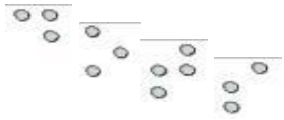
The Colorado Department of Education does not dictate a math code for students with visual impairment, including blindness. Two math codes are approved by the Braille Authority of North America. The decision about the math code is an individual student-by-student or an IEP decision. Both codes are viable for instruction and state testing.

For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 503-4647 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

## Braillewriter Repair

- Kirk McCall (303) 875-4527 (phone) and email [km2320@msn.com](mailto:km2320@msn.com)
- Mark Carpenter (719) 634-8720 (phone) and email [carpdiane@yahoo.com](mailto:carpdiane@yahoo.com)





# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## The Power of Braille: Why the BrailleDoodle is a Game-Changer for Literacy

Dr. Kirk Adams lost his sight at the age of five and learned braille as a young child, so he knows firsthand the transformative power of braille literacy. The new BrailleDoodle, created by Daniel Lubiner, represents an exciting innovation in making braille accessible, engaging, and fun for learners of all ages. [Learn more about Dr. Kirk Adams and the BrailleDoodle here.](#)



## Braille Brain Courses for Braille Literacy and Mathematic Instruction

This braille training project is funded by the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Agency, (H235E190002). It is intended to support braille literacy and mathematics instruction and may be used by pre-service and in-service TSVIs, paraprofessionals, parents and educational team members. Each course features numerous lessons which provide a thorough scope of the braille code. [Click here to visit APH's website on the Braille Brain courses.](#)

## Project INSPIRE 2 Mathlete Competition – Save the Date!

Project INSPIRE 2 is excited to announce our Second Mathlete Competition. On May 10, 2025, braille readers from grades 6 to 12 from across the U.S. and Canada will compete in our second virtual Mathlete Competition. Events include:

- **Sprint Round:** Read a problem written in words / select correct way to braille the problem from the 3 answer choices.
- **You Solve It Round:** Read and solve a math problem using the order of operations.
- **You Write It Round:** Listen to a math problem being read aloud and then braille the problem.
- **Relay Round:** Solve a math problem and then plug the answer into the next problem.

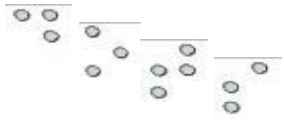
Registration opens Monday, March 3, 2025. Be sure to [sign up for the Project INSPIRE 2 Mailing List](#) so you don't miss the announcement with the registration link! Each mathlete who participates in the competition will receive a certificate and t-shirt. Medals will be awarded to mathletes who place 1st, 2nd and 3rd in their category.

We will hold the Saturday events via Zoom beginning at 11:30 AM Eastern, 10:30 AM Central, 9:30 AM Mountain, and 8:30 AM Pacific. We will set up an alternative time for mathletes in Hawaii, Alaska, or US territories.

- Strategies and Math Tips Session on April 5 for 1.5 hours (optional, but highly recommended)
- Practice Session on April 26 for 1.5 hours (optional, but highly recommended)
- COMPETITION!!! – May 10 for 2 hours
- Award Ceremony – May 17 for 1 hour

**MATHLETES will need a Perkins braille writer for the strategies and math and math tips sessions, practice session, and competition.**

If you have questions, contact Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum [lprosenb@uscupstate.edu](mailto:lprosenb@uscupstate.edu) or Dr. Tina Herzberg at [herzberg@uscupstate.edu](mailto:herzberg@uscupstate.edu) - 864-503-5572.



# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## **Braille Bricks Live Sessions**

**March 25 : How can you teach braille through play** - 10:00 a.m.

Blind and visually impaired children can access quality learning through play experiences. Learn how to create an accessible play environment and interpret their reactions. Children who can't see don't necessarily have the same play behaviors as sighted children.

**April 29 : Pre-braille activities with LEGO® Braille Bricks** - 9:00 a.m.

Young children need to develop tactile awareness and understand the basic concepts essential for learning braille, through manipulation and orientation. We'll explore engaging pre-braille activities like The Highest Tower and Finish the Road designed to be the first step on their journey to literacy. And new videos!

**May 13 : Basic Braille Activities with LEGO Braille Bricks** - 9:00 a.m.

Basic braille introduces children to the braille cell. Activities like Number Staircase or The Bull Pen move from understanding the braille cell to learning letters and numbers. They help children to differentiate dot patterns, with games to help memorize letters. And more videos!

**June 10 : Braille Activities with LEGO Braille Bricks** - 9:00 a.m.

In braille activities, children assemble braille characters to play with words (literacy) and numbers (numeracy). Sign up and play Hidden Word or Market Shopping with us. We'll have fun and you'll see (with videos) the links between your curricula and the skills practised with LEGO Braille bricks.

## **Go the Distance to Support Braille Literacy!**

### **Are you ready to embark on our 5th [Braille Across America Challenge](#)?**

Please consider taking on the challenge, inviting your family and friends to run, walk, bike, or roll the distance of a marathon, or 2, or 3 between March 17th (NBP's 98th birthday!) and April 21st, (Boston Marathon Monday).

Over the last couple of years, the cost of paper has gone up 20%, making braille even more expensive to produce. We need your help to cover this difference. Our 2025 Braille Across America team members will commit to run, walk, bike, or roll the distance of a marathon, 26.2 miles in 35 days. More importantly, team members are committing to being Literacy Champions by raising a minimum of \$500 to help fund the cost of 20 books, while advocating for more access to braille! As a team member, you will work together with other Literacy Champions to carry our braille baton across the country!

Whether you are participating solo or as part of a team, you will be making an impact while having fun. No matter where you are, you can be part of this movement—every dollar, step, mile, and ride bring us closer to our goal of ensuring greater access to braille.

All participants who raise a minimum of \$1,000 will receive a Limited Edition NBP Braille Baseball Cap with braille on the brim which reads "NBP is Braille" and teams who raise \$5,000 will have a braille book dedicated to them. **Important: All participants must attend the Zoom kickoff ceremony March 10th, to receive the official event T-shirt!**

This is a great opportunity for team members to meet each other, share their braille story and offer suggestions and tips on completing the challenge.

**[Register here!](#)**

# No Limits to Learning



**4-week program / Dates:** June 4 - July 2, 2025

**Apply by: Friday, April 18**

This summer the Colorado Center for the Blind is excited to again offer its No Limits to Learning program for blind teens and young adults. To participate in this program, applicants must be 15 years of age or older. The Colorado Center for the Blind is nestled in suburban Littleton, Colorado, with easy access to downtown Denver and the Rocky Mountains. We place a strong emphasis on safety and security and follow the Youth Protection Policy established by the National Federation of the Blind. All staff receive extensive training prior to the students' arrival. Students live with a counselor and will be supervised. [Read our full Youth Participant Protection Policy.](#)

## What is the process?

1. Students, their parents, TVI, or VR counselor complete the Summer Youth Application form.
  2. Once we have the student's application, all potential students are interviewed along with their parent by our Director of Youth Services to help determine if our programs will be a good fit for that applicant.
  3. If all agree the program and the student are a good fit after talking with the Youth Director, families will be asked to provide additional information, such as the student's medications, food or other allergies, etc.
  4. Apply early as space is limited. We will accept applications through April 18.
- Funding is typically available through Vocational Rehabilitation in each state under the Pre-ETS or transition programs. We will provide information about how to apply to VR in each state and to have VR fund the students' summer program.

Here are the elements that have made our summer programs vibrant and life-changing for so many teens:

- Each student gains belief and confidence in themselves as blind individuals.
- Students receive instruction from positive blind role models.
- Students live with a counselor and a roommate in their own apartment to build their skills in all areas of cooking, cleaning, and responsibility sharing.
- All students are required to use a long white cane.
- All students, regardless of degree of blindness, develop nonvisual techniques by using learning shades in all classes.
- Students take the following core classes: Cane Travel, Braille, Technology, and Home Management.
- Students learn about the world of work through job-seeking skills class, job shadows, and work experiences.
- Students who will be attending college participate in a college readiness class.
- Students learn about methods that they can use to succeed in STEM fields through hands-on seminars.
- Students participate in challenge recreational activities including rock climbing, canoeing, self-defense, ice skating, rafting, and more.
- Discussion groups are held several times each week. Topics covered include taking charge of school and life as a blind person, dating, taking responsibility, educating the public, images of blindness, and more.

A seminar held for family members provides them with support and encouragement to have high expectations for their blind teen.

"I never thought I'd be able to live successfully on my own, but this program challenged me and now I know that I can."

If you have questions, please contact Chaz Davis, Director of Youth Services, at [cdavis@cocenter.org](mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org) or 303-778-1130, ext. 212.

**[Apply for No Limits to Learning 2025](#)**



## Multilingual Learners

Identified or Suspected of  
Having Educational Disabilities



### Culturally Responsive School-Based Family Interviewing: Engaging in Empathic Family Partnerships

Information gathered by school teams from families is perhaps the most important part of making instructional decisions for children. A culturally and linguistically responsive approach is essential within a coherent system of school-community communication.

