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NEVER UNDERESTIMATE  
THE DIFFERENCE YOU  
MAKE IN THE WORLD,  
SIMPLY BY BEING YOU.

# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers  
of Colorado Children with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness  
August—September 2024

The simple truths are sometimes the most profound ones. And it is true, that each of you will make a difference in a child’s life or many children’s lives over the course of this new school year. Showing up, listening , supporting, guiding, teaching , and advocating to and for a child matters for the moment in hand, the school year, and possibly a lifetime. Colorado has an incredibly well trained and caring workforce for our learners with blindness, low vision, and deaf-blindness. Knowing what to do because of your expertise is both expected and imperative. You have a community of amazing colleagues to lend support across all that is needed to know and do. The heart stuff, well, that comes, from your heart to another’s heart. That is what being a teacher, in what ever title you have in your work with students, is also all about—being that caring human. Simply by being you—the very best for our children. Welcome back to a new school year, my wonderful friends and colleagues. You are the very best!

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**Colorado Definitions, Resources, Professional Learning, and Support Activities  
Specific to Children and Youth with Blindness/Low Vision, and Deaf-Blindness, Their Families,  
and Service Providers for School Year 2024-25**

**Compiled by Tanni Anthony  
State Consultant on Blindness/Low Vision, Colorado Department of Education**

**Legend for Acronyms:**

<b>ASV</b>	A Shared Vision
<b>CCB</b>	Colorado Center for the Blind
<b>CDE</b>	Colorado Department of Education
<b>CIMC</b>	Colorado Instructional Materials Center
<b>CMAS</b>	Colorado Measures of Academic Success
<b>COMS</b>	Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist
<b>CSDB</b>	Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
<b>ESSU</b>	Exceptional Student Services Unit
<b>O&amp;M</b>	Orientation and Mobility
<b>TVI or TSVI</b>	Teacher of students with visual impairments
<b>UEB</b>	Unified English Braille Code
<b>USABA</b>	United States Association of Blind Athletes



We have so many good things happening over the course of the upcoming school year! The following resources and activities are not exclusive to all that may be happening across the state in supporting children and youth with blindness/visual impairment, their families, and service providers. If there is a resource or activity that was missed on this list, please be in touch with Tanni to post it in future editions of the newsletter. Our communications are greatly improved when we work together to make announcements, have celebrations, and share resources.

**A Shared Vision**, Colorado’s leading provider of early intervention vision services for children who are blind or visually impaired, continues to make significant strides in empowering families and children across the state. In 2023, our dedicated team of 15 teachers delivered nearly 70% of all early intervention vision services across 55 counties in Colorado, reflecting our commitment to supporting the visually impaired community. We invite you to explore our 2023 Impact Report ([www.asharedvision.org/2023-annual-report](http://www.asharedvision.org/2023-annual-report)), which details the meaningful impact our services have had on families through education and support. One standout metric from our 2024 Caregiver Questionnaire: 100% of the families we supported would recommend our services to others. This is a testament to the quality and effectiveness of our programs.

Beyond our home-based services, our enhanced website has become a vital resource for families and other providers supporting very young children. It now features 24 sensory recipes, 35 craft and play activities, 20 Learning Experiences based on the Expanded Core Curriculum, and a comprehensive digital library of resources, many available in Spanish. These tools are designed to empower families and make learning both accessible and engaging.

Summer provided a wonderful opportunity for our teachers to collaborate on innovative projects for the families we serve, such as tactile books and the Sit ‘n’ Play Sensory Table created by Paula Landry ([www.asharedvision.org/sit-n-play-sensory-table](http://www.asharedvision.org/sit-n-play-sensory-table)). These hands-on projects are central to our mission of providing sensory-rich learning experiences. A Shared Vision staff are excited to announce the publication of our first original children’s book, **Esmeralda’s Day**, now available on our website ([www.asharedvision.org/esmeraldas-day](http://www.asharedvision.org/esmeraldas-day)). This book, featuring a family supported by our own Janet Anderson, is filled with developmentally appropriate activities for parents and caregivers. It beautifully illustrates how multi-sensory experiences can open up the visual world for children with visual impairments.

As part of our ongoing commitment to education, we continue to lead efforts to promote the adoption of vision screening protocols and train early intervention professionals to identify children with visual impairments. The pilot of our new multiplatform tool, designed to simplify access to the questionnaire, is showing promising results, especially with our rural partners, who have praised its user-friendliness and practicality.

Looking ahead, we are preparing to release an updated vision screening protocol by late summer. We are incredibly grateful to our ophthalmology and optometry advisors—Drs. Arnold, Berry, Hanson, Majors, Sands-Braverman, and Steele—for their invaluable contributions and ongoing support. Finally, in July, our Executive Director, Steve Lindauer, transitioned from his role to focus on operational support for our teachers, expand our Education program, and grow our board of directors. For any questions about our programs or inquiries about joining our team, please reach out to Paula Landry at [plandry@asharedvision.org](mailto:plandry@asharedvision.org).

**Anchor Center for Blind Children:** Headquartered in Denver for more than 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 general family support, including programs for caregivers and siblings. Anchor Center charges a nominal tuition fee for toddler and preschool programs and financial assistance is available-- No child is ever denied access to services based on the family’s inability to pay. In the 2023-24 school year, Anchor Center served 400 children, caregivers and siblings in home and community-based settings, and at their state-of-the-art facility in the Central Park neighborhood, located at: 2550 Roslyn Street, Denver, CO 80238. For more information, please visit the Anchor Center website at [www.anchorcenter.org](http://www.anchorcenter.org) or call (303) 377-9732.

**Aftersight:** Formed in 1991, Aftersight (formerly Audio Information Network of Colorado) uses audio to serve people with low vision or blindness. The organization was launched over 30 years ago to offer Audio Editions which make print accessible. With Audio Editions, volunteers read and record Colorado print, and those recordings are available, for free. Today, Aftersight offers 110 titles which range from major newspapers and magazines to local grocery ads and transit guides. Thousands of hours of content is offered every year.

In recent years, the organization has also begun to offer Aftersight Originals - or podcasts for people living with low vision or blindness. Six unique programs are available, and they cover topics like government benefits, getting around without a car, mental health, adaptive sports & movement, technology that makes life easier, and stories of people living with vision loss. All of Aftersight’s programming is developed in deep collaboration with the people they serve. Through this partnership Aftersight identifies needs, builds programs, and strives to provide information equity, community, and empowerment. Registration is not required, but those who choose to register are offered a free smart speaker. Programming is simple to find and to use, and it is available via broadcast and on-demand. So, listeners simply need to ask that smart speaker to play the newest edition of a magazine, local paper, or favorite podcast. Aftersight also offers a free online book club, online support group, and white canes. For more information about Aftersight or how to access their services, go to [www.aftersight.org](http://www.aftersight.org) or call (303) 786-7777.

**Braille and Large Print Format Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) Test Review:** Colorado TVIs have the opportunity to meet with the CDE Unit of Student Assessment and the CMAS publisher to review braille CMAS tests. There will be continued work specific to these assessments and educators are always needed. If you are interested in signing up for the educator pool, for reviewing the state tests, please contact Tanni at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

**Colorado Administrative Units:** The term “administrative Unit” (AU) means a school district, board of cooperative services, or the State Charter School Institute, which provides educational services to exceptional children and is responsible for the local administration of the Exceptional Children Education Act. For purposes of the education of school age (ages three through 21 years) children with visual impairment, including blindness, an administrative unit can be the family’s local school district, as well as the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. The vast majority (over 90%) of school-age students with visual impairments, including blindness and deaf-blindness are served in their neighborhood school district with a locally hired TVI and/or O&M Specialist. Some administrative units may use contract services for their TVI and/or Orientation and Mobility services. For questions about main contact personnel for students with visual impairment, including blindness or deaf-blindness in each administrative unit (AU), please contact Tanni at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647.

**CAER - Colorado Chapter of AER:** Is a professional organization that serves the community of individuals who are blind/visually impaired. Our chapter supports professionals through continuing education, mini-grants and service recognition with our annual awards banquet. The Colorado Chapter of our national Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI) includes members from educators serving birth to adults in all settings from early childhood agencies, schools, vocational rehabilitation and veteran rehabilitation. Please join the board for the opportunity to receive ACVREP credit, as well as the opportunity to meet and collaborate with colleagues in the field. For more information about scheduled meetings and activities, for member benefits, or joining the board, please contact Chloann Woolley at [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com) or (719) 494-6337. \*\*\*JOIN AERBVI-  
<https://www.aerbvi.org/join-or-renew-here>

**CAER Online Presence with a Website and a Facebook Page:** Please go to the following website for updated information regarding Colorado AER: [https://www.aerbvi.org/chapter\\_colorado](https://www.aerbvi.org/chapter_colorado) Request to join and contribute to our Facebook group [Colorado AER \(CAER\)](#)

**CAER Annual Awards Banquet and Business Meeting:** This event occurs in conjunction with the annual CDE O&M Seminar in the spring. The banquet is a time to celebrate colleagues and friends and to announce the recipients of the following awards:

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.

CAER just celebrated their 2024 banquet in May, so look for future information in emails about the Annual Awards Banquet in 2025. Nominations for the awards will be due 8 weeks prior to the event and should be submitted to [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com).

**CAER Mini Grants:** CAER provides mini grants to current AER members or those sponsored by an AER member. The maximum amount of the funds available will vary, but the allotted amount per grant must not exceed \$300. Recipients are only eligible to receive a mini grant once every two years. Recipients need to fulfill their obligation to provide CAER with an agreed-upon presentation of how the mini-grant funds were used within 90 days of funds received. Applications are accepted throughout the year and are due **November 1<sup>st</sup>** for review.

**Partial Reimbursement for ACVREP Certification:**

- Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT®)
- Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS®)
- Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT®)
- Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist for Individuals with Visual Impairments (CATIS™)

Reimbursement of **\$100** for initial certification and a **\$50** reimbursement for renewed certification is available to CO AER (CAER) members. After receiving your initial and/or renewal, please submit a copy of the certification and letter requesting reimbursement to CAER at [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com) - must provide proof of AER membership.

**Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Braille Competency Certification:** Funds have been reserved for four braille proctors (Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein) to provide opportunities for TVIs / braillists to take the Colorado Braille Competency Test and/or the 15+ clock-hours of CDE established renewal modules. Care must be taken to spread out the completion of the 15 renewal modules over the five-year-renewal period so that competency can be truly demonstrated across a period of five years. TVIs taking the test for the first time should have taken their first university-level braille course or have evidence of extensive other study. For information about braille competency testing and renewal requirements, please visit the [CDE BVI Guidelines and Support Documents](#). For more information, please contact Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647.

**CDE Brailist Listserv:** This listserv is exclusively for school braillists working in Colorado administrative units. It is a venue for braillists to share information, ask questions, and gather information. Persons wishing to be added to the braillist listserv should contact Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647.

**CDE Braille Mentors:** Our amazing CDE Braille Committee personnel (Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein) are available to provide one-time mentoring to TVIs who need support in preparing for a minimum of a second round of the Colorado Braille Competency Test. Mentoring assistance is reserved for Colorado TVIs in public schools who have failed the CDE Braille Test on the first occasion. Mentoring is reserved for up to ten hours and is not designed to teach the candidate the braille code, but to refresh skills using exercise and practices lessons for improvement. Please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647 for more information.

**CDE Keeping in Touch (KIT) Newsletter:** The link to each e-newsletter is sent out to CO parents of children and youth who are blind/visually impaired (who are signed up for this purpose), TVIs, O&M Specialists, braillists, and BVI paraeducators. It is posted on the CDE Blindness/ Low Vision website for others to download. The following e-editions are planned for this school year: August / September 2024, October 2024, November / December 2024, January / February 2025, March / April 2024, and May 2025. For more information, please contact Tanni at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647. The [KIT Newsletter](#) is posted online, check it out.

