

Editor:

Tanni L. Anthony, Ph.D.  
CDE State Consultant on  
Blindness / Low Vision

CO Department of Education  
Exceptional Student Services

201 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

(303) 503-4647 (cell)

E-mail:

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

# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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



As another school year comes to a close—and during what is always a busy and sometimes overwhelming time—I want to pause and focus on gratitude. Wise voices remind us that a grateful heart supports both our physical and emotional well-being. It helps keep our minds and hearts open, allowing us to notice not just the big wins, but the small moments of joy too—what some call *glimmers*.

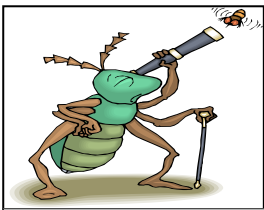
It's the pride in a child's eyes when they finally "get it," master something new, or reach the finish line on a project. It's a parent's sigh of relief when things fall into place. It's a pat on the back from a colleague, a supportive word from a leader—or the quiet moment when you realize your own hard work and growth.

Yes, there will always be challenges—barriers, detours, red tape, red ink, and problems to solve. But I believe there are more reasons to celebrate, and *YOU* are a big part of those reasons. Dedicated professionals. Caring families. Fabulous kids. Technology breakthroughs. New opportunities. Second chances—and sometimes third and fourth chances. Something always new to learn that makes the difference. **You make the difference.**

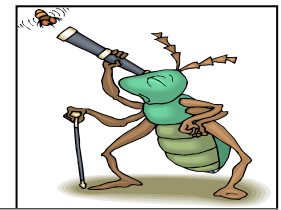
For all of these reasons—and for so many more—I say *thank you* for all you have accomplished in SY 2024–2025! With a grateful heart, Tanni

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# LOW VISION NEWS



Clinic	Clinic Date(s)	Due Date for Paperwork	Site Coordinator
Southern LVE Clinic	September 4-5, 2025	August 15, 2025	Jim Olson
Western LVE Clinic	October 3, 2025	September 19, 2025	Angela Sims and Erin Schroeder
Northern LVE Clinic	November 13-14, 2025	October 31, 2025	Samantha Thuis
Metro LVE Clinic	February 19-21, 2026	February 5, 2026	Berta Schlageter

## Regional Low Vision Evaluation (LVE) Clinics for the 25-26 School Year

Please put these dates on your calendar for the consideration of bringing you students with low vision to a clinic. **Heads up that the Southern Region Clinic is early September, so please be working with Jim now if you have a student to bring to this clinic. Also plan ahead for the Western Regional Clinic.**

# Resources and Materials

## Idaho Training Clearinghouse Accessibility Videos

The Idaho Training Clearinghouse has a collection of videos that teach document accessibility skills? Check out these short videos to learn best practices for making documents accessible.

### [Linguistically Responsive Data-Based Instructional Decision-Making for K–12 Multilingual Learners!](#)

This easy-to-navigate webpage offers guidance on using the Like-Peer Comparison process—a valuable approach for gathering and interpreting academic data specifically for Multilingual Learners (MLs). Designed to support multidisciplinary teams, this process helps integrate language proficiency and academic achievement data to make informed, meaningful decisions about instruction and programming.

The Like-Peer Comparison process can also be a powerful tool within a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework, helping teams consider the variable of language acquisition when evaluating student progress. Additionally, it may support determinations around whether an ML has a Significant Reading Deficiency (SRD).

Whether used alongside a culturally responsive and comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility for Special Education or to better understand how a disability may be impacting a student's academic performance, this resource helps ensure MLs receive equitable and effective support.

# Resources and Materials

## Coordinate Grids

Jeff Killebrew, long time member of the POSB STEM Google group created a Coordinate Grid in his classroom at the California School for the Blind. You can read all about [Jeff's Touch Grids](#) and his participation in the [SOFIA Mission](#).

## More Math Resources

[Check out the Paths to Literacy website.](#) When you get there, you will find a link videos by Susan Osterhaus, and the following section on using the graph board.

### Graph Board (APH Graphic Aid for Mathematics)

Published on Feb 4, 2010

Susan describes the APH Graphic Aid for Mathematics and demonstrates how it can be used for graphing algebraic and geometric concepts.

[An Introduction](#) (9:00)

[Plotting points on the coordinate plane](#) (8:09)

[Graphing a straight line](#) (5:42)

[Graphing an inequality](#) (6:05)

[Graphing a system of linear equations](#) (7:12)

[Graphing a system of inequalities using the boundary lines](#) (7:12)

[Graphing a quadratic \(parabola\)](#) (7:43)

[Graphing a circle on the coordinate plane](#) (6:23)

[Closing thoughts on graphing](#) (1:27)

John Rose is creating a new series of posts on Paths to Technology, so stay tuned for this information

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Anitha Muthukumaran's 3 posts for her second math series have been published. These posts include video tutorials and student activities.

This series builds on her first post, [Making Sense of Patterns with Algebraic Thinking](#).

She has worked to make this content accessible.

[Creating and Analyzing Challenging Data Patterns Series: Excel with JAWS](#)

[Creating and Analyzing Challenging Data Patterns Series: Algebraic Equations](#)

Creating and Analyzing Challenging Data Patterns Series: Excel Formulas (coming soon)

# 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**. **Berta Schlachet** is our new Program Support Assistant, she moved to this role as of April 1st! For training, support documents and resources, please [check out the Deaf-Blind website](#).