[Learn more about how you can advance equity for your students through Empathic Family Partnerships.](#)

### Federal and State Language Access Requirements

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, more commonly known as IDEA, requires that the school take whatever action is necessary to ensure that a parent/guardian with LEP is able to understand and meaningfully participate in their child's IEP meeting, which includes providing an interpreter at no cost to the parent/guardian for any IEP meetings. 34 C.F.R. § 300.322(e). In addition, the school must ensure that a parent with LEP understands the content of certain notices, which includes providing the following documents in the parent's native language unless it is clearly not feasible to do so:

- Prior Written Notices (PWN): The prior written notice provided to parents that proposes to initiate a change or reject a requested change in the identification, evaluation, or placement of a child with disabilities. 34 C.F.R. § 300.503(c).
- Procedural Safeguards are delivered annually under the IDEA. 34 C.F.R. § 300.504(d).

### Consent to an evaluation 34 C.F.R. § 300.9(a) Colorado House Bill 23 1263

Colorado House Bill 23 1263 requires that IEP teams verbally inform a Multilingual Learner's family of their right to a written translation or an oral translation of the final IEP into the dominant language used in the home, upon request, and at no cost. See the CDE's Fact Sheets on this legislation below:

Fact Sheet: [IEP Document Translation: HB 23-1263: Language Access for Families with Limited English Proficiency](#)

Spanish Language Version: [Traducción de Documentos IEP: HB 23-1263: Acceso al Lenguaje para Familias de Habilidad Limitada del Inglés](#)

### WIDA Survey

WIDA is collecting feedback to better understand educators' assessment needs and to inform future improvements to WIDA MODEL, WIDA's interim progress monitoring assessment. An interim assessment is a test administered several times during the school year to measure progress and guide future instruction.

Our ask: [Complete this 15-minute survey](#) by March 13 at 11:59 p.m. CT. We encourage all educators, even those not familiar with WIDA MODEL, to provide us with input!





Orchard Mesa & Fruita Lions Clubs



PRESENTS

# Easter Egg-Venture

**The Western Colorado Easter Egg-Venture:  
An Accessible Adventure for Children with Blindness  
or Visual Impairments & their siblings**

**[ March 30, 2024 • 12:00 – 2:00 PM ]**

## MESA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

**Lions Park • 2785 Hwy 50 • Grand Junction, CO**

*• Snacks will be provided for children •*

### WHO CAN ATTEND?

Children age 12 and under  
can participate.  
Siblings with sight can participate  
using blindfolds.  
*Registration Required.*

### ACTIVITIES

**CALLING ALL ADVENTURERS!**  
Children will experience a beeping egg hunt,  
craft their own braille/tactile book,  
get creative with musical egg activities  
- plus prizes to win. Shades of Blue Ranch  
will provide horse & carriage rides.

### TO REGISTER:

**Contact: Nila/970-901-6207 or Kimala/907-351-5814**

*Please feel free to text or leave a message*



**In support of children with visual impairments**

*Event Supported by the Orchard Mesa & Fruita Lions Clubs,  
A Shared Vision and Center for Independence Low Vision/Blind Program*



# 2025 CDE ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SEMINAR

 **Adams 12 Conference Center 1500 E.  
128th Ave Thornton, CO 80241**



**Date:** April 24-25, 2025

**Time:** 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

**Registration is limited to Colorado O&M Specialists or O&M  
Specialists-in-university training who reside in Colorado.**

**Day One Topic: Tactile Graphics for Colorado O&M Specialist**

Tactile graphics are especially important in helping students who are blind or visually impaired to develop O&M skills. We will discuss the foundational skills and strategies that students must use to successfully read and apply the information in a tactile graphic.

**Day Two Morning Topic: Orientation & Mobility  
for Students with Extensive Support Needs**

Students with visual impairment and additional disabilities are often the most challenging students on a caseload. This workshop will help you better understand this population and how to serve them. We will discuss the characteristics of students with learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism, and traumatic brain injury, along with specific ideas for instruction. A case study of a complex student will provide concrete examples of how to put the ideas into practice and the positive impact of instruction.

**Requirements to Receive UNC Credit**

- Must attend both days of training
- Write a graduate-level application paper.

Fifteen (15) CDE / ACVREP contact hours and  
One (1) UNC grad semester hour will be offered

For more information or questions about  
the seminar contact Tanni Anthony at

 [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

**Day Two Afternoon Topic: Cane to Canine:  
Getting Ready for a Guide Dog**

The O&M and guide dog domains have become more closely connected over recent years. As O&M skills are fundamental for guide dog travel, O&M specialists play a crucial role in identifying and preparing potential guide dog travelers. Instruction in this area, however, is often only a small part of an O&M instructor preparation program. This workshop will help practitioners better understand what guide dogs do, who makes a good candidate for a guide dog, and what skills to work on with a client to help them be ready to work with a guide dog. Attendees will leave with specific lesson ideas, resources for O&M guide dog preparation courses nationwide, and hands-on practice with Juno (i.e., simulated guide dog travel).

**REGISTER HERE**

**Registration is open until April 10, 2025**





**Registration is Open!**



*~Many People, One Heart~*



## **Western Regional Early Intervention Conference**

Hosted by the New Mexico School for the Deaf,  
the Project for New Mexico Children & Youth Who Are Deaf-Blind,  
and the New Mexico School for the Blind

held at the

**Sheraton Uptown Hotel**



*Albuquerque, New Mexico*



**Pre-conference: September 22, 2025; Conference: September 23-24, 2025**

- Early bird registration on or before July 18, 2025-Preconference only \$130; Conference only \$260; Both Preconference and Conference \$380
- Registration on or after July 19, 2025- Preconference only \$145; Conference only \$295; Both Preconference and Conference \$425
- Registration closes September 8, 2025

Presenters Include: Dr. Rachel Pilling Pediatric Ophthalmologist from the United Kingdom, Dr. Wyatt Hall University of Rochester Medical Center and Gallaudet's Child Resilience Center, Maurice Belote-Closure Co-Chair of the National Deaf-Blind Coalition, and many more.

**For more details:**

- The Western Regional Early Intervention Conference website address is: <http://www.wreic.org>
- For additional questions or information, please email us at: [WREICinformation@gmail.com](mailto:WREICinformation@gmail.com)



**We Hope To See You There!!**





# Calendar of Events

2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025

- March 1**      **See the Future Fund Tools for Life Applications Due**  
[Check out See the Future for application and details](#)
- March 13**      **Southern Region TVI—DVR Meetings**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- March 14**      **CAER Nominations Due—Get it Done!**  
Contact: Chloann Wooley [cwoolley@upboces.org](mailto:cwoolley@upboces.org)
- March 7**      **CIMC First Friday Meetings—virtual**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- March 19**      **Sound Bites: Optical Strategies to Enhance Mobility —virtual**  
 Register by 3/1/2025—[Sound Bites Registration](#)
- March 31**      **National Federation of the Blind Scholarship Application deadline**  
[2024-2025 scholarship application is now open](#)
- April 4**      **CIMC First Friday Meetings—virtual**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- April 12**      **Accessible Easter Egg Hunt – Grand Junction**  
Contact: Kimala at (907) 351-5814
- April 12**      **Easter Egg Hunt - Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton, 9:00 a.m.**  
Contact: Chaz Davis - [cdavis@cocenter.org](mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org)
- April 15**      **Deadline for NFDBCO Scholarship**  
[Click here](#) for more information.
- April 16**      **Sound Bites: Understanding Visual Field Loss in Children —virtual**  
 Register by 4/2/2025—[Sound Bites Registration](#)
- April 17**      **CSDB Beeping Egg Hunt – CSDB — 9:30 am to 11:30 am**  
Contact: Ashley Renslow at [arenslow@csdb.org](mailto:arenslow@csdb.org)
- April 24-25**      **CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar—Adams 12 Conference Center, Thornton**  
Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)





# Calendar of Events

2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025

May 2	<b>CIMC First Friday</b> Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
May 2-3	<b>Parents Encouraging Parents Conference—Grand Junction</b> Register: <a href="#">Click here to register.</a>
May 16-18	<b>Family Retreat</b> - YMCA in Estes Park Contact: Chaz Davis at <a href="mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org">cdavis@cocenter.org</a>
June 4-July 2	<b>No Limits to Learning (4-week Program)</b> To register: <a href="#">Click here</a>
June 5-6	<b>Conference for Assistive Technology and Education (CATE)</b> Contact: <a href="#">SWAAAC website</a>
June 6	<b>CIMC First Friday Meetings—virtual</b> Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
June 9-10	<b>Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness—Adams 12 Conference Center, Thornton</b> Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
June 9-14	<b>Camp Abilities Four Corners</b> To register by April 15th: <a href="#">Click here</a>
June 22-28	<b>Deaf-Blind Awareness Week—Celebrate!</b>
July 8-13	<b>National Federation of the Blind – New Orleans, LA</b> For more information, check out the <a href="#">NFB Convention site</a>
September 17	<b>Blindness/Low Vision Coalition—virtual</b> Contact: Tanni <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
Sept 23-24	<b>Western Regional Early Intervention Conference (WREIC) – Albuquerque, NM</b> Registration: <a href="http://www.wreic.org/">http://www.wreic.org/</a>
October 15-17	<b>APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY</b> Contact: <a href="http://www.APH.org">www.APH.org</a>
November 5-8	<b>Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference—Huntsville, AL</b> Registration — <a href="https://www.gitwl.org/register">https://www.gitwl.org/register</a>







## Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment News

### NIH Definition of CVI

CVINOW at Perkins School for the Blind has published an update, [NIH Initiative to Advance CVI](#), that describes a new working definition of cerebral/cortical visual impairment (CVI) from the National Institutes of Health. The page includes a link to an article in *Pediatrics* called the [Diagnosis and Care of Children With Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment: Clinical Report](#).