**CDE Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:** Our updated team of experts is ready for year two! Drs. Kara Hanson and David Simpson, low vision therapists Jim Olson and Karin Hensel, and Statewide LVE Coordinator Roberta Curtis will return for school year 2024-25. We will have regional clinics in Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, and Denver. The clinics are open to Colorado public school students with low vision who have a current Individualized Education Program only. A family member and the assigned TVI are expected to attend the LVE Clinic with each accepted student.

**CDE O&M Seminar:** The topic(s) and dates for this training have yet to be finalized. The goal will be an in-person late April or early May 2025 training. The contact person is Tanni Anthony at (303) 503-4647 or [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

**CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment:** This in-person conference will be held on September 20 and 21 at the Lowry Conference Center. The featured speaker will be TVI and CVI expert Matt Tietjen and the topic will be *Designing an Accessible Academic Experience for Students with CVI*. Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment is an



impairment in functional vision that cannot be attributed solely to problems with the eyes or optic nerves. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 503-4647 or [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

**CDE TVI COMS listserv:** This listserv is exclusively for Colorado TVIs and O&M Specialists working in Colorado administrative units, A Shared Vision, and Anchor Center for Blind Children. It is a venue for professionals to share information, ask questions, and gather information. Persons wishing to be added to the listserv should contact Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647.

**CDE BVI Sound Bites:** Sounds Bites will be offered one time a month via a zoom platform and will run on a given Wednesday of each month, beginning in October from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. Preregistration will be required through a sign-up process. The dates, topics (as they are established), and the registration link will be posted in the *Keeping in Touch* Calendar of Events section. For more information, please be in touch with Tanni at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647.

**CDE Web Pages Specific to Visual Impairment and Deaf-Blindness:**

- Deaf-Blindness – <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db>
- NIMAS / NIMC - <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/nimas>
- Orientation and Mobility - <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/rs-om>
- Visual Impairment, Including Blindness - <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision>

**Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs:** The Colorado Center for the Blind has brought high-quality, welcoming, and yet challenging programs and training for youth ages 4 to college since 1990. Whether it's CCB's year-round Fun Activities and Skills Training (FAST) program, mentoring for students attending the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB), Career fairs for high school/college students, residential summer programs for teens, or partnering with organizations like the National Science Foundation for an astronomy camp experience, CCB is committed to creating opportunities that raise expectations for blind students and help them build the confidence to pursue their dreams as successful adults. For more information on youth programs in Colorado or to stay up to date on our monthly youth activities, visit [CCB's youth Programs](https://cocenter.org/our-programs/summer-youth/) page at (<https://cocenter.org/our-programs/summer-youth/>), or contact Director of Youth Services, Chaz Davis at [Cdavis@cocenter.org](mailto:Cdavis@cocenter.org) or by phone at (303) 778-1130.

**Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC):** Housed on the campus of CSDB, the role of the CIMC is to provide braille and large print textbooks and serve as a repository for APH educational materials for all Colorado students ages birth through twelfth grade who are blind/visually impaired. The CIMC also houses a lending library of professional materials for access by TVIs. The CIMC hosts an email distribution list for all braillists in Colorado, contact Jim Olson, [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org), to be added to the group. For CIMC questions or assistance, contact CIMC staff: Jim Olson, Coordinator, [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org), (719) 578-2195. CIMC pilot number (719) 578-2196 rings all CIMC staff phones simultaneously but does not have voicemail capabilities. Danielle Steele (shipping/receiving, APH orders), [dsteale@csdb.org](mailto:dsteale@csdb.org), (719) 578-2198. Maddee Durossette (your agency's statewide student registration database, federal quota census program), [mdurossette@csdb.org](mailto:mdurossette@csdb.org), (719) 578-2199. Our other email addresses: [cimcaphorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcaphorders@csdb.org), [cimcbookorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcbookorders@csdb.org), [cimcBrailierTechSoftware@csdb.org](mailto:cimcBrailierTechSoftware@csdb.org), and [cimcregistrations@csdb.org](mailto:cimcregistrations@csdb.org). The CIMC page of the CSDB website: [www.csdb.colorado.gov](http://www.csdb.colorado.gov) – select "Outreach"; from the drop-down menu, click on "CIMC-Colorado Instructional Materials Center."

**CIMC First Friday Meetings:** Contact CIMC staff for meeting times and Zoom meeting links. These online Zoom meetings are scheduled for the first Friday of the month, when possible; alternate Fridays are indicated below. There is no set agenda for this meeting, it is simply an opportunity to ask CIMC staff, and your colleagues around the state, any questions you may have in an informal setting. We try to feature information on new APH products as they are announced. Meeting dates for the 2024-2025 school year: September 6, October 18 (third Friday), November 1, December 6, January 10 (second Friday), February 14 (second Friday), March 7, April 4, and May 2, and June 6. The times and Zoom links will be disseminated to CIMC's statewide email distribution lists.

**Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB):** The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind is a state funded school within the Colorado Department of Education. The school was established for the purpose of providing comprehensive educational services for children, birth to age 21, who are blind/visually impaired and/or deaf/hard of hearing. Services are provided directly to students enrolled at the school, and outreach programs service students, staff, and families in communities throughout Colorado. There is no tuition charge for students to attend CSDB, which is located in Colorado Springs; however, there is a charge to districts receiving outreach services. CSDB is required to follow all state-education laws that apply to other public-school programs. Parents may inquire about enrolling their child with blindness/visual impairment after conversation about placement with their school district Special Education Director or Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. For more information about CSDB on-campus programs, contact Kathy Emter, CSDB Special Education Director at (719) 578-2177 or [kemter@csdb.org](mailto:kemter@csdb.org). For more information about CSDB outreach programs, contact [csdboutreach@csdb.org](mailto:csdboutreach@csdb.org).

**CSDB Cane Quest:** Cane Quest is a challenging orientation and mobility contest for students in grades 3-6. Scout contestants team up with older students and earn coins as they compete in various challenges that demonstrate mastery of basic orientation and mobility skills. CSDB sponsors an annual event. Stay tuned for more details on if this event will occur during the 2023-2024 school year.

**CSDB Lending Library:** The library provides materials and information in a variety of formats for students who are deaf/hard of hearing and/or blind/visually impaired, as well as their parents and service providers. Most items may be borrowed using the library's community use form. The libraries are open Monday—Friday during the school year from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Please email the media specialist before coming in person to either library. For more information, please refer to the CSDB website at [www.csdb.org](http://www.csdb.org).

**CSDB and CCB Outreach National Braille Challenge:** The Colorado regional contests will again be held at CSDB and the Colorado Center for the Blind during the 2024-2025 school year. Students may also compete individually in their home school with their TVI administering the tests. Students compete in various categories such as spelling, reading comprehension, speed and accuracy, proofreading, and charts and graphs. The Braille Challenge will be held on the campus of CSDB on **February 27, 2025**. The contact for the CSDB day is Jamie Lugo at [jlugo@csdb.org](mailto:jlugo@csdb.org). CSDB Outreach will co-host the Braille Challenge at the Colorado Center for the Blind, which will be held on **February 7, 2025** (alternate date is February 28). Contact CIMC staff, at (719) 578-2196. Please visit the CIMC page of the [CSDB website](http://www.csdb.org) and [www.brailleinstitute.org](http://www.brailleinstitute.org) for additional information about the National Braille Challenge.

**CSDB Specialized Assessments and Consultation:** Specialized assessments; for example, functional vision, learning media, O&M, cognitive and social-emotional, may be provided to school districts, BOCES and charter schools to assist school staff in developing appropriate educational services and supports for students with vision losses. There is a fee for this service. For more information, contact [csdboutreach@csdb.org](mailto:csdboutreach@csdb.org).

**CSDB Role Model Videos:** The CSDB Role Model Videos are designed to provide students who are blind or visually impaired, their parents, and teachers the opportunity to understand life experiences of successful adult role models who are blind and visually impaired. The role models speak to their vision conditions, use of adaptive devices, independence as an adult, thoughts for parents, interpersonal skills, and why they feel they are successful adults. Check out the [CSDB YouTube Channel](#) for more information.

**Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (also called the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project):** We are starting the second of our currently funded five-year cycle began on October 1, 2023 with an increase in funding. There are currently 148 children and youth, age birth through 21 years, who have combined vision and hearing loss (deafblindness) in Colorado. Key activities include:

- Annual Child Count of CO children and youth, ages birth through 21 years, ] with deaf-blindness
- Free TA is provided to the families and service providers of children and youth with deaf-blindness

- Training and coaching for school-based interveners.
- Annual Webinar Series
- Annual Family Conference for parents and key caregivers.
- Annual Summer Institute, which focuses key assessment of and intervention / instructional strategies for children and youth who are deaf-blind
- deafblind and/or who have significant support needs.
- Website with over 100 fact sheets (in English and Spanish) on information specific to deaf-blindness.
- Lending library is open to parents and professionals and is stocked with great resources, including about 100 items specific to visual impairment. The library's inventory is listed on the website, where there also is a downloadable book-loan order form.

For more information about the CO Deaf-Blind Project's free technical assistance (TA) services, contact Gina Herrera at [Herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6605. Also check out the project's continually updated webpage: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>

**Colorado Talking Book Library:** For people who cannot read standard print, CTBL provides free audio, braille, and large print books. All services and materials are free, including accessible audio book players and braille e-readers. Books and magazines go through the mail postage paid. Audio and braille books are also available for download through the BARD mobile app. For more information, please contact the library via email at [ctbl.info@cde.state.co.us](mailto:ctbl.info@cde.state.co.us) or by phone toll free at 1-800-685-2136.

**Community Intervener Program:** This program is now up and running 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 Elli Streifer, the Program Manager, at [elli.streifer@state.co.us](mailto:elli.streifer@state.co.us).

**Eligibility – Deaf-Blindness:** The determination of whether a school-age (ages three to 21 years) child meets the eligibility criteria as a “child with deaf-blindness” is the responsibility of the local administrative unit's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the child's parents, and is based on state approved eligibility criteria. To be eligible, the child does not need to meet the full eligibility criteria for hearing impairment, including deafness and visual impairment, including blindness. This is outlined on those eligibility documents. For children who are entering the public-school district from an early intervention program or a private early childhood program, eligibility for school-based special education services and supports is not determined by personnel associated with these early-years programs. It is critical that parents are given accurate information about the eligibility process with school district staff. It is the IEP team who will further determine the need for an intervener. If there are questions about the school-age special education eligibility criteria, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647.

**Eligibility – Visual Impairment, Including Blindness:** The determination of whether a school-age child meets the eligibility criteria as a “child with visual impairment, including blindness” is the responsibility of the local administrative unit's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the child's parents, and is based on state approved eligibility criteria that document adverse educational impact and the need for specially designed instruction.

For children who are entering the public-school district from an early intervention program or a private early childhood program, eligibility for school-based special education services and supports is not determined by personnel associated with the early intervention / private early childhood programs. It is critical that parents are given accurate information about the eligibility process with administrative unit staff. If there are questions about the recently updated school-age special education eligibility criteria, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647.



**Foresight Adventure Guides for the Blind:** Foresight provides goal-oriented outdoor adaptive recreation experiences for students with low vision and blindness. Students have two opportunities to participate in Foresight’s fun, safe and transformative programs. The winter Learn to Ski/Snowboard program and the *Summer Camp for Blind Youth*. Both programs use outdoor recreation to promote self-confidence, independence, and personal growth for students who are blind or experiencing low vision. Each winter, students from a half dozen Colorado school districts plus Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind travel to Vail with teacher chaperones for two days of skiing/snowboarding. Returning students who have mastered basic skiing/snowboarding skills are paired with a Foresight guide and shadow to practice their skills and explore Vail’s varied terrain. Students new to the sport receive professional ski or snowboard instruction from Vail’s Adaptive Ski School. All the students experience the joy and freedom of skiing blind! Foresight provides the students with roundtrip transportation to Vail, lift tickets, ski or snowboard equipment, professional instruction (if needed), two days of lunch, and one-night lodging, for a requested minimum donation of \$75. However, Foresight will not turn any student away if they cannot pay the suggested donation.