A big thank you to all of the people who assisted in updating and/or completing the Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count Forms for our December 1, 2024 Count. You, and others, have contributed to the identification of 167 infants, toddlers, and school-age, and transition program students with deaf-blindness in our State. The Colorado Count was turned into the National Center on Deaf-Blindness on time thanks to your field work and the internal CDE work of Gina Herrera, Jessica Miesel, and Berta Schlachet.

Also, we just submitted our Annual Performance Report to the Office of Special Education Programs. The report summarized our budget status and progress on the goals and objectives of the project. Next on the docket is hosting the 2025 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs, which will be held on June 9th and 10th and focus on the implementation strategies of the Communication Matrix.

## 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.



**National Center  
on Deaf-Blindness**

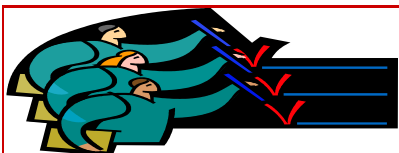
## 2023 National Deaf-Blind Child Count Report

The [2023 National Deafblind Child Count Report](#) has been released. It offers extensive information on the population of children in the U.S. who are identified with deafblindness, ages birth through 21. Included are state and national data on population demographics, type and severity of vision and hearing loss, and causes of deafblindness. For background information on the child count and reports from previous years, visit the [National Child Count page](#).

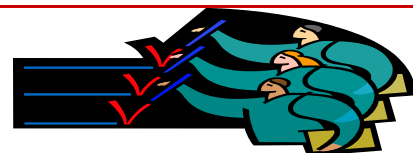
## Changes to OHOA Modules

NADB is excited to announce that we have completed revisions to *An Overview of Deafblindness and Instructional Strategies* in the *Open Hands, Open Access: Deafblind Intervener Learning Modules* series. The changes involve updates to formatting, references, and content that had become outdated.

These changes should not affect syllabi for those using the module for formal training. To learn more, visit [OHOA Overview Module 2025 Revisions](#).



## 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](#)



- [The Different Types of Eye Care Professionals](#)
- [Job Search Resources for Blind and Low Vision Job Seekers](#)
- ["No, thank you. I can do it": Preventing Learned Helplessness](#)

### U.S. DOE Newsletters

You can subscribe to a variety of United States Department of Education newsletters to stay informed of Department programs, policies and initiatives at this [link](#).

### Inaugural Blind Birder Bird-a-Thon

The inaugural Blind Birder Bird-a-Thon will take flight on **Sunday, May 18, 2025**. Legally blind birders from across the U.S. (and beyond) will step outdoors wherever they are to document the bird species they hear or see. A list of these species will be compiled from across the country, reflecting new and improve bird identification skills by participants. A national celebration of birds, community, and inclusion. This one-day event marks the first-ever pilot of a national birding event designed specifically by and for legally blind birders—and everyone who is legally blind is invited to join in. Whether you're an experienced birder or have never heard of a chickadee, the Blind Birder Bird-a-thon welcomes you. There's no experience necessary—just bring your curiosity and a willingness to tune into the natural world around you.

[Visit the Birdability website](#) to learn more about resources to get started, to register, or to get your questions answered. You may also contact Martha Steele at [marthajs@verizon.net](mailto:marthajs@verizon.net) for more information.

### Bresnahan-Halstead Center Teacher Grant

The Bresnahan-Halstead Center is excited to provide up to \$500 in financial support for educators (who serve birth-21) to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. Examples can include, but are not limited to, professional development/training, conference registration, and classroom materials. Contact Dr. Tracy Gershwin at [Tracy.gershwin@unco.edu](mailto:Tracy.gershwin@unco.edu) for more details.

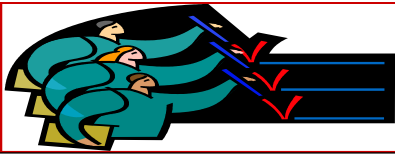
### Camp Abilities Four Corners

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.

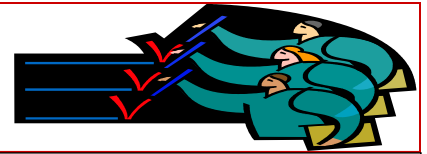
We are looking for a few adults to be one-on-one coaches at camp. The job description for coaches and instructors is on our website. If you are interested, email Vicki at the camp email address:

[campabilitiesfourcorners@gmail.com](mailto:campabilitiesfourcorners@gmail.com)





# 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

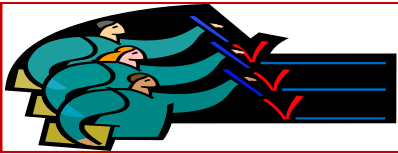
The IRIS Center is a national center dedicated to improving education outcomes for all children, especially those with disabilities birth through age twenty-one, through the use of effective evidence-based practices and interventions



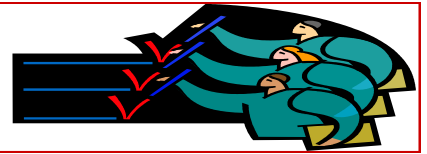
### \*\*\* Center for Parent Information & Resources (CPIR)

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





# CHECK IT OUT!



## Adaptive & Inclusive Recreation (AIR) Self-Defense for Low Vision



### 1TOUCH™ SELF-DEFENSE

FOR PARTICIPANTS WITH VISION LOSS | AGES 16+

- This self-defense training program is specialized for people who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision. The trained instructor accommodates multiple disabilities co-occurring with vision loss as well.
- The techniques are accessible, practical and require no previous experience. By learning these techniques, students will build confidence, spatial orientation, independence, mobility and dexterity, and tactile sensitivity.
- This program is made possible thanks to the support of the Center for People with Disabilities and the Deafblind Action Team.
- Fees: \$40 Resident/\$50 Non-Resident

569419-A1    Wednesdays    June 4-August 6    1-3 p.m.  
Thornton Community Center, 2211 Eppinger Blvd.