### Perkins CVI Protocol—FREE Training

The new Perkins CVI Protocol is an additional tool for your CVI assessment tool box. It was released January 2025. Perkins is currently offering a free class to support the implementation of the protocol for anyone who downloads the material. [Click here to get the protocol.](#)



## Orientation & Mobility

### SEE YOU IN NEW ORLEANS, DECEMBER 2026!

The excitement is already building up for the Orientation and Mobility Opus to end all Opus' - this will be one for the O&M history books! Lynn Gautreaux, the conference chair for 2026, is already hard at work planning for it. He says, "We will have an O&M program that will be remembered for years to come, with a wide variety of O&M sessions and various tracks, lots of exhibitors, and a location venue extraordinaire in New Orleans, LA!" Specific dates in December 2026, conference hotel, and other details will be forthcoming, so, mark your calendars and start planning to attend the 2026 O&M conference!

### Purchase Foundations of O&M Fourth Edition Today!

"The fourth edition of Foundations of Orientation and Mobility features contributions from over 50 experts covering essential O&M topics like teaching methods, sensorimotor functioning, and new technologies for individuals who are blind or low vision. Purchase your copy today!

[Purchase Volume I which provides a comprehensive view of the field of orientation and mobility.](#)

[Purchase Volume II which addresses sensory use, O&M instruction for different age and ability groups, and technology applications.](#)

Special note: Tanni has purchased 25 copies for administrative units serving students with blindness/low vision and deaf-blindness by full time TVI / O&M staff. The goal is to disseminate the books at the Spring 2025 CDE O&M Seminar on April 24-25.

# Visual Impairment, including Blindness

Effective as of June 2023.

The updated eligibility criteria can be found in the [Rules for Administration of the Exceptional Children Education Act](#).

**2.08(11) A child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness has an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects the child's educational performance and that requires specialized instruction. The term includes low vision, blindness and/or progressive vision loss.**

**2.08(11)(a) A determination that a child is an eligible child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness may include but not be limited to:**

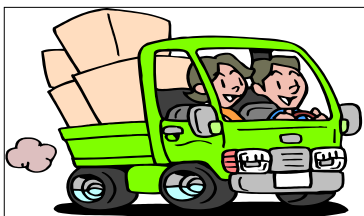
**2.08 (11) (a) (i) Visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;**

**2.08 (11) (a) (ii) Visual field restriction to 20 degrees or less; and/or**

**2.08(11) (a) (iii) A physical condition of visual system which cannot be medically corrected and, as such, affects visual functioning to the extent that specially designed instruction is needed.**

**These criteria are reserved for special situations such as, but not restricted to cortical visual impairment and/or a progressive visual loss where field and/or acuity deficits alone may not meet the aforementioned criteria.**





## TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

### NFB Scholarship Program

Every year, NFB awards more than \$250,000 in cash and prizes to blind scholars in recognition of their achievements and professional aspirations.

#### How to Apply

The [2024-2025 scholarship application is now open](#). The application will close on March 31, 2025 at midnight, eastern time.

#### Eligibility: The following requirements apply to all applicants:

- Must be [legally blind \(PDF\)](#) in both eyes.
- Must be residing in the United States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico.
- Must be 18 years of age by July 8, 2025.
- Must be pursuing or planning to pursue a full-time, post-secondary course of study in a degree program at a United States institution in the fall of the year of application. Beginning in 2025, the National Federation of the Blind may award up to five scholarships annually to applicants enrolled part-time who meet all other eligibility requirements.

NFB recognizes that employment, family caregiving, and ongoing medical care, concurrent with post-secondary enrollment, can contribute to a need for students to carry a part-time course load. Our application has been revised to provide an opportunity for students who will be enrolled part-time in the fall to share additional information with the committee.

Must participate in person in the entire NFB National Convention and in all its scheduled scholarship program activities (finalists will receive assistance to attend the national convention).

For more information regarding eligibility, please review our [scholarship program FAQs](#).

### College Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

Other scholarships are listed online [here](#).

# just for PARENTS

## National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB)

NFADB is the largest nonprofit organization serving families of individuals who are deaf-blind (combined vision and hearing loss). [Check out the NFADB website.](#)

The organization provides information on deaf-blindness, hosts webinars on a variety of topics, and is very involved in national conferences to support families of children with deaf-blindness.



## National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

Founded in 1983, the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC) is a membership organization of parents, educators, and friends of blind children reaching out to give each other vital support, encouragement, and information. They have thousands of members in all fifty states plus Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

The NOPBC offers hope, encouragement, information, and resources for parents of blind or low-vision children. NOPBC provides emotional support and a network for families. They also provide information, training, and resources to empower families to take an active role in guiding their child's development and education.

Their status as a division of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), an important organization of blind people in the world, provides many benefits. NFB provides its members information about the societal, legislative, and technological issues that affect blind people. One of their most exciting activities is their annual conference. Every year since it was established, the NOPBC has conducted an annual conference for parents and teachers of blind children as part of the national convention of the NFB.

The program has grown to include five exciting days of workshops, training sessions, activities for all family members, including sighted siblings, and countless opportunities to meet blind adults and other families and children from around the country. Most states have an NOPBC affiliate chapter. Colorado has one! For more information, call the Colorado Center for the Blind at (303) 778-1130.

## Exceptional Parent Magazine

Did you know subscriptions to [Exceptional Parent Magazine](#) are free? This award-winning publication focuses on serving the special needs community.

[Sign up here](#) to receive a free monthly subscription.

## Have a child with a Recent Eye Condition Diagnosis?

APH FamilyConnect's Getting Started Guides provide information about vision development, navigating IFSP and IEPs, braille literacy, and technology. They offer transition support, tips and ideas to support your child at home, as well as a wealth of additional resources to help you raise your child. [Access the Getting Started Guides here.](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions: Social Security Administration, Supplemental Security Income, and Social Security Disability Insurance - Can I work if I receive social security benefits?

This FAQ provides people with disabilities and their families an overview on social security benefits and answers common questions about these benefits and employment.

Check out the [Financial Toolkit: Frequently Asked Questions](#) resource.

# just for PARENTS



## A Guide for Parents and Family Members of Students on IEPs

The CDE website has great information for parents. Go to this link for frequently asked questions. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/parent-faq>

### Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP)

PEP is a conference for families and parents who have children with disabilities, ages birth to 21.

Parents include parents as couples, single parents, legal guardians, adoptive, and foster parents. A support person may attend and accompany a single parent. A support person is one who is helping a parent to raise a child(ren) with a disability or who is a caretaker of the child(ren) with a disability in the family (can include grandparent(s) or other relatives). PEP is a non-specific disability conference that focuses on commonalities, not diagnoses.

**PEP In-person Conferences at Hotels:** PEP in-person conferences are arranged at various hotels throughout regions in Colorado, and offers free registration, food, and lodging (if applicable). Special accommodations, language interpretation, and document translation are available. Transportation is not provided; consider carpooling if applicable; parking and sometimes valet service is available at the hotel venue.

**Cost, Food, Lodging:** PEP conferences are free to attend. Funded by both federal and state grants, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) offers these conferences free of charge to eligible Colorado parents of children with disabilities and to Colorado professionals who work with children and youth with disabilities and their families. Parents are responsible for their own transportation to and from the hotel venue.

For more information about PEP check out the [CDE PEP website](#).

For questions, reach out to Pahmela Mendoza, Family School Program Specialist at [mendoza\\_p@cde.state.co.us](mailto:mendoza_p@cde.state.co.us)

### Upcoming Event - Spring PEP 2025

Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) 2025 Spring Conference will be held in Grand Junction

May 2, 2025 | 9:00 AM-6:30 PM

May 3, 2025 | 8:00 AM-3:30 PM

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel

743 Horizon Drive

Grand Junction, CO

[Click here to register.](#)

### Interested in attending the next PEP in the 2025-26 School Year?

Join the PEP Mailing List

[Add me to the PEP Mailing List](#)





## IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

We are facing our first real shortage for Colorado TVIs (teachers of students with visual impairments) and Orientation and Mobility Specialists = orientation and mobility specialists. Please keep in touch with Tanni about our job openings. If you know of an anticipated opening in your part of the state, please begin working to recruit someone into our field by ensuring they have an opportunity to learn about being a TVI and/or an O&M Specialist. This may be a paraeducator, a brailist, and/or a colleague already in the teaching profession.

Please work with Dr. Paula Conroy to learn more about the UNC distance education / graduate program to prepare TVIs and O&M Specialists in Colorado! If you are looking for a job, please check out the listings below and also reach out to Tanni, who will have a current list of work across the state, including TVI and O&M Specialist contract work. Together, we can fill in the needed gaps to serve all of our students.