Foresight’s *Summer Camp for Blind Youth* offers students three days and two nights of fun outdoor experiences in the Vail Valley. Campers participate in stand-up paddle boarding, horseback riding, rock climbing, hiking and more. Team building and leadership activities are also incorporated into the camp. Foresight provides two nights lodging, daily lunch, one dinner, and all activities for a requested minimum donation of \$100. Again, students will not be turned away if they cannot pay. Camps take place in mid-June and mid-July.

Both the Learn to Ski program and summer camps promote components of the National Federation for the Blind’s Expanded Core Curriculum. Foresight’s programs reinforce elements such as socialization, self-determination, orientation and mobility, and, of course, sports /recreation skills development. Participants also report developing close friendships with people “just like them.” Send your students to Vail to learn important life skills all while mastering activities they can safely enjoy with friends and family throughout their lives.

Please contact Christine Holmberg, Foresight Executive Director, at (303) 506-3859, or email her at [christine@foresightskiguide.org](mailto:christine@foresightskiguide.org) for more information on the summer camp, and to get on the calendar for the upcoming ski season. You can also follow Foresight Ski Guides on Facebook and Instagram, and visit their website at [www.foresightskiguide.org](http://www.foresightskiguide.org).

**Metro TVI / O&M Specialists Meetings:** The meetings will be held virtually throughout the school year. For more information, please be in touch with Jeannie Lei ([jlei@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org)) or Nancy Cozart ([ncozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us)). Stay tuned for the meetings dates / locations for this school year.

**National Instructional Materials Standards (NIMAS):** NIMAS is the national source file format created by IDEA 2004 for use in the production of accessible formats, such as braille, large print, and digital text, for K-12 instructional materials. Publishers submit files in the NIMAS format to the NIMAC in accordance with state and district procurement contracts. Designated users in the states can then download the files for use in producing accessible formats on behalf of qualifying students. NIMAS files require further conversion work before use. They are not distributed directly to students but make it possible for students who require an accessible format to receive it in a timely manner. The NIMAC receives a wide range of student-facing instructional materials. Under IDEA 2004, states and districts can require NIMAS from publishers for “textbooks and related printed core materials.” This means materials written and published primarily for use in elementary school and secondary school instruction and required by a State Education Agency or a Local Education Agency for use by students in the classroom. Some materials, such as trade books (e.g., novels), are exempt from NIMAS requirements.

In May of 2020, the U.S. Department of Education clarified that the term “print instructional materials,” with regard to the scope of NIMAS in IDEA 2004, includes digital instructional materials if those materials can be produced in valid NIMAS format. For more information, visit the NIMAS and Digital Materials FAQ on the NIMAC’s website or the Notice of Interpretation FAQ from the National AEM Center.

**Eligibility for NIMAS:** Under IDEA 2004 Part D, Section 674 (e)(3)(A), to qualify for materials produced with NIMAS files, students must have **both** an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and a qualifying disability under the

eligibility guidelines of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS): An “eligible person,” is defined as someone who is blind; has a visual impairment or perceptual or reading disability that cannot be improved to give visual function substantially equivalent to that of a person who has no such impairment or disability and so is unable to read printed works to substantially the same degree as a person without an impairment or disability; or is otherwise unable, through physical disability, to hold or manipulate a book or to focus or move the eyes to the extent that would be normally acceptable for reading.

Eligibility must be certified by one of the following: Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Osteopathy, ophthalmologist, optometrist, psychologist, registered nurse, therapist, and professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or welfare agencies (such as teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI), a social worker, case worker, counselor, rehabilitation teacher, certified reading specialist, school psychologist, superintendent, or librarian).

For more information please visit the [NIMAS and Colorado’s authorized users webpage](#).

**Northern TVI / O&M Specialists Meetings:** The meetings will be held periodically throughout the school year. For more information, please be in touch with Aryn McNichol at (303) 702-8354 x58354 or [mcnichol\\_aryn@svvsd.org](mailto:mcnichol_aryn@svvsd.org). Stay tuned for the meetings dates / locations for this school year.

**Southern Region TVI/DVR Meetings:** The meetings will be offered throughout the school year with different hosts, locations, and topics. Contact Jim Olson ([jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)) for information,

**READ Act:** The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act), passed by the Colorado legislature in 2012, focuses on early literacy development for all students and especially for students at risk to not read at grade level by the end of the third grade. The READ Act focuses on literacy development for kindergarteners through third-graders. Students are evaluated for reading skills, and those who are not reading at grade level are given individual READ plans. TVIs should collaborate closely with general educators / literacy specialists on the READ Act screening, and if needed, diagnostic procedures to assure accessibility. This may include preparing materials in braille, utilizing commercial screening tools in braille format, assisting with magnification and other low vision needs of the visual presentation of the screening / assessment materials. The TVI may provide consultation to assist with the interpretation of results on timed screening / assessment procedures for learners using braille materials where normed testing was based on print readers.

**The SEE THE FUTURE (STF) Fund - Celebrating 27 Years!** - [www.seethefuture.org](http://www.seethefuture.org)

**STF ‘Tools for Life (TFL)’ - Applications due November 30, 2024 :** Providing financial assistance to the families of blind/visually impaired students (PreK – Transition) who are residents of Colorado. This assistance is to help purchase necessary adaptive equipment, which students may own and use in their home and community. These tools will support literacy and the pursuit of higher education. **Scholarships are awarded based on financial need.** Check out [TFL online](#) for more TFL information.

**STF ‘Education for Life (EFL)’ Program - Applications due March 1, 2025 :** EFL is pleased to award scholarships to qualified Colorado students who are blind/visually impaired. This scholarship fund is made possible through generous donations by optometrists, ophthalmologists, educators, technicians, corporations, foundations, and many others with an interest in the lives of these learners. This program provides scholarships to support Certificate Programs such as massage therapy, Associate 2 year degree, BA degree, MA degree, or a doctoral degree. Scholarships are awarded based on academic achievement, school and community service, and individual need. Check out the EFL Program [online](#) for more EFL information.

To [Meet the STF 2024 EFL Recipients](#)

**For Questions, contact:** Thomas W. Theune, OD, STF Founder & Chairperson, at (709) 640.0997 or [twtheune@comcast.net](mailto:twtheune@comcast.net).

**UEB Technical versus Nemeth Code:** The Braille Authority of North America has recognized both UEB Technical and the Nemeth Codes as approved braille math codes. As such, the decision of which code will be used for a child who is a beginner through an advanced braille reader is determined by the local Individual Education Program team. Textbooks can be ordered in both codes, the CMAS State Assessments are offered in both codes, and there are procedures to order College Board tests in either code.

**University of Northern Colorado VI Program:** The University of Northern Colorado offers an Online Master of Arts Degree Program / Visual Impairment. This program provides teacher candidates with the skills and knowledge to help students with visual impairments meet their potential in academic and social areas of their lives and prepares teachers-in-training to work with students from birth to age 21 with a special emphasis on the needs of early childhood and elementary-aged students. This program has been a bedrock for filling Colorado TVI positions. Dr. Paula Conroy is the Program Coordinator. For more information, please go to: <https://extended.unco.edu/programs/special-education-visual-impairment-masters/>

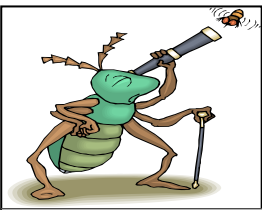
**UNC Non-degree Licensure Orientation and Mobility Program:** The program provides an endorsement in orientation and mobility. Approved by the national accreditation body, the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (AVREP), the Orientation and Mobility endorsement program is for students who have a master's degree in visual impairment or who are in the process of obtaining a Master of Arts in visual impairment. There is one on-campus course requirement for one summer. Dr. Paula Conroy is the Program Coordinator. For more information, contact: <https://extended.unco.edu/current/graduate/sped-om-end-ol-gre/>

**United States Association of Blind Athletes:** USABA is a Colorado-based 501(c) (3) organization that provides life-enriching sports opportunities for every individual with a visual impairment. A member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, USABA provides athletic opportunities in various sports including, but not limited to track and field, nordic and alpine skiing, biathlon, judo, wrestling, swimming, tandem cycling, powerlifting, and goalball (a team sport for the blind and visually impaired). For activities specific to Colorado outreach activities, please contact Kevin Brouard at [kbrouard@usaba.org](mailto:kbrouard@usaba.org) or by phone at (719) 866-3019.

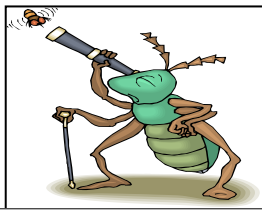
**Vision Coalition:** The Vision Coalition is a statewide advisory committee on the educational activities for students who are blind/visually impaired, support activities for their parents, and professional development activities specific to their service providers. Members include Tanni Anthony (CDE ESSU), Nancy Cozart (Metro region), Chaz Davis (Colorado Center for the Blind), Abby Horner (Northern Region), Donna Keale (CSDB BVI Outreach), Paula Landry (A Shared Vision), Jamie Lugo (School for the Blind – CSDB), Tammy Miller (Anchor Center for Blind Children, Michele Reed (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), Jim Olson (CIMC), Erin Schroeder (Western Region), and Chloann Woolley (Southern Region and CAER), The VC meets three times a school year. For more information, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 503-4647.

**Western Slope TVI / O&M Specialists Meetings:** The meetings will be held periodically throughout the school year. For more information, please be in touch with Erin Schroeder at (970) 254-5414 or [erin.schroeder@d51schools.org](mailto:erin.schroeder@d51schools.org) Due to distance across the Western Slope, meetings are held virtually.

**White Cane Day:** October 15th of each year marks White Cane Day across the country. There may well be celebrations across the state in a variety of school districts. As celebrations are planned, we will work to disseminate information. Time to raise a little or a big cane!



# LOW VISION NEWS



## 2024-2025 Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Schedule

Clinic	Clinic Date(s)	Due Date for Paperwork	Site Coordinator
Western LVE Clinic	September 26-27, 2024	Thursday, September 12, 2024	Angela Sims and Erin Schroeder
Southern LVE Clinic	October 11, 2024	Friday, September 27, 2024	Jim Olson
Northern LVE Clinic	November 14-15, 2024	Thursday, October 31, 2024	Samantha Thuis
Metro LVE Clinic	February 19-21, 2025	Wednesday, February 5, 2025	Roberta Curtis

### Low Vision Specialists Bring Evaluations to Students Across Colorado

*Matching students with visual impairments with the right tools to succeed can have a lifelong impact, say Low Vision Rehabilitation Service clinicians.*

Kara Mason, who is a content writer for the Departments of Ophthalmology and Emergency Medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, wrote an article about the [CDE Low Vision Evaluation Clinics](#) to highlight the work of all involved. For the full article, check out the [Department of Ophthalmology—Low Vision Evaluation article](#).

### Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics are Coming Your Way!

We are so happy that our regional LVE Clinics are funded and full staff for this school year. We are thrilled to have optometrists Drs. Kara Hanson and David Simpson, low vision therapists Jim Olson and Karin Hansel, and state coordinator Roberta Curtis on board. We will have all four regional clinics this year. TVIs, your work is now to fill the clinics, which are reserved for school age learners who have a good likelihood of benefiting from magnification tools during their school day, at home, and in the community.

It is a requirement of the clinic that eligible children and youth must have an active IEP and be served by a teacher of students with visual impairments. Both the TVI and a parent **must** attend the clinic with the child. There is no cost for the clinic evaluation. Device costs are the responsibility of the family and/or administrative unit. We ask that a fiscal plan be discussed ahead of the clinic in anticipation of prescribed devices. It is the TVI's responsibility to review the LVE report with the family and student, and to train the child on the ordered devices. The clinic reports will be sent to the TVI two to three weeks following the clinic through a secure portal. For logistical questions about the clinics, please contact Roberta Curtis at [curtis\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:curtis_r@cde.state.co.us)

## 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 Grant) is beginning its second year of its federally-funded five-year grant cycle. The purpose of the project, awarded to every state and US territories 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 a now annual webinar series and the long-offered Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness, and provide tiered and customized technical assistance. The current project has three 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. 166 children and youth were reported, 13 new individuals identified and 13 were exited from the CO DB Child Count.