For questions, contact [Becky.Post@ThorntonCO.gov](mailto:Becky.Post@ThorntonCO.gov) or call 720-977-5702.

Registration opens Tuesday, April 8 at 7 a.m.

To register, visit [goCOT.net/registration](https://goCOT.net/registration) or call 720-977-5901.



SCAN TO  
REGISTER







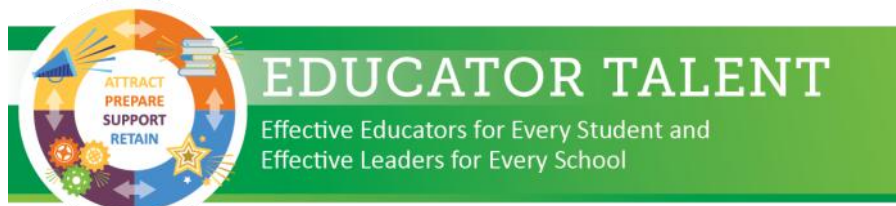
## Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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>.

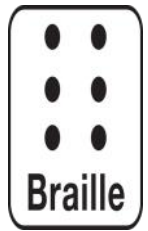
<p><b>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist Ages 0-21: (11.03)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution.</li> <li>✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and 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>✓ <b>Hold a current and valid ACVREP Certified O&amp;M Specialist certificate (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.




## 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](#)
- [Initial Specialty Set: Deafblindness](#)
- [Initial Specialty Set: Intervener](#)

### 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.](#)



## Registration Open: Autism Evaluation Training for 2025-26

CDE is once again offering the Autism Evaluation training for the upcoming 2025-26 school year. This training is designed for certified school team members responsible for the educational identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder. This training will focus on school teams building a comprehensive autism evaluation utilizing a variety of tools. Given the August start date for the training, we wanted to ensure individuals have time to register and plan accordingly before the summer break begins. ‘

- Round 1: 8/5, 8/12, 8/19, 8/25 (2025) (all 4 dates are required)
- Round 2: 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25 (2026) (all 4 dates are required)

If you have taken this training from us before, please note that the content has not had significant changes in the last couple of years. No need to register if you have previously completed the 12 hour virtual training.

[Autism Evaluation Flyer with Registration Link](#)

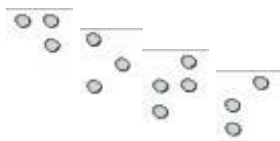
If you have any questions, please contact: Brooke Carson, [carson\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:carson_b@cde.state.co.us)



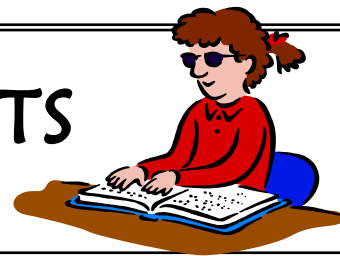
## ECEA Rule Change: Child Identification Obligations for CDEC Enrolled Children

The Colorado State Board of Education recently approved technical changes to the Rules governing the implementation of Colorado’s Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA) to clarify and align procedures related to the identification and referral of preschool-aged children enrolled in Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) programs. These updates were recommended by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to ensure consistency between ECEA Rules in sections 4.02 and 8.04 regarding child identification responsibilities when a child is enrolled in a school that is a CDEC program. As a result of these changes, preschool aged children attending CDEC programs considered to be schools, which includes licensed child care centers, should be referred to the AU of attendance when there is a concern that the child may have a qualifying disability and need special education. Referrals to special education for children not enrolled in a public or private school should be made to the AU of residence.

[This document](#) outlines the changes, which we encourage you to review carefully and share with others in your system with responsibility for child find. Should you have questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Melissa Taucher at [taucher\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:taucher_m@cde.state.co.us).