### Metro Region

- ♦ **1 FTE TVI (or part time)** TVI at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please reach out to Tammy Miller at [tmiller@anchorcenter.org](mailto:tmiller@anchorcenter.org)
- ♦ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist Position** in Littleton School District. Please contact Jennifer Templeton at [jtempleton@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:jtempleton@lps.k12.co.us)

### Northern Region

- ♦ **.5 FTE or part-time TVI / O&M Specialist**—Windsor School District. For more information, please contact Jennifer Sedaghat at [Jennifer.sedaghat@weldre4.org](mailto:Jennifer.sedaghat@weldre4.org)
- ♦ **.8 FTE for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Poudre School District for the 25-26 School Year. For more information, please contact Amy Villard at [avillard@psdschools.org](mailto:avillard@psdschools.org)

### Southern Region

- ♦ **1 FTE Principal of the School for the Blind** – This position is with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. The official job announcement is available via the CSDB website, under Classified Employment, at: [Non-Classified Openings](#) For more information contact Tera Spangler at [tspangler@csdb.org](mailto:tspangler@csdb.org)
- ♦ **1 FTE Elementary ELA Teacher and State Teacher Aide** at CSDB. Please contact Cheryl Austin for more information at [caustin@csdb.org](mailto:caustin@csdb.org)
- ♦ **1 FTE Literacy Teacher / Interventionist** at CSDB. Please contact Tai Naeem for more information [tnaeem@csdb.org](mailto:tnaeem@csdb.org)
- ♦ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist** for CSDB Outreach. Please contact Jac Tyrcha at [jtyrcha@csdb.org](mailto:jtyrcha@csdb.org)

### Across Metro, Northern, and Western Regions

- ♦ **Contract Work with Flexible Hours**—A Shared Vision. For more information about working in many areas of the state with the 0-2 population, please contact Steve Lindauer at [slindauer@asharedvision.org](mailto:slindauer@asharedvision.org)





## IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

**TVIs and O&M Specialists**—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE TVI and/or O&M licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing with part-time or substitute work. This includes maintaining your ACVREP O&M certification.

Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement! We are seeing many retired TVIs and O&M Specialists come back to contribute as subs for maternity leave, do contract work, and/or work at A Shared Vision. If you want to be on the CDE's TVI and/or O&M Specialist contractor list, please be in touch with Tanni at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)



### IMPORTANT RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITY

AER's Professional Personnel Recruitment Committee (PPRC) is proud to announce the release of the long-awaited recruitment video: "Visual Impairment Professions." The 5-minute PBS Spotlight On video started airing nationwide between regular programming on September 30, 2024. It is expected to reach 3 million viewers in just the first 3 months. It will continue to air for a minimum of one year.

The links to access this video with and without audio description are:

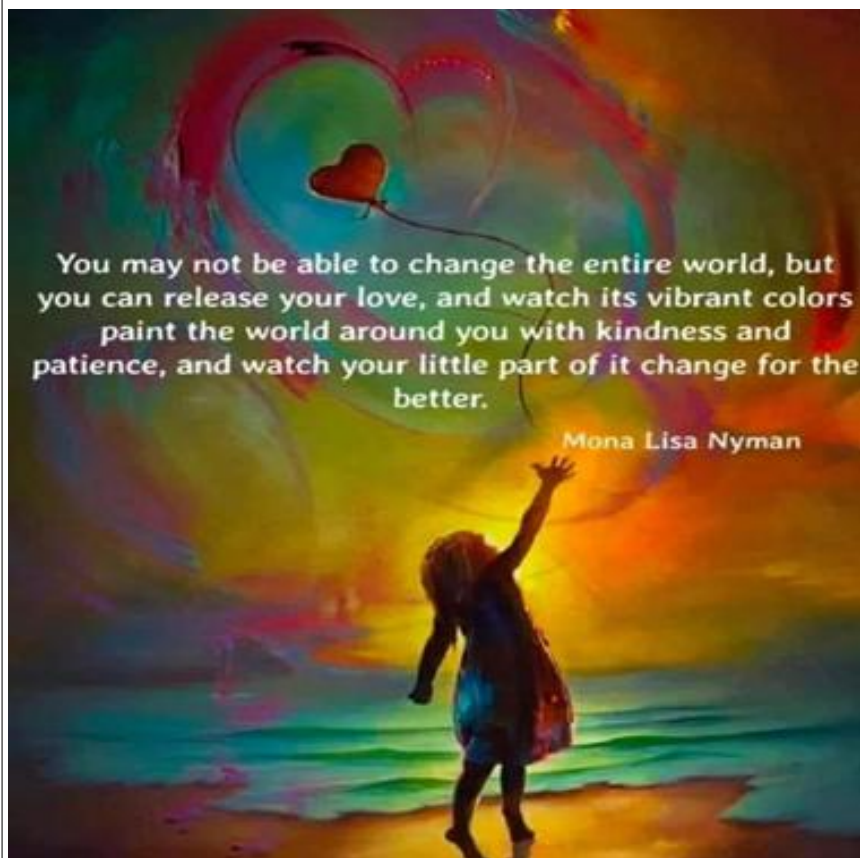
- 1) Without audio description <https://youtu.be/I90UJSQNGU8>
- 2) With audio description <https://youtu.be/mGscr-DOOEg>

Please use the video and spread the word. Everyone needs to help bring new people into our field!

"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it."

- Steve Jobs

## CO Chapter of AER is Accepting Nominations for Awards through March 14th



CAER will host its annual business meeting and awards banquet on April 24th. During this meeting, there will be an opportunity to honor award recipients. Please take time to read through the awards and their intended purpose. Who comes to mind as you read the words? Then please take a moment to write a nomination to honor this person and all they have contributed.

Nominations from AER members are due March 14th.

President's Award: This award recognizes outstanding leadership in service to people with visual disabilities. True to its name, the current President will select and present this award.

Gary Schmidt Award: This award honors an AER member who works directly with students/clients. Nomination criteria include ethical standards, sense of humor, degree of excellence in job performance, and professionalism. The CAER Board reviews the nominations for this award.

Connections Award: This award recognizes cooperative efforts that cross organizational lines, perhaps even groups working collaboratively to benefit our field. The CAER Board considers the nominations.

Lifetime Achievement Award: This award is presented to professionals who have given of themselves to students/clients throughout their career and are preparing for retirement.

Ken Neve Award: This award is to recognize an AER professional in the area specific to orientation and mobility. The CAER Board considers the nominations.

Nominations should be submitted to Chloann Wooley at [cwoolley@upboces.org](mailto:cwoolley@upboces.org)

# Blindness/ Low Vision Coalition

## Virtual Meeting – February 25, 2025

**Persons in Attendance:** Tanni Anthony, Cheryl Austin, Nancy Cozart, Chaz Davis, Abby Horner, Donna Keale, Paula Landry, Tammy Miller, Erin Schroeder, Jim Olson, Michele Reed, and Chloann Woolley

**Guests:** Kiera Zink, parent, and Jacq Tyrcha, CSDB Outreach Coordinator

**Persons Absent:** Paula Conroy

**MISSION OF THE BLINDNESS/LOW VISION COALITION:** The purpose of the Vision Coalition is to bring the collective resources of the group together to address state priorities improving services to students who are blind/visually impaired. (April 1998)

### ACRONYM LEGEND

ASV	A Shared Vision
BVI	Blind / Visually Impaired
CAER	CO Chapter - Association of the Education/Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired
CCB	Colorado Center for the Blind
CDE	Colorado Department of Education
CIMC	Colorado Instructional Materials Center
COMS	Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist
CSDB	Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
DVR	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
ESSU	Exceptional Student Services Unit
O&M	Orientation and Mobility
TVI/TSVI	Teacher of students with blindness/visual impairments

### MEMBERS OF BLINDNESS/LOW VISION COALITION FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

A Shared Vision – Paula Landry  
Anchor Center for Blind Children – Tammy  
Colorado AER Chapter – Paula Conroy  
Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Chaz Davis  
Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony  
Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Michele Reed  
Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson  
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Cheryl Austin  
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Donna Keale  
Metro TVI / COMS– Nancy Cozart  
Northern TVI / COMS – Abby Horner  
Southern TVI / COMS – Chloann Woolley  
University of Northern Colorado – Paula Conroy  
Western TVI / COMS – Erin Schroeder

**Norms of the Blindness/Low Vision Coalition:** Stay present. Verbally identify yourself before you speak. If we get into a serious discussion, please wait for your turn (we will assign someone to take stock of who is next in the discussion). Blindness/Low Vision Coalition meetings are a confidential environment. We are here for the common good of students, families, and our profession. In the spirit of improvement, we will bring critical issues to the table.



## PROGRAM UPDATES

### **Metro Region** (Nancy Cozart)

Our next and final virtual TVI/COMS meeting will be March 6, 2025 hosted virtually by Aurora Public Schools. Topics of discussion: (a) How considering braille for students is handled at the IEP meeting and documented in the IEP; (b) follow up on the new eligibility guidelines; (c ) getting families and students together for activities; and (d) planning for future meetings (regional rep/ reps), in person vs virtual, etc.

#### Discussion Items:

- *Are districts adjusting job descriptions for VI Paraprofessionals and/or Braillists?* The job descriptions on the CDE BLV website are actually those that were developed by Littleton School District many years ago. One area that has changed over time is technology. Chloann shared that her AU has higher pay for paraeducators working with learners with multiple disabilities. There is often a lot of turnover with these roles. Tanni will send out the job descriptions on the CDE website for our review and suggestions. It would also be good to include the intervener role.
- 
- *Are Eye Examination Reports required for eligibility?* Tanni clarified that we have a long history of asking for an eye examination report to provide critical information about ocular health, diagnosis, prognosis, and probable treatment. Without this information, the TVI does not have the full clinical picture to know about the condition(s) tied to the blindness/low vision and whether the child would benefit from medical treatment such as glasses for refractive error.