The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force. We have four CDE employees (Tanni Anthony, Gina Herrera, Roberta Curtis, and Jessica Meisel) contributing FTE to the project, and our contracted Family Engagement Specialist Cindy Colwell is also on board with the project. For training and 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. We will begin the December 1, 2024 Child Count process in October and will be reaching out to our agency and administrative unit contacts. 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 mentoring to provide support throughout the intervener training and certification process. Our next cohort begins August 23, 2024, with a 2nd cohort beginning January 2024! This program provides a wonderful opportunity for individuals who would like to receive intervener training and to obtain it *free of charge* if they 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 1:1 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.
- Feedback on all assignments, individual or group office hours, consultation, and mentoring from CO 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 deafblindness. This might be families of children and youth who are deaf-blind, school personnel, and agencies providing services to such 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: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrqst](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrqst) Return this form as an email attachment to Gina Herrera at [Herrera\\_G@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_G@cde.state.co.us).

You can also call Gina at 303-253-0451. Or [fill out our new Google Form for Technical Assistance](#).



## National Center on Deafblindness

### IEP Team Intervener Discussion Guide – Spanish Version

The newly redesigned IEP team discussion guide, [Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?](#) is now available in Spanish on NCDB’s website! The guide helps teams make informed decisions about a student’s access to information, communication, and more.

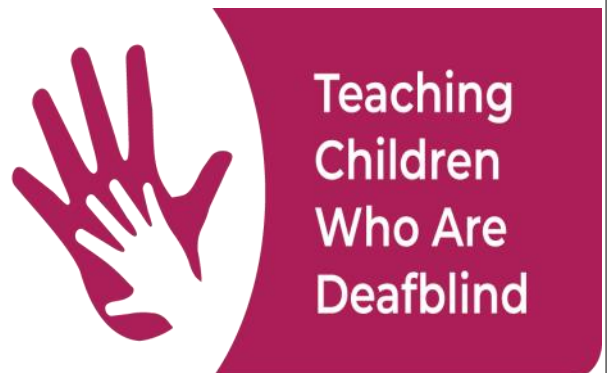
## Important Training Resources on Deaf-Blindness

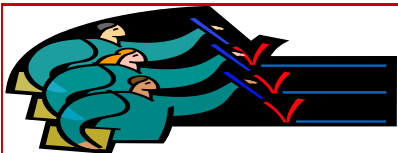
The National Center on Deafblindness has added some great new videos to the module [Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind](#) in the [Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind: Professional Development for Educators](#) series. The videos feature mothers of children who are deafblind who share their experiences during the critical years of early intervention and the teamwork that’s involved.

You’ll find the videos under “Parent Perspectives” in the module’s navigation menu. The videos enhance the content of the module’s lessons by providing additional insights into the experiences of family members.

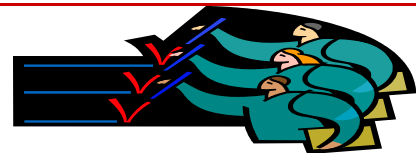
## Videos Added to NCDB Early Intervention Module

New content has been added to the module [“Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind”](#) in the [“Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind: Professional Development for Educators”](#) series. [“Parent Perspectives”](#) includes videos of mothers of children who are deafblind, who share their experiences during the critical years of early intervention and the teamwork with practitioners that’s involved.





## CHECK IT OUT!



### **APH Professional Development for ACVREP Credit**

Please remember that if you are a Colorado COMS, you need to retain your ACVREP certification to renew your CDE O&M license. If you are looking for more educational opportunities, head over to APH Hive. Their FREE eLearning platform for educators and families can be accessed at any time to earn ACVREP credits from the comfort of your home and office. With a growing course catalog covering categories like Early Childhood, Expanded Core Curriculum and more, APH staff are compiling the resources you need to serve students. [Learn more and sign up today!](#)

### **The Buzz**

Calling all educators and professionals in the field of blindness and low vision! Head over to the American Printing House for the Blind Hive and check out their newest comprehensive online learning course, Unlocking the Foundations of Reading for Students with Visual Impairments. This course examines reading development for students who are blind or low vision, explores the foundation of typical reading development, illustrates instructional strategies for teaching reading, and much more! Currently available are the first 4 of 8 learning modules, with the expectancy of each month featuring a new module. Once all 8 modules are active in June, 10 hours of ACVREP credit will be available. [Enroll to The Buzz](#) now to gain the tools and knowledge needed to make an impact on the lives of your learners!

### **New Online Learning Course**

Calling all educators and professionals in the field of blindness and low vision! Head over to the Hive and check out the American Printing House for the Blind newest comprehensive online learning course, Unlocking the Foundations of Reading for Students with Visual Impairments. This course examines reading development for students who are blind or low vision, explores the foundation of typical reading development, illustrates instructional strategies for teaching reading, and much more! Currently available are the first 4 of 8 learning modules, with the expectancy of each month featuring a new module. Once all 8 modules are active in June, 10 hours of ACVREP credit will be available. Enroll (<https://aphhive.org/#/home>) now to gain the tools and knowledge needed to make an impact on the lives of your learners!

### **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.

### **Early Childhood Mental Health Online Moodle Course Registration**

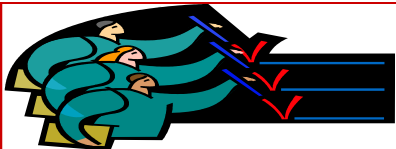
Are you passionate about understanding and supporting the mental health of your youngest children? Our new self-paced online course on Early Childhood Mental Health is designed to equip you with the knowledge and strategies you need to understand young children's mental health needs. The online course will cover principles of early childhood mental health, common and unusual presentations of early childhood mental health needs, and strategies educators can use to support mental health, including for students with disabilities.

#### **Important Course Information**

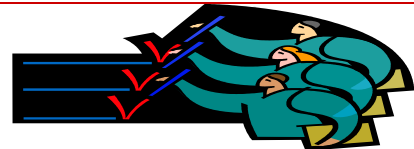
- **Target Audience:** This training series is intended for professionals working with children from preschool through kindergarten who serve children with disabilities.
- **Deadline:** Participants must complete all requirements by December 21st to earn their continuing education hours.
- **Continuing Education Hours:** Participants will receive 4.5 hours of continuing education hours upon successful completion of each module / quiz. If applicable, participant information will be shared with the CO Shines PDIS.

**Registration Closes:** September 13th

**Contact Information:** For questions or support, please reach out to Missy Taucher at [taucher\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:taucher_m@cde.state.co.us) or Krista Klabo at [klabo\\_k@cde.state.co.us](mailto:klabo_k@cde.state.co.us).



## CHECK IT OUT!



Greetings,

I'm the founder of Mathematics EnVisionEd, an organization that aims to uplift blind students in math. We are planning to initiate the world's first Blind Math Circle. A blind math circle is hosted for blind students interested in math to come together and learn. It doesn't have a set curriculum per se. Every week, the teacher takes up a topic on their own that they feel would be interesting. The purpose of it is not to teach new mathematics primarily, but rather to teach curious students to think mathematically. We will host the first blind math circle for grades 9-12. I would be immensely grateful if any teacher is interested to lead the Blind Math Circle. If anybody is interested, please contact me. We could even connect over a meeting.

Kabir Sahni, Founder of Mathematics EnVisionEd  
[kabir.ssahni@gmail.com](mailto:kabir.ssahni@gmail.com)



### Unstuck: The Special Education Podcast

Discussions between two professionals related to current trends and topics affecting the world of special education. They pull from a combined 40 years in the field to share stories, insights, and potential solutions. Check it out and [listen now to UNSTUCK](#).

**STEMIEFest** is a gathering of early childhood professionals, families, faculty, STEM industry members, and more to engage in innovative STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning experiences and activities for each and every child. ASL interpretation, captioning, and Spanish interpretation will be provided. As a result of attending STEMIEfest, attendees will have:

1. Increased ability to affirm positive STEM identities for all children, particularly children with disabilities (ages birth to five).
2. Increased knowledge about child centered development and practices.
3. Increased knowledge about the importance of STEM in early childhood.
4. Increased skills to implement STEM experiences for young children with intentionality.
5. Increased capacity to cultivate playful, joyful, and developmentally appropriate STEM experiences every day, everywhere, and for everyone.

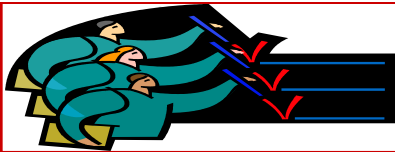
October 14, 2024 12:00 PM and October 15, 2024 12:00 PM

Register for free at [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

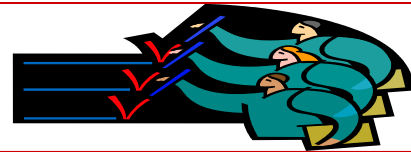
### Colorado Educator Support

Need some 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!



### Achieve Employment Equity

A recent APH webinar featured nationally recognized experts who shared valuable insights and tools for active job seekers aiming to achieve career equity. Our panelists provided tips and best practices for HR hiring managers and employers on recruiting, onboarding, and hiring blind and low vision job seekers. The session covered everything from essential research to practical tools for maximizing career potential and fostering equity in the workplace. It delivered timely, critical, and actionable information. [Employment Connections: Achieving Employment Equity \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

#### Browse APH ConnectCenter's latest content:

- [Strategies for Empowering Independent Living Skills](#)
- [Empowering Blind Job Seekers Through Innovation: Meet Tanner Gers](#)
- [Monarch: Thriving Beyond the Classroom](#)

### Barbie® Introduces the First Blind Barbie Fashionista Doll

In July Mattel, Inc. (NASDAQ: MAT) announced the addition of a blind Barbie doll, created to allow even more children to find a doll that represents them and inspire all children to tell more stories through play.

Barbie partnered with the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), an organization dedicated to creating a world of endless possibilities for individuals with blindness and low vision, to ensure details of the blind Barbie doll, including face sculpt, fashion, accessories, packaging experience, and e-commerce communication, accurately depict individuals with blindness or low vision.

Counseled by AFB, Barbie was committed to represent individuals with blindness and low vision throughout all stages of the design process, from the doll's sculpt to the dress pattern: **Accessories:** The doll comes with a white and red cane with an identifiable marshmallow tip and includes stylish and functional sunglasses. With some blind or low-vision individuals sensitive to light, the lens provides additional eye protection. **Elbow Articulations:** The blind Barbie doll includes elbow articulations to ensure comfortable cane use. **Textured and Vibrant Fabrics:** Barbie conducted testing with blind and low-vision children to ensure that the doll provided an accessible and satisfying play experience for kids with blindness or low vision. With AFB's guidance, Barbie designed the doll's fashion to include a satiny pink blouse with a textured ruffle skirt for tactile interest. Additional details include a brightly colored high-contrast hook and loop fasteners for closure on the back of the doll's top, as well as an elastic skirt waistband to make swapping outfits easier.

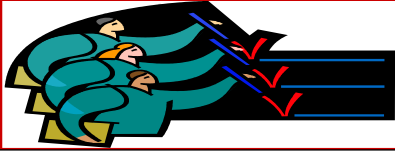
**Packaging and Design:** Barbie worked with AFB to create accessible packaging for the doll, including the placement and writing of 'Barbie' in braille on the package. **Eye Gaze:** The doll is designed with an eye gaze facing slightly up and out to accurately reflect the sometimes-distinct eye gaze of a blind individual.

### Dare to Be Remarkable Conference—Monday, November 11 - November 13, 2024 in Baltimore, Maryland

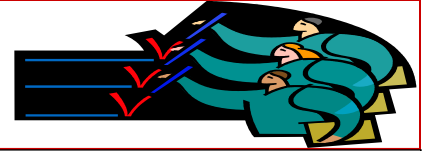
Mark your calendars for the National Federation of the Blind [2024 Dare to Be Remarkable conference](#), a three-day national conference for education and rehabilitation professionals who work with blind students and adults. This event will include:

- Keynote presentations each day by leaders in the education and rehabilitation fields.
- Workgroups on Structured Discovery Training methods and principles.
- Professional think tank work group sessions for VR instructors and administrators.
- Consumer panels on strategies that work.