# 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)







## Multilingual Learners

Identified or Suspected of  
Having Educational Disabilities



### New Executive Order: English US Official Language

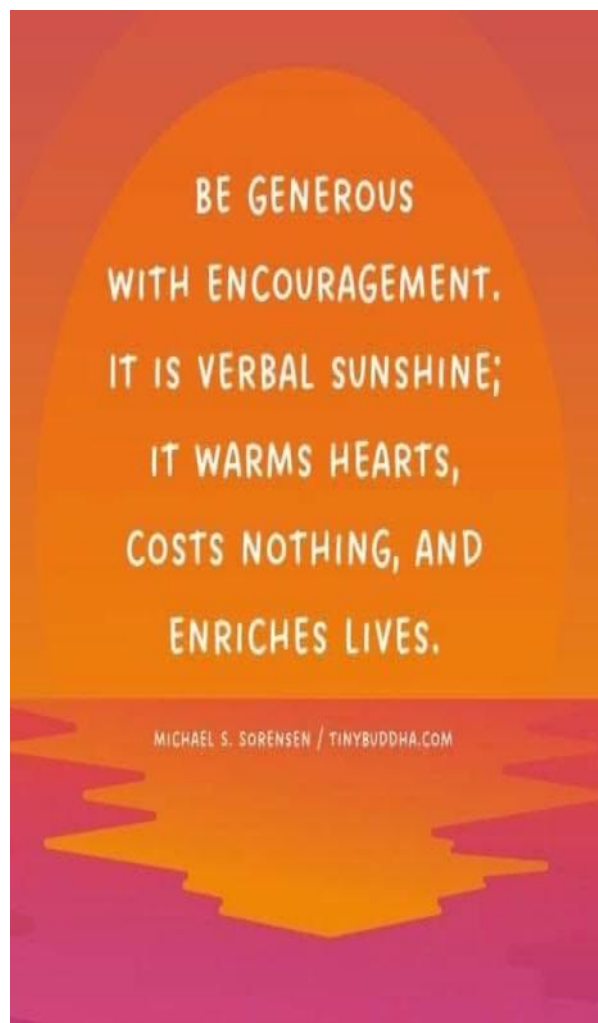
A new Executive Order was issued on March 1 that “[designates] English as the official language of the United States.” This executive order does not change existing legal obligations of schools and districts to support their multilingual learners and families with limited English proficiency. These obligations come from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA), and U.S. Supreme Court precedent.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** The Colorado Department of Education now uses the term **Multilingual Learner (ML)** to describe all students in Kindergarten through 12th grade who have been formally identified as English Learners using [Colorado’s Standardized Identification Process](#) and who are currently receiving English language development instruction. Please refer to the [Dear Colleague Letter](#) from the CDE’s Office of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education for more information on the use of this inclusive term

### Who are Dually Identified Students?

Dually Identified Students are students who have been formally identified as Multilingual Learners with Limited English Proficiency and who have also been found eligible as a child with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or MLs who have been found eligible for a 504 plan:

- **Limited English Proficient (LEP)** – as defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). [20 U.S.C. § 7801(20), 34 CFR 300.27].
- **Eligible for Special Education Services** – meaning the child has been identified as having a qualifying disability under IDEA [20 U.S.C. § 1401(3), 34 CFR § 300.8, and ECEA Rule 2.08] and requires specially designed instruction (special education) to receive reasonable benefit from general education.
- **Eligible for a 504 Plan** – meaning the child has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 [29 U.S.C. § 794, 34 CFR § 104.3(j)], and requires accommodations or services to ensure equal access to education, even if they do not qualify for special education under IDEA







NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF THE BLIND  
COLORADO

*Live the life you want.*

**The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado**

**Empowerment in Focus**

**NFBCO Roadshow/Resource Fair**

**Colorado Springs**

**Community Health Partnership**

**601 N Nevada Ave**

**May 17, 2025**

**10:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M.**

**Discover resources and strategies to brighten lives.**

- \* For individuals with blindness or low vision, families, and professionals.**
- \* Explore technology, connect with community, and find support.**

**\* All are welcome!**

**Contact Nate Hecker for details:**

**605-610-7959 or [hecker.haihais@gmail.com](mailto:hecker.haihais@gmail.com)**

# MOUNTAIN MOBILITY SUMMER CAMP

\$50



Join us for an incredible summer filled with outdoor adventures designed for blind and visually impaired teens on July 20-24th 2025! Experience thrilling activities, creative arts and crafts, exciting sports, and nonstop fun in the breathtaking mountains of Crested Butte, Colorado. Don't miss this chance to make unforgettable memories—sign up today and let the adventure begin!



#### Location

Visit beautiful Crested, Butte Colorado. Stay in deluxe lodging with shared living areas and kitchen.



#### Inspiration

Build and concur goals, forge meaningful connections, and create lifelong memories.



#### Outdoor Adventure

Group water sports, hiking, backpacking, and other fun activities!



TO SIGN UP CONTACT  
[emily@adaptivesports.org](mailto:emily@adaptivesports.org)  
[info@caninesandcanes.com](mailto:info@caninesandcanes.com)



# Calendar of Events

2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
May 16-18	<b>Family Retreat - YMCA in Estes Park</b> Contact: Chaz Davis at <a href="mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org">cdavis@cocenter.org</a>											
May 17	<b>NFBCO Roadshow/Resource Fair</b> Contact: Nate Hecker at <a href="mailto:hecker.haihais@gmail.com">hecker.haihais@gmail.com</a>											
June 4-July 2	<b>Colorado Center for the Blind No Limits to Learning (4-week Program)</b> To register: <a href="#">Click here</a>											
June 4-August 6	<b>1Touch Self-Defense for Participants with Vision Loss (Ages 16+)</b> To register: <a href="http://gocot.net/registration">gocot.net/registration</a> or contact <a href="mailto:Becky.Post@ThorntonCO.gov">Becky.Post@ThorntonCO.gov</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@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>											
June 9-10	<b>Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness—Adams 12 Conference Center, Thorton</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—Cameron, AZ</b> To register by April 15th: <a href="#">Click here</a>											
June 22-28	<b>Deaf-Blind Awareness Week—Celebrate!</b>											
June 20-24	<b>Mountain Mobility Camp—Crested Butte</b> For more information: <a href="mailto:Emily@adaptivesports.org">Emily@adaptivesports.org</a>											
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 5-6	<b>Southern Region Low Vision Evaluation Clinic—CSDB</b> Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>											
September 12	<b>First Friday CIMC Virtual Call from 2:30—3:30 p.m.</b> Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>											
September 17	<b>Blindness/Low Vision Coalition—virtual meeting</b> Contact: Tanni <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony at 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>											
September 26	<b>2025 Colorado Assistive Technology Expo</b> <a href="#">RSVP to attend the expo</a>											