### **Northern Region** (Abby Horner)

We will have a Northern TVI meeting in April and CATT will be doing a presentation. We do not have a date yet but it will be in April. There will be a .8 FTE opening in Poudre School District for this next school year.

### **Western Region** (Erin Schroeder)

The Western Slope TVI/COMS met in January and have another meeting scheduled for March 3<sup>rd</sup>. At our January meeting we discussed Colorado's additional requirements to renew our teaching licenses. Participants asked about the Special Education and Behavioral Health renewal requirement and English Learner requirements. The CVI Connect resource was shared, and we looked at the information on their website. Questions were asked about ordering the PSAT and SAT in braille from the college board and the best way to ensure students had access in time for test day.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Beeping Easter Egg Hunt will be held Saturday April 12<sup>th</sup> from 12 to 2 p.m. at Orchard Mesa Lions Club Park in Grand Junction for children who are blind or have low vision. The event is sponsored by A Shared Vision, Lions Clubs, Center for Independence and The Daily Sentinel. Flyers will be sent out to families on the Western Slope when they are available.

*Discussion: READ Act and how it works for the students who may not be able to access an existing READ Act screening tool selected by their district.* Tanni reviewed that the CDE screening tools are a menu from which AUs can select their chosen tool or tools. This tool will work for the majority of the students and there are times when a differentiated pathway must be considered. For more details, go to [this webpage](#).

summer. She will be in touch with Erin for some guidance / assistance.

### **Southern Region (Chloann Woolley)**

There are 63 names on the Southern Region TVI/DVR distribution list that represent 10 organizations. For those new to the area, please know that Colorado has regional meetings across the state and all service providers are invited to the meetings held in their respective regions (Western slope, Northern, Metro Denver, and Southern). The Southern Region TVI/DVR group includes the following organizations in the southern region: CSDB (Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind); DVR (Department of Vocational Rehabilitation); Academy School District 20; Pueblo District 60; Colorado Springs School District 11; School District 49; Pueblo School District 70; South Central BOCES; Ute Pass BOCES; and Virtual TVI.

The third Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting was held on January 21, 2025. School District 49 organized a tour and presentation during a snow-day with Dr. Gregg Pusateri, OD, M.Div. He is the new owner and doctor of New Horizons Low Vision Center at 5614 N. Union Blvd in Colorado Springs, CO 80918 (719) 471-3200. Dr. Pusateri shared many of his tools and his low vision evaluation process. He provided good instruction on how he evaluates clients Using Eccentric (Off-Center) Vision.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is hosting our 4<sup>th</sup> meeting at their office in Colorado Springs, on Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, from 2:30-4:00 p.m. They have already shared 6 handouts for our Tuesday meeting titled: Description of the 5 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS); Employment Matters 101-Sample Ability Statements; Employment Matters 101-Session 8 key Learning Points; Referral for Pre-employment Transition Services; DVR information page; and the DVR Services Handbook. Our last meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2025 hosted by CIMC with a Make-and-Take topic.

Please continue to check out the new research and information about brain based visual impairments. CVI links to share for more information:

[CVI Ally](#)

[Teach CVI](#)

[CVI Now](#)

[CVI Perspective](#)

[CVI Scotland](#)

[CVI for the TVI & other Professionals](#)

[The Perkins CVI Protocol](#)

### **A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)**

As Colorado's leading provider of early intervention vision services for children who are blind or have low vision, A Shared Vision is committed to ensuring that all families have access to essential services. Our community of skilled professionals works collaboratively to empower families and help children with blindness and low vision reach their full potential.

2024 was a busy year! A Shared Vision supported 216 children and their families, and provided 1,891 IFSP vision service visits, an increase of 23.4% and 1.6% respectively from the prior year. Thirty-two of the children lived in rural communities in seven counties.

Our biggest project this winter is preparing the updated Vision Screening Protocol© for release this spring to professionals in Colorado and across the country. This update incorporates feedback from several Colorado experts, including top pediatric ophthalmologists and optometrists enhancing the precision and effectiveness of our instruments with more specific recommendations for our caregivers. Additionally, we have integrated a HIPAA-compliant cloud-based platform to greatly streamline the administration of the protocol and significantly improve the caregiver experience. Training on the new protocol and scoring guidance will be available through instructional videos and in person.

We are truly grateful for the collaboration from the pediatric ophthalmologists, optometrists, and blindness/low vision experts who assisted us with this new update. Thank you for your continued partnership in this important mission to help other professionals identify very young children with blindness or low vision.

We continue to expand our family resources with the addition of two new tactile book activities – “The Five Senses of the Holidays” and a “Lovebug Book.” To access step-by-step directions to these books and access other digital resources, visit our updated website [here](#).

There is a fiscal shortfall with EI Colorado. Stay tuned for more information about how this will impact reimbursement and services for families. This may impact several of our entities who provide early intervention services.

The occurrence of blind and low vision services for children in EI has grown significantly over the past few years. This increase in demand for services is wonderful as we have historically underserved our families of children with blindness, low vision, or vision concerns. However, our challenge now is the shortage of EI-TVIs to meet these growing demands. At any point in time, we have 5 to 15 families awaiting an EI-TVI to provide IFSP vision services. To better serve the state-wide needs, we have implemented an innovative approach, called Quick Response Visits, for initial contact with families when a provider isn't immediately available. This approach enables families to quickly connect with an EI-TVI via telehealth and get initial support as we review their needs and identify an ongoing provider.

During the Quick Response visit, the teacher gathers information about the family and their child's diagnosis and vision concerns to help us review the frequency and intensity of visits, as well as the complexity of those visits. Also during the Quick Response visit, the teacher provides the family with information and strategies they may need until an ongoing provider can establish a longer-term relationship with them. We have found that in some cases this Quick Response visit is all the family will need, and additional visits may not be necessary.

As soon as we can assign an ongoing teacher from either A Shared Vision or Anchor Center, we notify the referring service coordinator and share notes with the ongoing provider to ensure a seamless transfer. If a family is still awaiting an ongoing teacher after three or four weeks, they are offered another Quick Response visit.

#### **Anchor Center for Blind Children (Tammy Miller)**

Program Updates: We are enjoying a fantastic school year in our three children's programs! Preschool is on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and our Infant & Toddler Program is on Mondays and two Fridays per month. Our Home Visit EI Program is continuing strong with a great team!

Anchor Center recently hosted the Early Childhood Blindness/Low Vision Alliance's biannual seminar where 30 professionals and leaders from Early Childhood programs attended from around the U.S. and Canada. This workgroup has been meeting across the USA since 1975 and is committed to the early intervention and early childhood services for young children with blindness/low vision. *Tanni's Notes:* The Anchor Center for Blind Children did a masterful job of hosting the seminar and we are very Colorado-proud for their hospitality and special touches to welcome and host this meeting.

Events: We have Community Days planned for each month of the school year for all our students and their families, including swimming, playground visits, adaptive horseback riding, etc. Our Family Services team

holds Night Watch respite events one night per month during the school year. Our annual wine tasting fundraiser event *Visions of Love* took place in February. Thanks to all who supported us with your attendance!

Headquartered in Denver for 40 years, Anchor Center for Blind Children specializes in serving children with visual impairments or combined vision and hearing loss during their most formative years of development, ages birth to five years. Staffed by a transdisciplinary team of highly trained teachers of students with visual impairments, early childhood special educators, therapists, and a pediatric ophthalmologist, Anchor Center's vision services are customized to meet each child's unique needs and strengths. Families also receive support, guidance, practical knowledge, and connections to other important resources. Anchor Center's primary programming includes: vision assessments and pediatric ophthalmology exams; early intervention home-based services (for children, ages birth to 3 years); center-based programming for infants (newborn – 18 months), toddlers (18 months – 3 years), and preschoolers (3 – 5 years); occupational, physical, and speech/language therapies; recreational, music, and horticultural therapies; summer camps and family respite care; and family support, including programs for caregivers and siblings. The Anchor Center charges a nominal tuition fee for toddler and preschool programs but does not charge for infant services. No child is ever denied access to services based on the family's inability to pay.

Anchor's NAVEG screening project is pivoting based on practice and feedback, NAVEG is a neonatal screening tool for babies at risk for a brain based visual impairment. Stay tuned for their updates with this research. The Anchor Center is also investigating next steps to address intervention-based research.

#### **Colorado AER Chapter (Chloann Woolley)**

Please join and support your local Chapter of The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER).

CAER awarded three mini-grants for a total of \$825 for three people to attend extended training: Ofelia Caballero via Nancy Cozart - Texas Symposium on Deafblind Education; Bryan Moles - Illinois AER Conference, and Ellie Carlson - Southern O&M Conference

Our next meeting was held on Monday February 24<sup>th</sup>. We currently have three agenda items: 1. schedule information shares from our mini-grant recipients for ACVREP credit; 2. Suggestions/plans for May CAER Banquet/Awards, which will be held April 24<sup>th</sup> (the Thursday night of the CDE O&M Seminar); 3. review the AER statement in regard to the possible certification area from AER: Certified Vision Rehabilitation Occupational Therapists (CVROT).