Information for those interested in presenting will be shared soon. Please direct all inquiries to the conference organizers Edward Bell, at [ebell@latech.edu](mailto:ebell@latech.edu) or 318-257-4554, or Anil Lewis, at [alewis@nfb.org](mailto:alewis@nfb.org) or 410-659-9314,



# CHECK IT OUT!



## OSEP-Funded TA Centers

OSERS' technical assistance centers are ready to address your questions regarding the IDEA and best practices and alternate models for providing special education and related services, including through distance instruction. The National Center for Systemic Improvement is the primary source for technical assistance resources during the COVID-19 national emergency for IDEA Part B programs. The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center is the primary source for IDEA Part C programs. For questions pertaining to Part C of IDEA, States should contact their [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center State Contact](#). For Part B of IDEA, states should contact the [National Center for Systemic Improvement](#).

### \*\* 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.



### \*\* Proficient Communicators 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:

- [TIES Distance Learning #1: Morning Meetings](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #2: A Collaborative Start to Behavioral Supports](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #3: Effective Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\) Within the Distance Learning Environment: What in the World Does That Look Like?](#)



### \*\* Accessible Materials and Technologies

The [National AEM Center at CAST](#) has developed resources to support students who need accessible materials and technologies while learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.



### \*\* eBooks

[Book share](#) provides accessible eBooks for eligible individuals with barriers to reading. The resources linked here will help students with dyslexia, blindness/ visual impairment, cerebral palsy, and other print reading barriers to continue learning during school closures.





# Resources and Materials

## Adapted Physical Education Terms

Podcast feature Dr. Mike Messerole (presented at the 2023 SHAPE CO Convention) on "[Understanding the terminology of Physical Education for Students with Disabilities](#)"

## NCEO: Resources on Accommodations, NCSA presentations

### ◆ Student and Teacher Perceptions of Accommodations

Many students with disabilities use accommodations during instruction and when taking assessments. It is important to consider student perceptions about what works as well as their preferences when making accessibility and accommodations decisions. Students are often the best source of information about their strengths and needs. It is also vital to better understand teachers' perspectives regarding various accommodations and accessibility features. What have they found to work well? What is challenging about selecting or implementing various accommodations?

[Read more about student and teacher perceptions of accommodations ...](#)

### ◆ The Basics of Accommodations and Modifications

There continues to be confusion among some educators and staff in State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) about what is an accommodation and what is a modification. A recently published NCEO Brief, [The Basics of Accommodations and Modifications \(Brief #33\)](#), clarifies what accommodations and modifications are for both instruction and assessment for students with disabilities. The Brief also disentangles the use of the term "alternate or modified curriculum" from the meaning of modification used for instruction and assessment.

[Read more about the basics of accommodations and modifications ...](#)

### ◆ Accommodations Toolkit

NCEO has an [Accommodations Toolkit](#) that provides easy-to-use summaries of the academic research literature on specific accommodations for students with disabilities as well as companion accessibility policy analyses. The Accommodations Toolkit is organized by accommodation and currently includes research summaries for 29 accommodations.

[Read more about NCEO's Accommodations Toolkit ...](#)

### ◆ Videos About Accommodations Decision Making

NCEO produced a series of videos several years ago that told the story of how a team of educators worked with a student and her family to help ensure that she had an accommodation she needed to meaningfully access instruction and assessments. This series continues to be extremely popular, and many people have told NCEO how helpful the videos are. We are sharing these "oldies, but goodies" again in case you missed them. This series of videos is available on the NCEO [YouTube channel](#).

[Read more about NCEO's videos on accommodations decision making ...](#)



# Resources and Materials

## New Guides from FamilyConnect

APH FamilyConnect has two new guides *Getting Started: A Guide for Families New to Blindness and Low Vision*. One is for [birth to 3rd grade](#) and one for [4th to 12th grade](#). They provide information about visual development, education, eye care providers, adapting the home, and more.

## Reach the APH ConnectCenter via the Be My Eyes App!

Thanks to a partnership with Be My Eyes, people in the US can contact the APH ConnectCenter Information and Referral Line through the Be My Eyes App. Reaching the APH ConnectCenter is easy: open the Be My Eyes app, activate the "Browse Specialized Help" button, and select "Blindness Organizations." Tap on APH ConnectCenter, and you will be connected in seconds! Visit [www.bemyeyes.com](http://www.bemyeyes.com) and [APH ConnectCenter and Be My Eyes Partner to Provide a Broader Array of Assistance](#) to learn more about the help and support available in the free app.

## Utilize or Share the Getting Started Guide 2020

[Getting Started 2020: A Guide for People New to Vision Loss](#) offers essential guidance for those navigating the complexities of a recent eye condition diagnosis. It is a compass directing individuals toward tools, support systems, and information. Continuously updated, it acknowledges the evolving landscape, especially post-COVID-19, emphasizing virtual support systems and multiple accessible formats. It is available in English and Spanish.

## Assistive Technology Track

The Assistive Technology and Inclusive Engineering graduate certificate provides an in-depth introduction to the area of inclusive and assistive technologies for individuals aspiring to either work in the field of technology, disability, and/or aging into disability; and/or to sit for the national RESNA credentialing examination for one of two certifications to recognize assistive technology service providers who have met a national standard of job-based knowledge and experience.

Learn more about this certificate at [CU Bioengineering Certificate Programs](#).

In addition to the link above, check out more course information listed on the [Academic Programs and Degrees webpage](#).





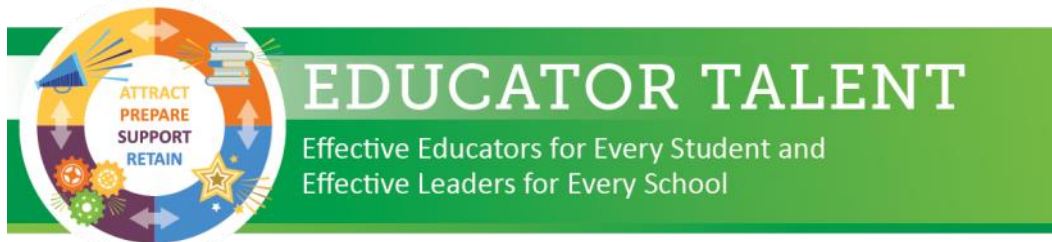
## Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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>Do not let your ACVREP O&amp;M Certification expire.</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.



## Extended Part C Birthday Criteria 2025

The Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) EI Colorado Program, and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) have made the joint decision to keep the Extended Part C Option available to qualifying children who turn three between May 1, 2025 and the start of the school year.

More information about the Extended Part C Option, can be found on the EI Colorado website under the [Training & TA](#) section and on the CDE website: [Early Childhood Special Education Resources and Guidance](#).

## 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.](#)

For more information contact Colleen O'Neil at [oneil\\_c@cde.state.co.us](mailto:oneil_c@cde.state.co.us)

## Updated READ Act Requirement Chart and FAQs for Educator Preparation Programs

To further clarify understanding of requirements for the READ Act teacher training requirements that both ensure program completers earn the READ Act Teacher Training Designation as well as the licensure requirements for teachers, the Educator Preparation and Licensure teams have created [a webpage with information and updated frequently asked questions](#).

Contact the [educator preparation team](#) with questions.

## 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 Sept. 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.



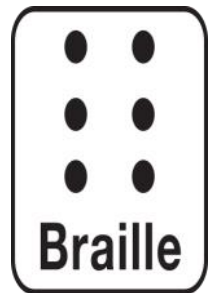
## Licensure Requirements for TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists Colorado Initial Licensure in the Endorsement Area of Visual Impairment

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 as a teacher of students with visual impairments, with 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.

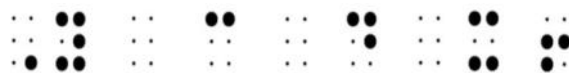
The initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate expires five years from its date of issue.

### 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.

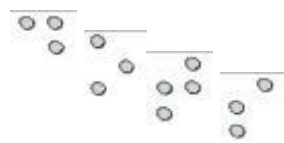
For more information about Colorado’s braille competency requirements, please go to:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs)

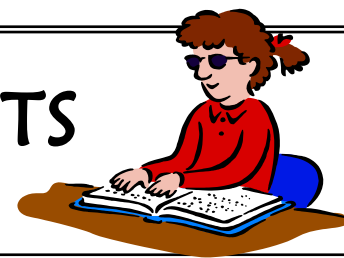


You can do it !





# 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:Nkcozart@cde.state.co.us">Nkcozart@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

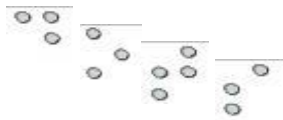
The Colorado Department of Education does not dictate a math code for students with visual impairment, including blindness. Two math codes are approved by the Braille Authority of North America. The decision about the math code is an individual student-by-student or an IEP decision. Both codes are viable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



## Tactile Graphic Resources

BANA offers the *Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2022* publication as a printable PDF and a zipped BRF. An accessible PDF version will follow. The purpose of these guidelines and standards is to provide transcribers, educators, and producers with information about best practices, current methods, and design principles for the production of readable tactile graphics. In the 2022 edition, technical material is transcribed in Unified English Braille (UEB), as well as the Nemeth Code in UEB Contexts.

This edition also includes information on best practices currently in use since the 2010 version was published. The *Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2022* is [available on the BANA website](#).

## Professional Development Conference 2024



Join the National Braille Association and other braille transcribers, teachers of the visually impaired, prison braille program managers and other producers of braille from around North America. In 2024 our annual Professional Development Conference will be located at The Antlers hotel in scenic Colorado Springs.

**Dates: October 23-25, 2024**

This year the main conference will consist of three strands each lasting two-and-a-half days. Attendees will select one topic and learn throughout the duration of the conference on that topic. The result will be an intense deep-dive that will leave attendees with a deeper understanding of the topic than we can normally offer in half-day workshops.

Additionally, the day before the conference we're offering an optional full day of training to review the new Nemeth Code update.

## Tactile Graphic Resources

- ◆ Project INSPIRE Course: [Introduction to Geometry and Tactile Graphics for Students in Grades 3 to 8](#)— tips for teachers of students who are blind or visually impaired.
- ◆ Lucy Hasty' s Tactile Graphics Website: [Tactile Graphics](#)
- ◆ Tips for Tactile Graphics- list of resources. [Tips for Tactile Graphics](#)
- ◆ Paths to Literacy Resources: [Teaching Tactile Graphics Video](#)
- ◆ APH Webinars: [Strategies and Resources for the Instruction and Evaluation of Tactile Graphicacy Skills](#)





# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)



## Advancing Equity in Special Education Identification Webinar Recordings

This interdisciplinary webinar series focuses on foundational strategies and considerations for equitable special education evaluations. The four-part series explores system-wide practices that support the early and accurate identification of students with disabilities from historically underserved communities in culturally relevant ways.

We recommend these recordings for special service providers, leaders supporting evaluation and intervention processes, coordinators/directors, evaluation team members, intervention professionals, cultural liaisons, family-engagement specialists, and any other Colorado public educators involved in supporting students from diverse backgrounds.

Professionals can choose which sessions to watch, but we encourage **all** to view the "Improving System-wide Practices for Equitable Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Special Education Identification" session.

To obtain a certificate of attendance for relicensure, individuals can watch the video and pass the associated quiz. Below are the topics covered in the webinar series:

- ◆ [Multilingual Learner Processing Guide](#)
- ◆ [Multilingual Learner Family Interview Questions](#)
- ◆ [Improving System-wide Practices for Equitable Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Special Education Identification](#)
- ◆ [Strategies and Considerations for Intellectual Disability Identification](#)
- ◆ [Strategies and Considerations for Serious Emotional Disability](#)
- ◆ [Strategies and Considerations for Speech-Language Impairment](#)

Please share these recordings with your colleagues who may benefit from this valuable resource. Thank you for your dedication to supporting students from diverse backgrounds.