**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:**

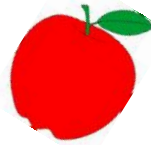
- The Western Regional Early Intervention Conference website address is: <http://www.wreic.org>
- For additional questions or information, please email us at: [WREICinformation@gmail.com](mailto:WREICinformation@gmail.com)



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



July  
MAY



# Calendar

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

- October 3**      **Western Region Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**—Grand Junction  
Contact: Angela Sims at [angela.sims@d51schools.org](mailto:angela.sims@d51schools.org)
- October 3**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)
- October 15-17**      **APH Annual Meeting** – Louisville, KY  
Contact: [www.APH.org](http://www.APH.org)
- October 23-24**      **CDE State Conference on Blindness/Low Vision**—Lowry Campus  
Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- November 5-8**      **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference**—Huntsville, AL  
Registration: <https://www.gitwl.org/register>
- November 7**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)
- November**      **Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**—Fort Collins  
Contact: Sam Thuis at [thuis\\_samantha@svvsd.org](mailto:thuis_samantha@svvsd.org)
- December 5**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)



2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026 2026

- January 9**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)
- February 6**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)
- February 19-21**      **Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**—Anchor Center for Blind Children  
Contact: Berta Schlachet at [bschlachet@csdb.org](mailto:bschlachet@csdb.org)
- March 6**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)
- April 3**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)
- May 1**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)
- June 5**      **First Friday CIMC Virtual Call** from 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Olson at [Jolson@csdb.org](mailto:Jolson@csdb.org)





# Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment News

**Five Downloadable One-Page Documents on CVI:** From the CVI Now page with Perkins School for the Blind. Available in English and Spanish.

<https://www.perkins.org/resource/downloadable-one-pagers-essential-for-cvi-advocacy/>

- What is CVI? (available in English and Spanish)
- When to Suspect CVI? (available in English and Spanish)
- Co-Occurring Conditions (available in English)

**CVI Now Stories:** This collection of personal stories can help inform student, families, and colleagues. Check it out at: <httpswww.perkins.org/cvi-now/resource-center/>

## CVI Connection—Aurora to the Linden Lodge in the UK

By Lisa Hebbert

Last June, I had the incredible opportunity to visit London and tour Linden Lodge, an outstanding day and residential special needs school in Wimbledon. The school serves students aged 2 to 19 with visual and multi-sensory impairments who benefit from specific sensory education approaches and specialized facilities. The school is designed with this specialty in mind and offers a leading edge technology vision assessment room. The classrooms are designed to support sensory needs of all students, although currently the majority of the students are diagnosed with CVI, with a waiting list of over 75 students.

While I was there, the staff asked if I would be interested in creating a cohort group where we could exchange teaching ideas and strategies. They were very curious about how we "did it" in the USA.

After I returned from London and was looking through my pictures, I knew I just had to share this amazing place with everyone. I really want everyone to have a chance to experience this. I called a few TVI friends and asked if they would be interested and formed the Across the See Cohort group. Our group included five TVIs from the United States and two from the United Kingdom. Coordinating across a seven-hour time difference, we experimented with various meeting times and technologies to make it work. We successfully met four times, engaging in discussions on a range of topics including CVI strategies, school funding models, and employability opportunities for students with visual impairments in the UK compared to the US.

In the summer, it is important to rejuvenate ourselves and many of us do that by traveling. When you are planning your next trip, anywhere, I would encourage you to look into visiting other school systems in other states, especially in other countries because the more we connect, the smaller the world becomes. By the way, group field trips to Linden Lodge are a consistent topic of discussion

*Editor Note:* Thanks to Lisa for sharing her travel adventure and this wonderful cohort opportunity for sharing and learning. Our world decreases in size and increases in connection when we find out teammates across the globe.



# 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 this national 2026 O&M conference!

## 2025 CDE O&M Seminar

Thanks to the 50 plus people who attended the training—lots of learning, connections, and fun!



Paula and Allie with their tactile maps



Ayrn, and Liz with their tactile aps



Aleah working with Charlotta using the Juno Harness to simulate working with a dog guide.



Nancy, and Alysia using the Juno harness to simulate working with a dog guide.

# 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:**

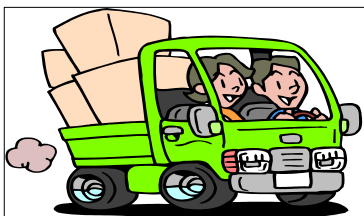
**2.08 (11) (a) (i) Visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;**

**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!

### Empower Your Students: Free Job Seeker's Toolkit!

Are you supporting your students and clients in achieving their employment goals? APH ConnectCenter and NSITE have partnered to create a free, accessible online Job Seeker's Toolkit specifically designed for individuals who are blind or have low vision.

This comprehensive resource provides five self-paced courses covering:

- Self-Awareness: Helps individuals explore their strengths and career aspirations
- Career Exploration: Offers targeted tools and resources to discover fulfilling career paths
- Employment Process: Provides clear guidance on navigating applications, interviews, and beyond
- The Interview: Equips students and clients with effective interview strategies
- Maintaining Employment: Offers valuable techniques for success in the workplace

Direct students and clients to the APH ConnectCenter website to find the [Job Seeker's Toolkit](#) and explore additional resources for career development

### What are Secondary Transition Services in Special Education?

Secondary transition services in special education are a coordinated set of activities designed to help students with disabilities successfully transition from high school to post-school life. These services, typically provided for students ages 15-21, focus on preparing them for further education, employment, and independent living through individualized support and goal-oriented planning.