Join us in a fundraiser Reusable shopping bags that read "I Read Braille What's Your Superpower?"

Colorado's Association for Education and Rehabilitation (CAER) of the Blind and Visually Impaired is hosting a fund raiser. We will use for Mini Grants for members to support their clients or educational needs. We are selling reusable bags in blue with the words "I Read Braille What's Your Superpower?" written on them in a cream color, with the same saying written in Braille beneath the words. The Braille is in gold and all the writing is outlined by a rectangle in the same gold color. Bags sell for \$12.00 each and shipping for each bag is \$3.00. Bulk purchases are possible. Reach out to Michele Reed at 559-907-8177.





Funds raised are used for grants to support the local community with and serving vision loss. We also host an awards banquet and offer discounted memberships. The bag dimensions are 13" x 9.75" with a 10" gusseted bottom with insert. The handles are 20". [Click here](#) to visit the Etsy shop.

AER has created recruitment flyers and their link is featured in the Keeping in Touch newsletter.

### **Colorado Center for The Blind Youth Programs (Chaz Davis)**

In January we brought 12 youth to Ignite Adaptive Sports' brand-new headquarters for a winter sports day. All attendees participated in downhill skiing or snowboarding and learned how to traverse the mountain safely with a guide. One student who tried snowboarding for the first time exclaimed that "I've never had so much fun. My parents told me I could never do this, but I did and I'm so glad. CCB has been working with Ignite Adaptive Sports since 1993, and we are grateful for the partnership.

In February, we planned to have a shark dissection at CCB in collaboration with Professor Terry Harrison at Arapahoe Community College. We had over 30 students from 6 school districts register for the event. Additionally, 11 blind role models and students from Colorado School of Mines and University of Denver volunteered to mentor the students during the activity. Due to inclement weather, we had to postpone the dissection to a later date.

On February 22, students took part in a tour of the Morrison Natural History Museum led by a local paleontologist. Students learned about the rich history of the lands we live on today.

There will be an accessible Easter Egg Hunt on April 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 at the Colorado Center for the Blind in Littleton. On May 16-18<sup>th</sup>, there will be a family retreat at the YMCA in Estes Park. There will be activities for parents and family members.

We are beginning to meet with families regarding our summer residential program which will be from June 4 through July 2, 2025, for students ages 15-21. Students will take classes in assistive technology, Braille literacy, cane travel, home management and residential skills. Students will have the opportunity to take part in college and career seminars to learn the ins and outs of navigating college and the workplace as a blind person. This year, we have a two-day camping trip scheduled at Great Sand Dunes national Park in addition to rock climbing and watersport activities. Applications will be open until May 1.

### **Colorado Instructional Materials Center (Jim Olson)**

Counts: (1) Statewide Count, and (2) Federal Quota Census: CIMC staff has been hosting one-on-one Zoom meetings with administrative unit contact personnel to review their entire statewide count, student by student. The feedback has been very positive. Time is spent verifying each administrative unit (AU) has the appropriate verification for students to meet the eligibility requirements to be included in the Federal Quota Census as Functional Definition of Blindness (FDB), Meets Definition of Blindness (MDB), or the new IDEA eligibility category, or if they cannot be included at all.

2025 Denver Colorado Braille Challenge Contest update: The CSDB Outreach department is once again partnering with the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) in Littleton, CO to host the Denver Metro regional contest on Friday, February 28, 2025 at the CCB. Fifteen (15) students from five (5) Colorado administrative units are registered to compete. Thank you to the TVIs from Adams 12 Five Star Schools, Arapahoe County District 6

(Littleton), Denver Public Schools, Douglas County Schools, and El Paso County District 49 (Falcon) for bringing students to celebrate braille!

Braille Book Orders for next 2025-2026 School Year: The annual book ordering deadline for textbook and novels in braille is April 1<sup>st</sup>, annually. Thank you to those administrative units who have already submitted their book orders.

NIMAC and NIMAS: The National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) was created by IDEA 2004. NIMAC is a federally funded, online file repository of source files in the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS format. Based on the DAISY standard, NIMAS itself is not intended for distribution directly to students – generally, it requires conversion to become a fully-accessible textbook equivalent for students with print disabilities.

Why is this important: The availability of NIMAS files for braille vendors and transcribers greatly speeds up the transcription process of your new books. You plan an important role in obligating publishers to submit NIMAS-conformant files sets of textbooks and related core instructional materials to the NIMAC. Sample contract language, developed by the National AEM Center (National Center on Accessible Educational Materials) is available on both the NIMAC.us website and the AEM.cast.org website:

From the [aem.cast.org](http://aem.cast.org) website: Sample Contract Language: A sample statement that could be included in an SEA or LEA contract or purchase order follows:

By agreeing to deliver the materials marked with “NIMAS” on this contract or purchase order, the publisher agrees to prepare and submit on or before [month/day/year] a NIMAS file set to the NIMAC that complies with the terms and procedures set forth by the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) (IDEA Title I, Part D, sec. 674(e)). The publisher also agrees to markup materials eligible for NIMAS submission that contain mathematical and scientific instructional content by using the [MathML modular extension of the DAISY/NIMAS Structure Guideline](#), as posted and maintained at the DAISY Consortium website (refer to the latest applicable version). Should the vendor be a distributor of the materials and not the publisher, the distributor agrees to immediately notify the publisher of its obligation to submit NIMAS file sets of the purchased materials to the NIMAC. The files will be used for the production of accessible formats as permitted under the law for eligible students (IDEA Title I, Part B, sec. 612(a)).

New APH Product Release: Memory Puzzles: Shapes. Catalog number: 1-08001-00, \$99.00. From the APH website: Shapes fosters memory and matching skills, problem-solving, and tactile learning. In partnership with [The Puzzled Co.](#), Memory Puzzles: Shapes features 52 waterproof puzzle pieces that form 26 pairs of tactile shapes, all housed in a durable pouch that includes a list of suggested activities. Every puzzle piece includes both braille and print labels. To help students orient the pieces, each component has a couple of tactile clues: a wavy orange line in the center to indicate the horizontal direction, and a square orange braille indicator in one of the upper corners.

APH: Recently Discontinued Products: SMART brailier; Boehm 3, K-2 Tactile Edition; Graphic art tape kit; Game of Squares; Getting To Know You: A Social Skills...; Letter writing paper, black line paper, fanfold tractor feed paper (both 8.5” x 11”, and 11.5” x 11”), transcriber paper, several other versions of paper; Goin’ Someplace Special; Match-It-Up Frames: Small set; Tactile theme pack: In My Yard; Large Print/Braille Desk-Top Number Line; Fractional Parts of a Whole; Hands-On Kit; Wrat5 – Print and the Wrat5 – Braille; Textured Pegs; Small Stylus; On The Way To Literacy – Terrible Awful Day. [See the APH website for a complete list.](#)

**APH Braille Tales:** Sign up for Braille Tales and start receiving free books! The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) believes early exposure to reading develops crucial braille awareness skills and promotes enthusiasm for literacy. By enrolling in Braille Tales, participating families receive a free print/braille book every other month until the child reaches their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday. To be eligible for the program: (1) Child and/or parent who is blind or low vision. (2) Child must be age 5 or under. (3) Family must reside in the U.S. or its outlying areas. For Questions, more information, or to apply, visit [aph.org/braille-tales](http://aph.org/braille-tales), or email: [brailletales@aph.org](mailto:brailletales@aph.org). The application is available in English and Spanish on the APH website.

**Accuracy of Identifying the Child's Blindness/Low Vision Condition:** Tanni has asked the CIMC to work with their contacts to ensure we have an accurate (at least feasible) condition listed. Jim noted that nystagmus is a frequently listed primary condition. Unless it is MOTOR nystagmus, this is not a primary diagnosis as sensory nystagmus is a symptom of early onset, bilateral visual impairment.

**Home Schooler Learners:** Children who are home schooled have always been eligible to be registered with the CIMC and with the APH Quote Count, pending eligibility that includes five specific requirements. Orders are filled by licensed TVIs working in CO. For more information, go to [the CIMC website](#).

### **CSDB School for The Blind (Cheryl Austin)**

**Staff Updates and Vacancies:** Staff returned from Winter Break under the new leadership of Interim Principal Cheryl Austin, formerly the Dean of Students, School for the Blind since August of 2023. We have welcomed an Inclusive Early Childhood Education practicum student from the University of Colorado -Colorado Springs, supervised by Jerred Sonneborn. All vacant positions (School for the Blind Principal; Literacy Teacher, Interventionist, and Coach; Elementary ELA Teacher; and State Teacher Aide) are now posted and CSDB is accepting applications.