## Increasing EDI for Students with Disabilities

Belongingness occurs at the intersection of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Healthy educational systems seek to ensure all students, including those with disabilities, enjoy this experience. This website is designed to provide resources for school and district personnel to close opportunity gaps for youth with disabilities. Resources, training, opportunities to collaborate with others, and links to other sources of information regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion are available at the [CDE—Increasing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities website](#).

## Equity and Inclusion-Focused Leadership: Attitudes and Actions

A new resource from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance ([ECTA](#)) Center provides the steps Part B and Part C leaders take to identify and address barriers to inclusion and equity.

[Equity- and Inclusion-Focused Leadership: Attitudes and Actions](#) note that these leaders share five attitudes and five actions. These attitudes and actions help them prioritize equity and inclusion in concrete and impactful ways so that each and every child can meet their fullest potential.

"She can't get inside the building because of her wheelchair."

No. She can't get inside because the building is not accessible. The building has a barrier that does not let her in. The wheelchair is not the problem; the building's lack of access is the problem.

Words matter.

## CCB Youth Programs Rocked Over the Summer!



In June, Colorado Center for the Blind, in partnership with the National Science Foundation, hosted a one-week residential and day astronomy camp for Colorado high school aged students. Eight students collaborated to build several 3D printers used to produce three dimensional renderings of concepts found within our solar system and beyond. Camp attendees were able to better conceptualize the distance between planets and their proximity to the sun. In addition to an accessible introduction to astronomy, the students visited the Space Foundation Discovery Center in Colorado Springs where interactive/tactile exhibits provided a more engaging museum experience for our blind participants.

Also in June, CCB welcomed seven students for a seven-week Summer for Success residential program for blind teens. Program participants received instruction in the areas of Braille, assistive technology, cane travel, and home management with the overarching goal of increased independence. These seven students attended the National Federation of the Blind Convention in Orlando, FL. The convention provided invaluable educational and networking opportunities for young blind people looking to transition to post-secondary schooling and the workforce.

In July, CCB hosted an additional 10 teenagers from across the country and abroad in the four-week No Limits to Learning program. In both programs, eight outstanding blind role models served as residential counselors and instructors for our students. While learning Braille, accessible technology, cooking, cleaning, and cane travel skills, They also had the opportunity to go rock climbing, hiking, learn martial arts, visit the Fiske Planetarium on the CU-Boulder campus, collaborate with young engineering students to create accessible exhibits for a university project, and much more!

## College, Careers, and Connections—Presented by the CCB

**Date:** Thursday, September 26, 2024

**Time:** 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**Location:** Colorado Center for the Blind, 2233 W Shepperd Ave, Littleton, CO 80120

Join us for an inspiring College and Career Seminar! You will meet blind people employed in diverse occupations and learn how they handle all aspects of their jobs.

### What to Expect:

- Gain valuable insights from engaging speakers who excel in their respective fields.
- Participate in panels with industry professionals and hear about current trends & challenges in various careers.
- Explore a wide range of career opportunities at our interactive career fair.
- Connect and network with individuals in interest-based breakouts, including topics such as the Business Enterprise Program, Social Security benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation services, working remotely, and what local colleges and universities have to offer.

**Lunch will be provided to all attendees.** Please tell us about your dietary restrictions, if any, in your RSVP email.

### Who Should Attend:

- High school students 15 or older exploring college and career options.
- College students seeking guidance and advice for their future careers.
- Individuals of all ages interested in learning about various career paths.
- Teachers and professionals that work with the blind.

**Registration:** This event is free to attend, but reserving your spot is required.

**RSVP to Charles Bennett** at [Cbennett@cocenter.org](mailto:Cbennett@cocenter.org). For more information, call Charles at (303) 778-1130 ext. 228.

There are limited seats available, so secure your spot now!



## "Horse Sense" Event for Blind Children and Their Siblings!



**Date:** September 14, 2024

**Time:** 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

**Location:** Colorado Center for the Blind

**Address:** 2233 W. Shepperd Ave., Littleton, CO 80120

Do you love animals? Want to learn all about horses? Like to know how they work with our law enforcement officers?

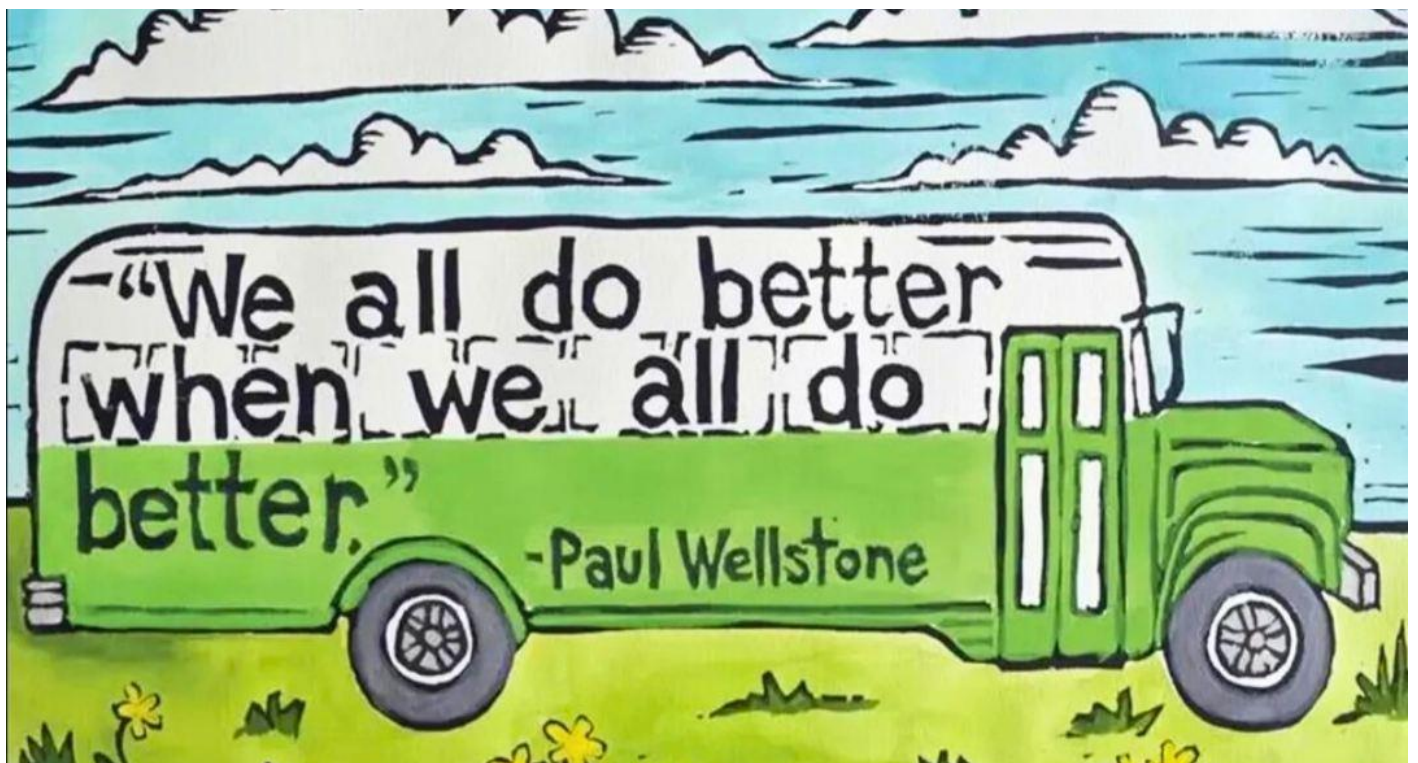
Join Colorado Center for the Blind and the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Mounted Unit for an exciting opportunity to get up close and personal with some friendly horses! Meet some of the mounted unit officers and enjoy light refreshments. This event is perfect for all ages!

Plus, Lt. Rich Anselmi has written two kid's books about horses with illustrations by one of the deputies – "Julie's Wish" and "The Happy Police Horse." Both books are available in Braille! So, you'll have the chance to read one of these fun stories to the horses!

We can't wait to see you there!



[Please RSVP for Horse Sense by September 6.](#)








# Calendar of Events

2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024

September 5	<b>Vision Coalition</b> —virtual Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
September 6	<b>CIMC First Friday Meetings</b> —virtual Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>
Sept 26-27	<b>Western Region Low Vision Evaluation Clinic</b> —Grant Junction Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
October 2-4	<b>APH Annual Meeting</b> – Louisville, KY Contact: <a href="http://www.APH.org">www.APH.org</a>
October 11	<b>Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic</b> —CSDB Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
October 15	<b>White Cane Day</b> —Celebrate by Raising a Little Cane!
October 18	<b>White Cane Day Celebration</b> —Acacia Park Contact: Jamie Lugo at <a href="mailto:jlugo@csdb.org">jlugo@csdb.org</a>
October 18	<b>CIMC Third Friday Meetings</b> —virtual Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>
October 23-25	<b>National Braille Association Professional Development Conference</b> —Colorado Springs For more information and to register <a href="#">visit NBA Professional Development site</a>
October 24-27	<b>NFB Conference of Colorado</b> —Park Meadows Marriott For more information and to register <a href="#">visit the NFBCO State Convention site</a>
October 26-29	<b>SOMA O&amp;M Conference</b> —Huntsville, AL For more information and to register <a href="#">visit the SOMA Conference site</a>
November 1	<b>CIMC First Friday Meetings</b> —virtual Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>
November 14-17	<b>ICEVI World Conference</b> —Ahmedabad, India
November 14-15	<b>Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic</b> —Fort Collins Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
November 11-13	<b>Dare to be Remarkable Conference</b> —Baltimore, MD Contact: Edward Bell at <a href="mailto:ebell@latech.edu">ebell@latech.edu</a>
November 30	<b>See the Future Fund Tools for Life Applications Due</b> <a href="#">Check out See the Future for application and details</a>
December 6	<b>CIMC First Friday Meetings</b> —virtual Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>
December 14	<b>CAER Wreaths Across America</b> – Fairmount Cemetery, Denver



# Calendar of Events

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

- January 4      **Louis Braille Birthday—#216**
- January 10    **CIMC Second Friday Meetings—virtual**  
                     Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- February 7    **Braille Challenge—Colorado Center for the Blind**  
                     Contact: CIMC staff at (719) 578-2196
- February 14   **CIMC Second Friday Meetings—virtual**  
                     Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- February 27   **Braille Challenge at CSDB from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**  
                     Contact: Jamie Lugo at [jlugo@cldb.org](mailto:jlugo@cldb.org)
- March 1        **See the Future Fund Tools for Life Applications Due**  
                     [Check out See the Future for application and details](#)
- March 7        **CIMC First Friday Meetings—virtual**  
                     Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- April 4         **CIMC First Friday Meetings—virtual**  
                     Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- April TBD      **Beeping Easter Egg Hunt at CSDB from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**  
                     Contact: Jamie Lugo at [jlugo@cldb.org](mailto:jlugo@cldb.org)
- May 2          **CIMC First Friday Meetings—virtual**  
                     Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- June 6         **CIMC First Friday Meetings—virtual**  
                     Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- June 22-28    **Deaf-Blind Awareness Week**
- July 8-13      **National Federation of the Blind – New Orleans, LA**  
                     For more information, check out the [NFB Convention site](#)
- Sept 23-24    **Western Regional Early Intervention Conference – Albuquerque, NM**  
                     For more information: <http://www.wreic.org/>
- October 15-17 **APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY**  
                     Contact: [www.APH.org](http://www.APH.org)
- October 7-9    **APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY**  
                     Contact: [www.APH.org](http://www.APH.org)
- November 5-8 **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference—Huntsville, AL**





# Orientation & Mobility

## SOMA O&M Conference—October 26-29, 2024

The planning team has HIGH ASPIRATIONS for this year's SOMA O&M conference in Huntsville, Alabama, home of the U.S. Space and Rocket Center Space Camp! It will be held October 26-29, 2024. There are more than 50 [presenters](#) doing 40 sessions, with an amazingly diverse selection of topics for O&Ms working with students of all ages - everything from motivating movement in children, to working with adults with CVI.