Key Components of Secondary Transition Services:

- Post-Secondary Education & Training – Assisting students in exploring and preparing for college, vocational training, or other educational opportunities.
- Employment Preparation – Teaching job skills, career exploration, resume building, and providing work-based learning experiences.
- Independent Living Skills – Developing essential life skills such as money management, transportation, housing, and self-advocacy.
- Community Participation – Encouraging social skills, recreation, and access to community resources.
- Self-Determination & Advocacy – Empowering students to take an active role in planning their future and making informed decisions about their education and career goals.

Check out a plethora of resources at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/transition>

# 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



## **The Colorado Center for the Blind - Youth Program**

Invites you and your family to join a Fun-filled Family Retreat Weekend

**What?** Spring Family Retreat Weekend

**When?** Friday, May 16 to Sunday morning, May 18, 2025

**Where?** YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park

**Who?** Parents with a blind or low-vision child and siblings – the entire family!

**Times?** Friday Check-in: 5 to 7 p.m. - Sunday Depart by: 10 a.m.

**How?** [Register here by May 9th.](#)

**There will be lots of educational opportunities for parents of blind children:**

- Navigating school and social settings
- Just what can your blind/low-vision child be expected to do? In school, after school? At home?
- Cooking, household tasks, etc.

**How to include your child in family activities – games, movies, outings?**

And lots of fun for all the kids! Activities include: Going on a nature hike, Nature and conservation education, climbing, or other on-site activities, field day activities: kickball, sack races, Accessible board games and more!

This family weekend will take place at the beautiful YMCA of the Rockies property in Estes Park. We'll all arrive Friday evening and work together to make meals, clean up, and sleep in the spacious cabin perfect for families. Saturday will be our major activity day, and we'll pack up and leave on Sunday morning.

[Read more about YMCA of the Rockies](#)

**Registration will be required for this event.**

For more information, contact Chaz Davis at 303-778-1130, ext. 212, or [cdavis@cocenter.org](mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org)

# 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)

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)
- ♦ **1 FTE TVI and O&M Specialist** in Greeley Schools. For more information, please contact Jenny Clark at [jclark5@greeleyschools.org](mailto:jclark5@greeleyschools.org)

### Southern Region

- ♦ **1 FTE TVI and O&M Specialist** for Colorado Springs D11 School District. For more information, please contact Nancy Maresh-Melo at [NANCY.MARESHMELO@d11.org](mailto:NANCY.MARESHMELO@d11.org) or 719-520-2153.
- ♦ **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:

Without audio description:

<https://youtu.be/I90UJSQNGU8>

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 2024-25 Awards—So Proud of our Colorado Talent

The CAER Awards Ceremony was held on April 24th in Thornton. It was a great evening to celebrate well deserving colleagues on their important contributions to our field. Award recipients included:

**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. **Hanna Waldman**, nominated by Kaitlin Lombardi, received this award. Hanna is a TVI and O&M Specialist in St. Vrain Valley Schools.

**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. **Roberta Curtis**, nominated by Jeannie Lei and Tanni Anthony, was given this award. Roberta has a daughter with low vision, has served on the CO Special Education Advisory Council as a parent representee, and worked at CDE for six years support the CO Deaf-Blind Project and BLV-specific projects, including the regional low vision clinics.

**Ken Neve Award:** This award recognizes an AER professional in the area specific to orientation and mobility. The CAER Board considers the nominations. **Donna Keale**, nominated by Chloann Woolley, received the Ken Neve Award. Donna is a TVI and O&M Specialist who has worked at CSDB in several roles She is with their Outreach Program and serves several school districts and over 35 families with the local Part C Program.

**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. **Jamie Lugo** was presented this award. Jamie is a TVI and O&M Specialist. She was the CSDB School for the Blind Principal for many years and is now working with the District 49 School District in Colorado Springs.



# *Farewell and In Gratitude*

## **Happy Retirement, Nancy Cozart!**

Nancy accepted the TVI/COMS position in Littleton Public Schools being tasked to build a program for students with visual impairments. As part of this, she has made sure each year that all students in the Visually Impaired program have what they need and that their voices are heard not only in the classroom but also in the surrounding communities. Nancy has talked with and trained many district personnel, administrators, certified staff, classified staff, parents, students, and community members. Throughout her 38 years, Nancy has been an active member multiple committees and associations including the Colorado Chapter of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (CAER), Colorado Vision Coalition, Metro Regional TVI/O&M specialist meetings, and more. Nancy has also been an active member of the Colorado Braille Competency Committee, mentoring future and present Teachers of the Visually Impaired to receive their Braille Competency Certification or Renewal for the state of Colorado. Nancy's service to the families, parents, and teachers have been innumerable. While we will dearly miss Nancy we congratulate her for retirement THANK YOU NANCY! - Littleton Public Schools Vision Team



I have known Nancy as a colleague for close to 30 years. One of the things that resonates with me the most is her connection to the families that she supported. I watched how she supported each family to navigate the skills their child would need in the classroom, but also the skills necessary for independence at home and the community as well. Nancy compassionately and honestly helped families with understanding the next steps they might face with their children. Congratulations Nancy, on your very long and successful teaching career, have a wonderful beginning to your retirement! ~Tarren O'Brien (LPS Staff Member)