**School for the Blind News:** We have welcomed two new students, one elementary and one secondary. New student expectations regarding use of personal technology during the school day and excessive tardiness to class were implemented for second semester. One senior student participated in the Colorado All-State Choir in Denver January 9-11, 2025, under the guidance of music therapist/instructor, Emma Reece. Four students (one elementary, 2 secondary, and one Bridges to Life) attended the Foresight ski trip to Vail on February 2-4, 2025, co-chaperoned by Angie Brown and Allie Unker. One secondary student participated in the state spelling bee on February 20, 2025. Alex Pillard and Kyle Berns, secondary science and math teachers, have organized a field trip for Biology students to participate in a shark dissection activity at the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) in Littleton on Friday, February 21, 2025. The CSDB Braille Challenge is scheduled for February 24, 2025, with competitors in 5 categories, fun activities for "rookies," and musical performances by 3 bands. Twenty-one secondary students are participating in a weekly music and theatre Fine Arts Center collaboration, co-coordinated by Allie Unker and Emma Reece. Six secondary students are participating in a new afterschool Ski Club, led by Aimee Twaddle, to prepare for a trip to Crested Butte February 26-March 2, 2025.

**Staff Teamwork:** The Complex Needs Professional Learning Community (PLC) is developing a tactile symbol library, with a recent workshop for all staff to develop personal identifiers. . The Blind Advisory Committee is currently planning a Blind and Low Vision Career Fair for secondary and Bridges to Life students on Friday, May 9, 2025. CSDB and the U.S. Association of Blind Athletes continue to discuss opportunities for partnership as their goalball and soccer programs move to Colorado Springs.

**CSDB Events:** The First Semester Awards Ceremony was held on February 10, 2025, with all students and approximately 20 families in attendance to celebrate their accomplishments. Winter parent-teacher

conferences were held the week of February 10-13, 2025, with a total of 25 conferences scheduled, or 38.5% of students (3 in person; 22 via Zoom). CSDB hosted their Braille Challenge on January 24<sup>th</sup>! It was a great day with kids competing in all five categories. April 17<sup>th</sup> will be the Beeping Egg event.

*Discussion:* Enrollment criteria questions for CSDB should be directed to Kathy Emter, the Special Education at [kemter@csdb.org](mailto:kemter@csdb.org)

### **Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) Outreach Services (Donna Keale)**

The two TVIs are serving 65 children/students as TVI &/or O&M Specialists. The current breakdown is 32 in Early Intervention children and 33 school-age students. Our third TVI position is still vacant and posted everywhere we can find to post the job. We are still receiving request for services from Special Education Directors in both the TVI and O&M areas.

Donna has two learners with deaf-blindness and she is participating in a class sponsored by the SD Deaf-Blind Project.

In addition to serving children/students we are also working with the CIMC on the statewide Braille Challenge at the Colorado Center for the Blind (February 28th) and setting up the Beeper Egg Hunt on April 17, 2025, from 9:30-11:30 a.m. on the campus of CSDB.

Lastly, as we start approaching the last quarter of the school year, we will be preparing to create our next five-year strategic plan. At the last meeting the regional representatives were asked to ask their regions for any ideas, want or needs from CSDB Outreach. We are happy to have Jaclyn "Jac" Tyrcha, CSDB Outreach Director, at our meeting on 2/25/2025 to meet and put a face to her name. We are hoping if there are thoughts, ideas and or request that they can be emailed to Jac at [jtyrcha@csdb.org](mailto:jtyrcha@csdb.org)

### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) (Michele Reed)**

Staff Updates: Our current vacancies include a Field Instructor O&M/VRT for the Denver Metro area, and Field Instructor O&M/VRT for the western slope. The Assistive Technology Unit Interim Supervisor is Michelle "Showe" Trella. The AT Unit welcomes Maxine Lomax as the newest instructor. All our vocational rehabilitation counselor positions are filled. Our BEP program has a new program manager Leif Jacobsen.

The Personal Adjustment Training Unit continues to provide training in the community. We continue to discuss and examine ways to provide comprehensive services to the people we serve that include remote training, in-person training, and Zoom virtual group sessions (Reflections, Enrichment Hour, Women's Group, and two Braille Groups and a Men's Group).

BLVS and DVR are looking at pre-employment transition services including training/job development support, collaborating with other youth with disabilities, collaborating with other states, and increasing vendors to provide more options and opportunities. DVR has joined the Blind Statewide Task Force Meeting organized by Tera Spangler. Pamela Ellis, the counselor in the Colorado Springs office, will be the point of contact for students attending the Colorado School for the Blind. DVR will be presenting to the TVIs and O&Mers in the Southern Region on February 25, 2025 regarding our Pre-Employment Transition Services and work-readiness training opportunities. DVR can accept referrals for the youth program starting at the age of 15 to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services during the summer and school breaks.

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: We are in the second year of our new five-year award. The project's mission is to provide free technical assistance to parents and service providers of children and youth, ages birth through 21, who are deaf-blind or who have both a vision and a hearing difference. The project has a lending library and a website with a multitude of electronic resources that are available to families and educational personnel.

- **Project Staff:** Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are Co-Directors on the grant project. Jessica Meisel is our Technical Assistance (TA) Specialist. Jessica provides onsite consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. She is also leading our training and support to school-based interveners. Cindy Colwell is the Family Specialist. We are currently working to fill the Administrator III position recently vacated by Roberta Curts.
- **Technical Assistance:** To request FREE technical assistance for students with deaf-blindness, please contact Gina Herrera at [Herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)
- **Annual Deaf-Blind Child Count:** The December 1, 2024 Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count forms have been disseminated to the field and we are in the process of wrapping up this year's Child Count so it can be submitted to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness by our March 15, 2025 deadline.
- **Project Webpage:** The CDE DeafBlind webpage is [here](#).
- **Project Trainings:** We have finished with the two webinars specific to the *Communication Matrix*. The flyer and registration for the 2025 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs was just disseminated to the field. This training, *Beyond the Matrix: Assessment to Implementation For Students With Complex Communication Needs* will be held at the Adams 12 Conference Center on June 9 and 10<sup>th</sup>. Nancy Steele will continue to be our trainer and facilitator. The training is only open to CO-based personnel working for Part C, A Shared Vision, Anchor Center for Blind Children, CSDB EI BVI program, and/or CO public schools. We are looking for teams to gather on behalf of particular child / student to build out a communication program.
- **O&M Foundation Books:** The project has funded the purchase of 25 hot-off-the-press Foundations of O&M books. They will be disseminated at the spring O&M Conference to AUs with full time staff representing O&M services.

**BVI State Funded Activities:** The CDE has a strong commitment to services and supports to our students and the staff who serve them. We are pleased to offer professional learning and technical assistance to the special education field serving children who are blind/low vision, including CVI.

- **Braille Competency:** All TVIs who are new to the field are expected to demonstrate braille competency in their first year of employment in this role. If a TVI extends this date, the administrative unit of employment is at risk for a citation of noncompliance. A Practice Test is posted on the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness website. It includes practice multiple choice items and braille samples. One recent change is a requirement that a TVI must have taken their university-level braille course or have evidence of another form of significant self-study before taking the CDE Braille Competency Test the first time. Please be aware that all TVIs in Colorado public schools must renew their braille certificate one time after the first five years of initial certification.



Tanni has sent out the UEB Rules (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) to the CDE Braille proctors. Jim shared that the new edition has a clickable (online) index.

- **CDE State Conference on Blindness/Low Vision / CVI:** This year's conference was held at the Lowy Conference Center on September 20-21. The topic was *Academic Excellence for Learners with CVI* with Matt Tietjen. Over 60 people were in attendance. Tanni will begin working on the Fall 2025 conference with an identified focus on low vision assessment / specially designed instruction.
- **CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:** We have a full return team with Dr. David Simpson and Dr. Kara Hanson as our optometrists, Jim Olson and Karin Hensel as our Low Vision Therapists, and Roberta Curtis as our State Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Coordinator. The site coordinators include Angela Sims for the Western Region, Jim Olson for the Southern Region, Samantha Thuis for the Northern Region, and Roberta Curtis for the Metro Region. We have just finished our final clinic for the year, which had great attendance. Our thanks to the Anchor Center for Blind Children who were once again so gracious with hosting this clinic in their wonderful building. It truly takes a village! The team will be recruiting a new Low Vision Therapist and Statewide LVE Coordinator.
- **CDE O&M Seminar:** The Spring 2025 O&M Seminar will be held at the Adams 12 Conference Center on April 24-25<sup>th</sup>. Featured speakers will include Jenny Wheeler (Tactile Graphics), Stephanie Herlich and Shelby Zimmerman (Working with Students with Additional Disabilities in the morning and Guide Dogs in the afternoon). Registration information has been sent to CO O&M Specialists and is open until April 10<sup>th</sup>.
- **Listservs:** The CDE ESSU maintains two separate listservs specific to personnel working in BVI programs in Colorado school districts. One is specific to Colorado TVIs and COMSs. The second one is specific to Colorado braillists, which is being updated. It is important to remind all users of these listservs that personally identifiable information (PII) on students and parents should never be posted in any listserv messages. If anyone has questions about the listservs, please be in touch with Tanni.
- **Keeping in Touch Newsletter:** The August—September 2024, October 2024, and November-December 2024, and January—March 2025 editions have been published.. There is one remaining edition for this school year - April and May 2025. Please be sure to share the email messages with the link with parents and paras, as we are no longer mailing out the newsletter and do not have the email addresses of most parents who have signed up to receive the newsletter. Thank you!
- **Recruitment and Retention:** The good news is that many of the openings were filled over the summer and we have had additional personnel since the school year began. Please check the Job Page in the KIT for updates on new positions.