- 21 hours of ACVREP-approved program
- 40 sessions, most of them repeated to give you more choices and fewer conflicts

[Click here to check out the incredible program!](#)

### FIELD TRIPS!

You might need your Space Suit, too -- we have arranged reduced-priced tickets you can purchase to two exciting field trips to enjoy before the conference:

- **US Space and Rocket Center** and its internationally-known *Space Camp Program* is just 15 minutes from the hotel! For \$90 you can go to Space Camp where your group will receive astronaut training to complete a "space mission" and experience two space simulations.
- **Helen Keller's Birthplace**, Ivy Green, where you can see the well where she understood her first word. The tour and transportation from the hotel is \$35/person.



For conference registration and hotel information, check out [SOMAconference.org](https://SOMAconference.org)

### Help Your Child Become an Active Traveler

Are you the parent of a teen who is blind or low vision? Help your child embrace the freedom of independent travel even when driving isn't an option. Read our article and watch our recorded webinars for tips on empowering your teen to navigate the world confidently: [When Other Teens Are Learning to Drive and Your Child Isn't](#)

## 2024 Southwest Orientation & Mobility Conference

The Southwest Orientation & Mobility Conference is back... and this year is in person! This coming November we will be hosting our conference at the [Austin Marriott North](#) in Round Rock, TX. We can't wait for you to join us!!

Conference Dates:

- November 3rd: Pre-Conference (Optional)
- November 4th - 5th: Main Conference

Registration Fees:

- Professionals - \$175 (Early) & \$200 (Late)
- Family Members, Univ. Students, & Paraprofessionals - \$75 (Early) & \$100 (Late)

Late registration begins **October 1st**. Registration ends on **October 25th @ 5:00 PM Central!**

For more information about the conference and to register, please check out the [SWOMA Conference event page](#).

# Visual Impairment, including Blindness

Thank you to all of people who took time to discuss, craft, and comment on the updated eligibility criteria of Visual Impairment, Including Blindness. Thank you also to the Colorado State Board of Education for their careful view and constructive feedback on the draft version and the ultimate final version, which was 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:**

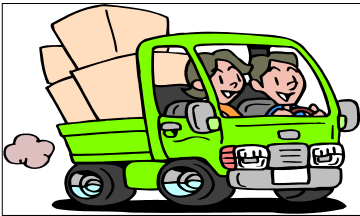
**2.08(11)(a)(i) Visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;**

**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!

### Browse APH ConnectCenter's Content on Transition:

NSITE and American Printing House for the Blind Connect Center bring you the [Job Seeker's Toolkit](#), an accessible, self-paced, free online training course. The purpose of The Job Seeker's Toolkit is to assist you in acquiring and build critical tools that will ultimately help conduct a successful job search. The Toolkit's five courses are structured into modules and activities that build on the content and exercises of the preceding course.

### Strategies to Improve Opportunities in Career and Technical Education for Students with Disabilities

The NACT: C's new resource, [Strategies to Improve Opportunities in Career and Technical Education](#), can help state-level personnel improve collaboration among special education, vocational rehabilitation, and career and technical education for students with disabilities.

### Transition Success: People with CVI

People with CVI have lots of options after secondary school. Some choose to go to college; others enter the workplace. Everyone's path is unique. At Perkins, we're here to support your family's journey by offering concrete advice and promoting self-advocacy. Here are some helpful tips to begin the planning process. Check it out [Transition: Success after secondary education for people with CVI](#) article.

### Transition Goals for College-Bound Students

For Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs), writing and reviewing IEP goals are an integral part of the job description – IEP goals drive every lesson! Academic IEP goals follow the general curriculum with attention to the specific tools and specially designed instruction tied to the needs that of a student with visual impairment / low vision.

Transition IEP goals should be considered and developed across the student's school career and especially in high school. What might be common transition needs that should be considered *and developed in high school*? Check out the [Transition goals for a college-bound high school student with blindness or low vision](#) article and an associated videos.

Engineers make bridges.  
Artists make paintings.  
Scientists make rockets.  
But teachers make them all.



# 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.



## 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 he or she has an opportunity to learn about being a TVI and/or an O&M Specialist. This may be a para-educator, 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 for TVI/O&M Specialist** in Cherry Creek School District. Please contact Amy Barr at [abarr2@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:abarr2@cherrycreekschools.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)
- ◆ **.2 FTE for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Poudre School District. For more information, please contact Amy Villard at [avillard@psdschools.org](mailto:avillard@psdschools.org)

### Southern Region

- ◆ **.4 FTE TVI Position**—Colorado Springs District 11. For more information, please contact Nancy Melo Maresh at [nancy.mereshmelo@d11.org](mailto:nancy.mereshmelo@d11.org) or (719) 520-2158.
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI Position** at CSDB. Please contact Jamie Lugo for more information at [jlugo@csdb.org](mailto:jlugo@csdb.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist** for CSDB Outreach. Please contact Ashley Renslow at [arenslow@csdb.org](mailto:arenslow@csdb.org)



# Jobs

**IMPORTANT!**  
**We have JOB OPENINGS!!**

## 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).

**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)



I don't understand why people say  
what if teachers had superpowers...

What do you mean... what if?



## New Faces and New Places

- ◆ **Aleah Green** is on board as a new TVI and COMS with Jefferson County School District. She was raised in Thailand and moved to the United States in 2014. She holds a bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Thailand and a Master's degree in Special Education/Visual Impairment with an endorsement of Orientation & Mobility from the University of Northern Colorado. Her career began as an R&D chemist, working for five years in Japan and Thailand. After relocating to the U.S., she transitioned into special education. For the past nine years, Aleah worked as a paraeducator at the Maryland School for the Blind and as an intervener at Fletcher Miller School in Jefferson County School District. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, hiking, gardening, and exploring new activities. Aleah shares that she is very excited to join the Jeffco Vision team and be a part of this amazing community!
- ◆ **Amber Korban** is the new Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments with the Thompson School District. In this role, she serves students Pre K through 21 years old. Amber is enrolled in the graduate program at the University of Colorado for a M.A. in Special Education: Teacher for the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Endorsement. She has a B.A. from UNC in Sociology. She is the mother to three awesome children and they enjoy the beautiful outdoors as much as they can. Amber just became an USH Ambassador. An [USH Ambassador](#) is a trained volunteer with a direct connection to Usher syndrome. Ambassadors serve as the local point of contact for the Usher Syndrome Coalition, providing information and resources, connecting with individuals and organizations in their state, representing the Usher Syndrome Coalition at community activities.
- ◆ **Chris Bates** been a social studies teacher for many years, teaching at every level from middle school to college. Chris shares that last year, he was extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to join the CSDB family where he teaches middle and high school social studies at the School for the Blind. Chris had limited experience with the Blind/Visually impaired Community and the staff and students have been wonderful! Chris is starting his second year at CSDB and is newly enrolled in the Master's TVI Program with the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. He is excited to gain this new knowledge and bring it back to his classroom. In his free time, he enjoys hiking, and spending time with his two dogs.
- ◆ **Covi Rodriguez** is working full time in Adams 12 School District. She continues to provide home visit support to the Anchor Center for Blind Children.
- ◆ **Jaclyn Tyrcha** has accepted the role of the Director of Outreach and will begin at CSDB on September 3. Jaclyn is a former CSDB student. Her experience includes 12 years in the education field in a variety of roles in both Deaf School and public-school settings, Early Education, as well as recent experience in the corporate sector.
- ◆ **Jenny Campbell** is studying to be a TVI with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Jenny has been a special education teacher for over 20 years. While earning her Bachelor's in Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts with Elementary Licensure at the University of Northern Colorado, Jenny began working in therapeutic recreation. This sparked an interest in her, and she returned to school for her endorsement in special education. Jenny has worked as a mild to moderate and a center-based teacher. Jenny even spent some time as the director of an adult day program focusing on individuals with complex communication needs. Jenny spent a few years as a full-time foster parent and part-time online teacher tutoring with VIPkid, iTutor, and Prodigy Tutoring and her own company (Soup Educational Services). During those precious years, Jenny participated from a parent's lens as her visually impaired son attended Anchor Center for Blind Children and the Littleton Public Schools. Jenny finished her Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction at Western Governors University. Jenny is excited to integrate her parent's perspective and special education background into her new role. In her free time Jenny loves camping and going on adventures with her boys.
- ◆ **Jon Fisher** is currently a Transition Teacher for the Bridges to Life Program at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind. He has been an educator, mostly in Music, since graduation from University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in 2009. He has also performed other jobs, both administrative and secretarial. Jon notes he is a lifelong learner and is currently enrolled to begin a master's program in special education, becoming a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments. His hobbies include music, playing 15 musical instruments, movies, trivia and video games.





## New Faces and New Places

- ◆ **Julie Harrison** is in a new role at CSDB as the Bridges to Life Coordinator! Julie has dedicated 22 years to the CSDB as a music educator and music therapist. Her tenure at CSDB has included teaching in both the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind, where, in addition to music and drama classes, she has instructed classes in the Expanded Core Curriculum and Life Skills. Julie's academic background features a Bachelor's degree in Music Education and a Master's in Music Therapy from Florida State University. In 2023, she earned a Master's in Special Education with a focus on teaching students who are blind or have low vision from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Recently, she completed intensive Orientation and Mobility summer training in preparation for an endorsement.
- ◆ **Laura Ruben** is a new TVI with District 6 in Greeley, Colorado. She moved to Colorado in February 2024 for a change for her family. She has worked in many different areas between the community and school districts in mental health services and Special Education. When given the opportunity to work for District 6, Laura was excited to be part of a team to make a difference in Special Education. Laura shares that she fell in love with the department. Laura is now enrolled at University of Northern Colorado for a Master's in Special Education: Visual Impairment. Laura is excited to meet other teachers, learn different ways to teach, and be able to make a difference one day at a time.. We are a community and it takes a community to make a difference for the children.
- ◆ **Margi Moldane** is a Colorado native with 15 years in education. She started as a general education teacher in Denver Public Schools and then taught linguistically diverse students in metro districts. After earning a degree in early childhood special education, Margi completed the TVI program at UNC. She now works part-time at both the Anchor Center for Blind Children for Blind Children and Denver Public Schools. When she is not working, you'll find her in the mountains trying to keep up with her husband, two sons, and their dog.
- ◆ **Michelle Boyer** is the new preschool teacher of student with visual impairments at CSDB. She is starting her 11th year working with blind/low vision students, it will be her 10<sup>th</sup> year as a TVI. Michelle began her teaching journey as a paraeducator in a preschool for blind/low vision children in Kansas City, MO in 2014. She quickly realized that she loved working with this population and wanted to lead her own classroom. In Summer of 2015, Michelle started her master's program and began teaching her own room fall of 2015. In Fall 2020, she transitioned into a K-12 traveling TVI position with a district in Kansas City, MO. Michelle and her family moved to Colorado Springs from Kansas City, MO this July, so that she could join CSDB. She shares that they are very happy to be in Colorado. Motherhood is what keeps Michelle busy outside of work. Additionally, she enjoys various types of crafts, crochet, and baking
- ◆ **Natalie Hale** shares she is thrilled to have the opportunity to join the Special Education Department in District 49 as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments. She earned her Master of Education degree through Regis University and a Reading Teacher endorsement through UCCS. She has worked in District 49, in both public and charter schools, for the last sixteen years, teaching in grades 1-4. Natalie is excited for the transition to the District 49 Special Education Department and is eager to make an impact on the children we teach every day. While not at work, Natalie loves to read, take long walks, and spend time with family and friends. She has three amazing daughters who keep her quite busy as well!
- ◆ **Taiyabah Naeem** is the new Curriculum & Instruction & Assessment Director with CSDB. She has worked for several years as a teacher, project manager, researcher, and education leader. She has a wealth of teaching experience and developing policies for school organizations. races, ethnicities, and language backgrounds. Washington University. Her career is founded on the pedagogies of equitable leadership, differentiated instruction, inclusiveness, and student and family-centered learning. Taiyabah is the mother of two young boys (CODAs).