Mrs. Cozart has been a constant and invaluable presence in my son's life for the past 13 years. In many ways, she has been like a second mother to him. She has always been a passionate advocate for my son, ensuring he has everything he needs to thrive academically from kindergarten through high school. Whenever a challenge arises, our first question is always, "Did you ask Mrs. Cozart?" because we know she will have the answer. We've consistently relied on her guidance and expertise, and she has generously offered her support each time we've needed it. Beyond her academic guidance, Mrs. Cozart has equipped my son for life beyond K-12 education, particularly as a visually impaired student. Her care and commitment to his success have played a crucial role in shaping his journey. We truly feel incredibly fortunate to have had her in our lives, and we are forever grateful for the love, support, and wisdom she has shared with him and our family.  
~ Lense Gameda (Parent)

Nancy has been a beacon of expertise, dedication, and advocacy for all students with visual impairments in Littleton Public Schools. She has been a mentor, confidant, and teacher for me as a center-based educator for many years. She has helped me immensely as we have worked together to meet the complex needs of our most impacted learners, and grown my ability to more independently create materials and plans for my students with CVI. Her knowledge and commitment to our district, staff, and students will be greatly missed and impossible to replicate. Congratulations on your great accomplishments and well-deserved retirement Nancy! Our gratitude for all that you have done and what you mean to us cannot fully be put into words. ~Christin Worsley (LPS Staff Member)

## Farewell and In Gratitude

- We say farewell to **Jerred Sonneborn** who began his work at CSDB in 2019, first as an intern, then as a special education teacher, and then as a TVI / math teacher. We thank him for his six years at CSDB. Jerred is moving to Chicago to work in a special education capacity for Chicago Public Schools. We wish you all the best, Jerred!
- **Avery James** has been a TVI at CSDB School for the Blind for this past school year. She has accepted a position at the Texas School for the Blind. We wish her all the very best!
- **Angie Brown** will be retiring from the Bridges to Life Transition program at CSDB. She has been with CSDB for six years, having started in September 2019. Angie earned her TVI degree from the University of Northern Colorado. Prior to her time at CSDB, she worked as a Special Education Transition Teacher in the Fountain-Fort Carson, Colorado Springs 11, and Woodland Park school districts. Angie is an invaluable resource with extensive knowledge of community resources and opportunities available for transition services. Her cooking classes will be especially missed by the students, and the staff will miss her and her expertise dearly.



## colorado connections

### Personnel Updates

- ♦ **Jonathan Karli** has accepted the School for the Blind Principal position at CSDB. Jonathan has worked for the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI) for the past 14 years in various capacities including Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Regional Director, and most recently Chief Academic Officer. He will start July 1, 2025.
- ♦ **Colleen Havey** is the new TVI and O&M Specialist in Pikes Peak BOCES. She has been working as a TVI/O&M Specialist for the past 21 years. She received her BA from the University of Utah (VI) and her MA/O&M from San Francisco State. Colleen worked in California until a year ago when she moved to Colorado Springs. She taught virtually until she joined Pikes Peak BOCES in March 2025. Working with students with CVI is her passion. Watching every little bit of progress and being able to be creative with my materials to help them access their curriculum is such a joy. Colleen loves to sing, dance and act. She started dancing at age 5 and performing at 8. As a teen she worked at an amusement park in CA (Marriott's Great America) where she performed as a singer/dancer, magician's assistant, and varying Loony Toons Characters. In her early 20s, she was fortunate to work on cruise ships as a magician's assistant and singer/dancer for several years. Now Colleen enjoys being involved in community theater, loves to craft, and be creative. She has two beautiful adult daughters that she is very proud of.
- ♦



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## Braille Competency



- Hats off to **Aleah Green** from Jefferson County School District , **Natalie Hale** from District 49, and **Covi Rodriguez** from Adams 12 School District for earning their initial CDE Certificates of Braille Competency. Woo hoo to **Aryn McNichol** from St. Vrain School District for earning her CDE Renewal Certificate. Kudos to **Gena Francouer Anderson, Jenny Appel, Sumer Bellinder, Jessica Hank, Aryn McNichol, Autumn Odette, and Samantha Thuis**, for completing braille renewal modules. Thanks to **Chris Maynard, Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein** for their 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 an immediate testing date. Thank you to everyone for keeping our standards for braille competency high!

## Applause

- My apologies for omitting the wonderful **Lisa Brocard** out of the list of people who worked so tirelessly at the January 2025 Braille CMAS Test Review. Lisa, a brailist from Littleton, served a second time in this role during this school year. Thank you, Lisa!
- A huge thank you to **Karin Hensel** for her deeply valued work as a Low Vision Therapist with the CDE Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics over these past two school years. Karin stepped in at a time of need and offered great expertise to the project. Dr. Kara Hanson shared, "I learned a lot from you, too, and it's made me a more insightful doctor." High and well deserved praise. Thank you, Karin!
- We are so proud of **Anitha Muthukumaran** who a part-time Digital Math Consultant with the Perkins TEAM Initiative. She has been working in this role and has news of her first [published post](#). Anitha has been running a virtual math club for students with visual impairments for more than a year now. It is called [Math Minds Unseen](#). Students from grades 4-8 all over the nation are welcome to join. They run it once a month, and it is free. Two high school juniors (one of whom is blind) and an MIT freshman run the club. Anitha's role is to ensure the accessibility of digital math for the students who attend. She will be presenting about the club at the April POSB Instruction STEM conference in California. For the next school year, Anitha would love to get more students for the club. Currently, they have students from California, Texas, Georgia, and no one from Colorado. If you want to know more, reach out to Anitha at: [anitha.muthukumaran@dcsdk12.org](mailto:anitha.muthukumaran@dcsdk12.org)
- A Big Colorado Thank You to the following presenters who contributed to the 2024-25 Sound Bites series: **Dr. Tanni Anthony, Ruth Childs, Dr. Kara Hanson, Dr. Tina Herzberg, Dr. Lauren Leiberman, Dr. Mary Robbins, Connor Rodrigo, Dr. Penny Rosenblum, Dr. David Simpson, and Elizabeth Webb**.
- Applause also to **Nancy Steele** for her two webinars specific to the Communication Matrix on behalf of the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project. Nancy will also be our Summer institute trainer / facilitator.
- Thank you to the CAER Board: **Chloann Woolley, Heather Solberg, Jeannie Lei, Jamie Lugo, Bryan Moles, and Ellie Carlson**. We so appreciate all that you each contribute to ensure we have a CO AER Chapter that is meaningful to AER members.