We continue to have openings. Please share any expected vacancies with Tanni so we can be as proactive as possible with new recruits. Tanni would like to know about people coming up for retirement. Contract TVI and O&M staff are needed in several AUs. A Shared Vision and Anchor Center for Blind Children need more TVI / O&M Specialist support. Please keep Tanni in the loop on anticipated and real vacancies. If you want to be on the CDE list of contractors, please reach out to Tanni.

- **Sound Bites:** Sound Bites are monthly virtual training / dialogue sessions based on identified topics of needs. There have been five Sound Bites this school year featuring: Dr. Penny Rosenblum, Dr. Tina Herzberg, Dr. Lauren Lieberman, Ruth Childs, Dr. Tanni Anthony, Elizabeth Webb, Mary Robbins, and

Connor Rodrigo. We will have two Sounds Bites in the remaining of this school year, March, and April with Drs. Kara Hanson and David Simpson.

## **AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **CDE BVI Approved Budget for 2025-26**

The following activities have been funded:

- Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- CDE O&M Seminar
- CDE State Conference on Blindness / Low Vision (focus on low vision)
- CDE Training specific to CVI
- CIMC Interagency Agreement
- Blindness/Low Vision Coalition (no costs but an approved activity)
- Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- Sound Bites (monthly virtual trainings) (ECC follow-up, CVI, low vision, SDI)

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Empowering Vision Foundation – Kiera Zink**

Kiera is the parent of a ten year daughter who is deaf-blind. She has been active with advocacy and was one of two parents who worked with the legislature to establish the Community Intervener Project, which is housed with the Commission for the Deaf and DeafBlind. Kiera and her husband are starting a new nonprofit that will financially assist families of children who are blind or deaf-blind with additional disabilities with home-based services from a TVI. This will address the need for more service support to children within their home environment.

Discussion: Families are used to home base services during their infant/toddler years but this focus changes when children enter the school system. This is a real need. There are concerns about how the nonprofit will be staffed given the current shortage of personnel. These services are not in competition with the school, but there is always room for collaboration. The idea is to work outside of school hours, on the weekend, and/or in the summer so this program is available for TVIs who are looking for additional work responsibilities if they are already working full time for an agency / school. The frequency of visits is what works for the families and the personnel involved. The focus will be families of children ages preschool through 21 years. The hope is to go statewide. The focus can be education, family activities, or supporting community activities. There may be a pilot program initially to learn how these services can work to assist the family and the child. There will be an application for families that helps tease out funding for other services. TVIs would be reimbursed on an hourly basis. The Zink family is working on criteria for acceptance, number of initial families, etc. She would like to develop a list of TVIs who are interested and their areas of specialty.

A question came up about whether TVIs would need to have CDE licensure to be considered for this work. There is also a need for liability insurance. This may or may not be a requirement for someone not currently employed by a school district. Another question was about if the parents have to be present during the time (so they are fully responsible. if the child if there is a health concern). Kiera was clear that the parent(s) must be present during the home visits. Also, what happens if the family speaks another language than the provider? Like the Community Intervener, there would be an effort to pay TVIs who speak the language with the family. This may

not always be possible. This nonprofit is connecting TVIs to families but not employing TVIs. The family may need to secure an interpreter.

The program might be able to offer telehealth services to families in more rural areas. Keira is very aware of families first using existing services so these funds can be used for services or even materials that do not have other fiscal coverage.

They are working on establishing the nonprofit. There are next steps to figure out with grant donations etc. so Keira will keep us posted on the launch date. It may be 2026.

### **CSDB Outreach with Jacq Tyrcha**

Jac shared about CSDB Outreach. She is interested in bringing certain Outreach activities back or building upon what is currently offered. The BVI Outreach has two fully funded staff and has a vacancy for a third position. Donna Keale and Sara Noel have active caseloads with local Community Center Boards and school districts. Jac asked how to build out with the challenges of a staff shortage. Paula Landry shared about their Quick Response Visits with a virtual touch base visit with a family and then link them to other possible providers / resources for the interim. It was recommended that the BLV providers meet to talk about challenges, and what is currently happening to address a wait list. Tammy will set up a time for CSDB, Anchor Center, and A Shared Vision to meet and compare notes.

Is there a need for student activities, such as camps? Family activities? There has been a change over time with student availability over the summer, childcare issues, transportation, teacher availability. Would a weekend or a day meet up be helpful? This is a great topic for people to talk about in their regional TVI /O&M / DVR meetings. Can this be elevated to special education directors to know about these options and how to support at a local level?

The goal of Outreach is serve statewide and specifically to the areas outside of the Pikes Peak region. Abby shared that it is helpful to have events that are held in the northern region. Even metro activities can be too far for some families to coordinate transportation. The Western slope is large – it is a lot of territory for families to come to a designated location. This is further complicated by the low incidence of where the kids are located.

Jac asked about parental training opportunities, would that be something that families might want to attend virtually? Or training for TVIs, special educator directors? It has been helpful to share information about trainings that are currently scheduled.

### **Retention / Recruitment**

Tanni reviewed the open positions that she knows about so far for next school year. Please continue to share vacancy needs with her.

### **Next Virtual Meeting Dates:**

September 17, 2025 is on the books!



# colorado connections



## Braille Competency

- Kudos to **Chris Kinney** and **Morgan Harrington** for completing braille renewal modules. Thanks to **Nancy Cozart** for her proctoring work.
- If you are a new TVI to a Colorado administrative unit have not demonstrated braille competency yet this school year, please reach out to Tanni to learn more and secure a testing date. Thank you!

## Professional Development Accolades

- Thanks to **Dr. Tina Herzberg** and **Dr. Mary Robbins** for their co-presentation on *Sparkling Your Student's Interest and Engagement in Science*. They presented at the January 28th, 2025 Sound Bites session. We had 30 participants.
- Thanks to the amazing **Nancy Steele** for her January 28 and February 17 presentations on the Communication Matrix. Session 1 focused on *What is the Communication Matrix?* and Session 2 addressed *The Communication Matrix: Interpreting Results*. We had close to 50 people each session, including many whom were TVIs. This important information was the setup training for the upcoming June 9-10th Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness.
- Thank you to **Connor Rodrigo** for his presentation at the February 19th Sounds Bites on *Adapted Physical Education for Students with Blindness / Low Vision*. We had over 45 participants including TVIs, O&M Specialists, and Adapted Physical Educators.

## Applause

- A huge thank you to **Kyle Berns, Anitha Muthukumaran, Marty Rahn, and Alyshia Shelton** for their expertise and commitment to accessibility during their work at the January 28-30, 2025 CMAS braille-format Science and Social Studies CMAS test review. This is a labor intensive process and with the team going through each question for braille accuracy and each graphic for its tactile quality.
- Congratulations and huge gratitude to **Meghan Klassen** and **Tammy Miller** who so capably hosted the January 28th—February 1st Early Childhood Blindness/Low Vision Alliance Seminar at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. The seminars, which have been attended by various agencies since the 1970s focus on workgroup opportunities for personnel from the USA and Canada to gather, learn, network, and build products (e.g. the original Babies Count protocol and Position Papers adopted by CEC) to benefit young children with blindness/low vision, their families, and colleagues.

Colorado attendees included: **Tanni Anthony, Elise Darrow, Kay Ferrell, Meghan Klassen, Tammy Miller, Jennifer Parker, and Cathy Smyth.**

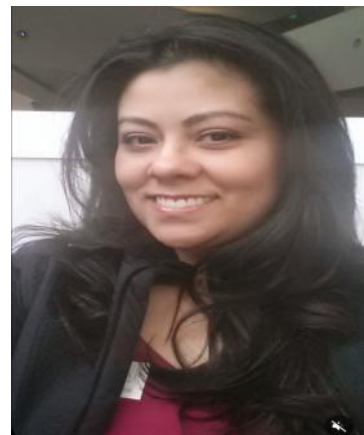


# colorado connections

## *Farewell and In Gratitude*

It is hard to believe that after six years with CDE, I am bidding farewell. My time at CDE has been a highlight of my career. I want to express my deepest gratitude for the incredible experience of working alongside you. I enjoyed partnering with you with the low-vision clinics and the deaf-blind child counts. I enjoyed the camaraderie we built in the many conversations we had to understand CDE updates. I am hopeful that I have made the same impression on you as all of you have on me. I honor your dedication and unwavering support for students. While I am excited about my next chapter, I will genuinely miss our interactions and the passion you bring to the work. Please know that I am cheering you on as you continue to do the good work.

~ Roberta Curtis



Note from Tanni: Roberta Curtis was employed by CDE for six wonderful years. During this time, she provided continual administrative support to Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera for all their Blindness /Low Vision, Deaf-Blindness, and Significant Support Needs related professional development and technical assistance activities. Roberta was ever present on all things paperwork, fielding questions, and providing assistance. In the past two school years, she assumed the role of our State Coordinator for the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics. In this capacity, she worked directly with TVIs on organizing the paperwork / clinic schedule, helping to load and unload the clinic van, setting up and tearing down the clinic, assisting with onsite hosting, and finalizing the reports. As a mom of adult child with low vision, the clinic was something she had personally experienced, which deepened her commitment to its success.. She brought life to all of the paperwork along the way and became a trusted and invaluable friend. We wish her the best in her new adventure and know that she will continue to be great professional and colleague—and for those of us, fortunate enough, also a forever friend.

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