**Welcome to our new staff and happy new role to personnel who are in new positions.**

**We are grateful for and to you!**





# colorado connections

## Braille Competency News



- ◆ Congratulations to **Brittany Hodgson** from Eagle School District, **Elizabeth Webb**, virtual / hybrid TVI serving several CO administrative units, and **Sumer Bellinder** of Pueblo 60 School District for earning their initial CDE Braille Competency Renewal Certificates!
- ◆ Also so pleased to share people working over the summer on their braille renewal hours: **Gena Francouer Anderson**, **Sasmita Bisoi**, and **Aryn McNicol**. Thanks to proctors **Nancy Cozart**, **Chris Maynard**, **Brenda Shepard**, and **Julie Wetzstein** for summer proctoring and mentor work.

## Professional Development

- ◆ Thanks to presenter Chris Montgomery for his two day presentation on June 24-25 at the 2024 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Supports Needs. TVIs in attendance included: **Tanni Anthony**, **Sally Burch**, **Jennifer Campbell**, **Nancy Cozart**, **Barb Galgano**, **Karin Hensel**, **Donna Keale**, **Amber Rundle Kahn**, **Julie King**, **Paula Landry**, **Jeannie Lei**, **Kaitlin Lombardi**, **Bryan Moles**, **Jim Olson**, **Wendy Schlageter**, **Alyshia Shelton**, **Wendy Stoltman**, **Maggie Tutt**, and **Elizabeth Webb**, and **Chloann Woolley**.

## Personnel

- ◆ **Jamie Lugo**, School for the Blind Principal, and her son traveled to Los Angeles to work at the National Braille Challenge finals. Finalists and their families, from across the globe; United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia competed in this special day, Very cool!
- ◆ Our huge thanks to the CIMC staff of **Jim Olson**, **Maddie Durossette**, and **Danielle Steele** for EVERYTHING they did this summer to bring in new equipment, get things labels, ordering braille books, updating registration databases, and sending books and materials. If you have not taken time to thank them for their year-round work, that would be a good thing to do!
- ◆ **Julie Deen** is making history! Congratulations to her on her 25<sup>th</sup> year as the Executive Directors of the Colorado Center for the Blind. Also, for attending the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii convention as a national NFB representative.
- ◆ We are so proud of **Jessica Meisel** who was spotlighted for her article in the Teacher Resource Section of the Council for Exceptional Children's Special Education New Today. *"Touch is a lifeline for learners with visual, hearing, and multiple disabilities, offering a way to connect with their world"*. We're thrilled to share this support from our exceptional teacher resource repository, thanks to our generous contributor, Jessica Meisel, that reveals the profound impact of hand-under-hand guidance and co-active movement. These techniques empower educators to nurture students' growth and confidence through touch, making every day learning more accessible and meaningful."
- ◆ Colorado was represented at the National AER Conference, held in Charlotte, NC in July. Thanks to those who presented and attended!!

## Congratulations!

- ◆ "Happy Baby!!" to **Whitney** and **Chris Kinney** on the birth of their new baby boy, Slone, on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. So happy for you all!

# Who Ya Gonna Email / Call/ Text?

## SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025

**A Shared Vision: Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment** at [www.ASharedVision.org](http://www.ASharedVision.org)

- For referrals – ([upreferrals@ASharedVision.org](mailto:upreferrals@ASharedVision.org) (general mailbox)

**Anchor Center for Blind Children** at <https://anchorcenter.org/>

- For referrals or information on services / CVI Initiative contact (303) 337-9732

**Tanni Anthony** at (303) 866-6681 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

- CDE Braille Competency Testing /Braille Certification Renewal
- CDE Initiatives specific to State Assessments, Standards, READ Act, School Readiness Act, etc.
- CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar
- CDE State Conference on BVI
- CDE TVI / O&M and Braillist Specialist listservs
- CDE web pages on Blindness/Low Vision, Deaf-Blindness, and Orientation & Mobility
- Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision & Hearing Loss Project
- Deaf-Blind Webinar Series
- Eligibility of Learners with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness or Deaf-Blindness
- IEPs, Learning Media Assessments and LMA Plans, specially designed instruction
- Job Clearinghouse – TVI and O&M Specialist positions within Colorado
- *Keeping in Touch (KIT)* newsletter
- Licensure for TVIs and O&M Specialists
- NIMAS and NIMAC procedures within Colorado
- Policy / Guidance documents pertaining to learners with BVI and/or deaf-blindness
- READ Act and guidance specific for learners with blind/visually impairment or deafblindness
- Sound Bites (monthly virtual trainings)
- Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs
- Vision Coalition (CDE State BVI Advisory)



**Kevin Brouard** at (719) 866-3019 or [kbrouard@usaba.org](mailto:kbrouard@usaba.org)

- USABA Membership and Outreach Coordinator

**Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC)** at (719) 578-2196

- Braille Challenge – Metro Contest
- CIMC webpage: <https://csdb.colorado.gov/outreach/cimc-colorado-instructional-materials-center>  
Please encrypt all emails containing personally identifiable student information (PII) you send to the following email addresses:
- [cimcaphorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcaphorders@csdb.org) for “APH Order Form” & “CIMC Professional Lending Library” submissions and questions
- [cimcbookorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcbookorders@csdb.org)—braille and large print “Book Order Form” submissions, sourcing inquiries, and questions

- [cimcBrailierTechSoftware@csdb.org](mailto:cimcBrailierTechSoftware@csdb.org)— “Brailier-Tech-Software Order Form,” “Brailier Repair Form” and questions
- [cimcregistrations@csdb.org](mailto:cimcregistrations@csdb.org)—submissions and questions related to the “Parent Consent Form,” “Registration Form,” and “Exit Form”
- (719) 578-2195 Jim Olson (Coordinator) [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- (719) 578-2196 CIMC pilot number (rings all CIMC computer-based phones simultaneously, no voicemail)
- (719) 578-2197 – (vacant position) , (braille transcriber, questions related to braille book orders)
- (719) 578-2198 – Danielle Steele, [dsteeler@csdb.org](mailto:dsteeler@csdb.org) (shipping & receiving related questions, APH instructional materials orders)
- (719) 578-2199 - Maddee Durossette, [mdurossette@csdb.org](mailto:mdurossette@csdb.org) (state / APH registrations, database reports, federal quota census, & related questions)
- Mailing Address: CIMC, 1015 East High Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3559

**Paula Conroy** at (970) 351-1651 or [paula.conroy@unco.edu](mailto:paula.conroy@unco.edu)

- UNC Teacher Training Program on Visual Impairment / O&M Training Program
- UNC representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Nancy Cozart** at (303) 734-3090 or [nkcozart28@gmail.com](mailto:nkcozart28@gmail.com)

- CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor
- Metro TVI / O&M Specialist Region representative at Vision Coalition meetings
- Metro TVI / O&M Specialist Regional Meetings

**Roberta Curtis** at (720) 456-2601 or [curtis\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:curtis_r@cde.state.co.us)

- Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Statewide Coordinator
- Metro Low Vision Evaluation Site Coordinator
- Administrator III for Tanni’s State BVI and DB Work



**Chaz Davis** (303) 778-1130 or [cdavis@cocenter.org](mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org)

- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs
- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Julie Deden** at (303) 778-1130 or [jdeden@cocenter.org](mailto:jdeden@cocenter.org)

- Colorado Center for the Blind Director

**Kathy Emter** at (719) 578-2177 or [kemter@csdb.org](mailto:kemter@csdb.org)

- CSDB Director of Special Education
- CSDB and Enrollment Questions

**Christine Holmberg** at (303) 506-3859 or [christine@foresightskiguide.org](mailto:christine@foresightskiguide.org)

- Foresight Ski Guides

**Gina Herrera** at (303)253-0451 or [herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)

- Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project
- Free Technical Assistance for Learners with Deaf-Blindness, Their Families, and Service Providers
- Intervener Training and Support (with Jessica Meisel)

**Abby Horner** at (970) 348-1920 or [ahorner2@greeleyschools.org](mailto:ahorner2@greeleyschools.org)

- Northern Region TVI / O&M Specialist Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Donna Keale** at (719) 330-7387 or [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)

- CSDB BVI Outreach Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Paula Landry** at (303)-335-6554 or [plandry@ASharedVision.org](mailto:plandry@ASharedVision.org)

- A Shared Vision: Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment
- A Shared Vision Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Jeannie Lei** at (720) 810-1363 or [jlei@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org)

- Metro TVI / O &M Specialist Regional Meetings

**Jamie Lugo** at (719) 578-2108 or [jlugo@csdb.org](mailto:jlugo@csdb.org)

- Braille Challenge – CSDB Regional Contest
- CSDB Adams’ School for the Blind Principal
- CSDB School for the Blind representative at Vision Coalition Meetings

**Christine Maynard** at (719) 229-4981 or [maynard\\_c@cde.state.co.us](mailto:maynard_c@cde.state.co.us)

- Southern Region CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

**Aryn McNichol** at (303) 702-8354 or [mcnichol\\_aryn@svvsd.org](mailto:mcnichol_aryn@svvsd.org)

- Northern TVI / O&M Specialist Regional Meetings

**Tammy Miller** at (303)-377-9732 or [tmiller@anchorcenter.org](mailto:tmiller@anchorcenter.org)

- Anchor Center for Blind Children Director of Children’s Programs and Services Program Coordinator
- Anchor Center for Blind Children representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Jim Olson** at (719) 578-2195 or [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

- CIMC webpage: [www.csdb.colorado.gov](http://www.csdb.colorado.gov). Click on the “Outreach” tab, and choose “CIMC” from the drop-down menu.
- Authorized NIMAS file user for Colorado
- CIMC braille & large print book orders and APH loan materials
- CIMC First Friday Meetings
- CIMC Professional Lending Library
- CIMC Representative at Vision Coalition meetings
- CIMC year-round registration of Colorado students who are blind/visually impaired
- Federal Quota Census registration (first Monday in January annually)
- Ex Officio Trustee for the Colorado Department of Education Federal Quota Accounts
- Southern Region TVI-DVR Specialist Meetings
- School district orders of prescribed low-vision clinic devices

**Michele Reed** at (720) 883-7154 or [michele.reed@state.co.us](mailto:michele.reed@state.co.us)

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services Representative at Vision Coalition meetings



**Erin Schroeder** at (970) 254-5414 or [Erin.schroeder@d51schools.org](mailto:Erin.schroeder@d51schools.org)

- Western Slope TVI / O&M Specialist Representative at Vision Coalition meetings
- Western Slope TVI / O &M Specialist Regional Meetings

**Brenda Shepard** at (303) 995-7913 or [shepard\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:shepard_b@cde.state.co.us)

- CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

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- Site Coordinator for Western Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

**Tera Spangler** at (719) 578-2102 or [tspangler@csdb.org](mailto:tspangler@csdb.org)

- CSDB Superintendent

**Lorrie Spoering** at (303) 727-9277 or [Spoering\\_l@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Spoering_l@cde.state.co.us)

- Talking Book Library Outreach Librarian

**Nicolle Steffen** at (303) 727-9277 or [Steffen\\_n@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Steffen_n@cde.state.co.us)

- Colorado Talking Book Library Director

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- Director of CSDB Outreach (BVI / DHH) Programs, Early Intervention, Preschool

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- Site Coordinator for Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

**Kim Wardlow** at (303) 786-7777 x 101 or [www.aftersight.org](http://www.aftersight.org)

- Aftersight (formerly) Audio Information Network of Colorado

**Jacky Weatherup** at (719) 578-2102 or [jweathrup@csdb.org](mailto:jweathrup@csdb.org)

- Executive Assistant to the CSDB Superintendent and the CSDB Board of Trustees

**Julie Wetzstein** at (303) 216-6124 or [Wetzstein\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Wetzstein_j@cde.state.co.us)

- CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

**Chloann Woolley** at (719) 494-6337 or [cwoolley@upboces.org](mailto:cwoolley@upboces.org)

- Southern Region TVI / O&M Specialist and CAER Representative at Vision Coalition meetings
- CAER President







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