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## Professional Development Accolades

- ◆ Thanks to **Dr. David Simpson** for his informative presentation on *Visual Field Loss in Children*, our last Sound Bites of the school year. This session was held on April 16th. We had 36 people attend.
- ◆ A big shout out to the presenters of our 2025 CDE O&M Seminar: **Jenny Wheeler** presented on *Tactile Graphics* on April 24th. **Stephanie Herlich** and **Shelby Zimmerman** presented on April 25th on *Students with Additional Disabilities* and *Guide Dogs*. We are grateful to all three for sharing their expertise! The seminar had about 60 participants each day with a few more coming on the first day as we welcome several district braillists! A big thank you to **Debbie Haberkorn** and **Jim Olson** for their materials contributions from the CIMC to enhance the presentation on *Tactile Graphics*.

## Year-Long Thank Yous

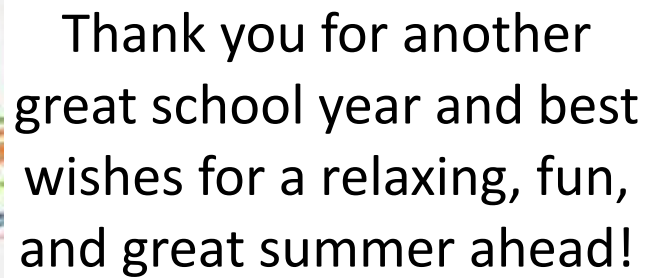
- A huge shout out to the members of the 2024-25 Blindness/Low Vision Coalition, which met three times this school year. Thank you to: **Tanni Anthony** (CDE), **Cheryl Austin** (CSDB School for the Blind), **Paula Conroy** (UNC), **Nancy Cozart** (Metro Region), **Chaz Davis** (CCB Youth Programs), **Abby Horner** (Northern Region), **Donna Keale** (CSDB BLV Outreach), **Paula Landry** (A Shared Vision), **Jamie Lugo** (CSDB School for the Blind), **Tammy Miller** (Anchor Center for Blind Children), **Jim Olson** (CIMC), **Michele Reed** (DVR), **Erin Schroeder** (Western Region), and **Chloann Woolley** (CAER and the Southern Region). These members have been so important to state-level discussions and have represented their regions and programs beautifully. So grateful for their service. It is also important to acknowledge Nancy Cozart who has been with the Blindness/Low Vision Coalition for so many years. You will be missed, Nancy, and we thank you for all you have contributed.
- Thank you to the CDE Braille Committee who ensure our TVIs and Braillists are in the know of the Unified English Braille Code: **Tanni Anthony**, **Nancy Cozart**, **Chris Maynard**, **Jo Pinto**, **Brenda Shepard**, and **Julie Wetzstein**.
- Thank you, thank you thank you to our amazing 2024-25 Low Vision Evaluation Team. This includes **Roberta Curtis**, **Dr. Kara Hansen**, **Karin Hensel**, **Jim Olson**, and **David Simpson**. Their combined talents were so important for the success of the clinics.
- Our thanks to the LVE Site Coordinators: **Angela Sims**, **Erin Schroeder**, **Jim Olson**, **Sam Thuis**, and **Roberta Curtis**. Thanks also to **Krista Berkey** with CDE, who was instrumental in ensuring the Northern and Metro Clinic reports were finalized and sent out to TVIs and families. Also thank you to all the TVIs, parents and students who attended.
- Woo hoo to a great team on our Colorado Deaf-Blind Project – thanks to the **Tanni Anthony**, **Gina Herrera**, **Jessica Meisel**, **Roberta Curtis**, and now **Berta Schlachet**. We are going strong with the recent submission of our Annual Report.
- It takes a team to get it all done on a state level. Tanni's personal thanks to **Roberta Curtis**, for all her support for the bulk of this school year. Since Roberta has left CDE, my huge thanks to **Krista Berkey** and now **Berta Schlachet** for their profound program assistant support. Could not do it without these stellar teammates.





# In Memoriam

We are heartbroken about the loss of **Laura Ruben**, a beloved mother, teacher, and friend. Laura was a dedicated and compassionate teacher in District 6, Greeley, Colorado, where she worked tirelessly. She was back in school to become a TVI. Her impact on the community was profound, and she was cherished by all who knew her. For those of us who were just getting to know her and for all the students and colleagues who will never know her compassion and expertise, we are deeply saddened by a life taken and lost too soon.



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