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Quarterly Newsletter

September 2026



Deafblind Library Resources

Deafblind Eligibility

Deafblind FAQs

Make A Referral

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
- Nelson Mandela

Learn More About AKDBP & Deafblindness

Letter from the Editor

Dear Families, Educators, and School Administrators,

Welcome back to a brand-new school year! Whether you are greeting the fall with excitement, a little nervousness, or simply a deep breath — know that you are not alone. The Alaska Deafblind Project walks alongside you every step of the way, and we are ready for what this year will bring.

For the students we serve together — children and young adults who experience the world through the unique combination of hearing and vision loss — each school year is a remarkable journey of discovery. Every new skill learned, every connection made, every moment of communication unlocked is a testament to the dedication of the families and educators who show up for them day after day.



"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
- Nelson Mandela

These words remind us why the work we do together matters so deeply. For students who experience deafblindness, access to a quality, individualized education is not simply an opportunity — it is a lifeline. It opens doors to communication, to independence, to connection, and to a future shaped by their own possibilities. The dedication each of you bring to that mission, whether you are a parent advocating at an IEP table or a teacher learning a new tactile strategy, is nothing short of world changing.

Please join me in congratulating team member Abby Steer on completing her master's degree in deafblind education from the University of Utah! This is no small achievement, deafblind education demands a rare depth of knowledge and skill, and Abby's dedication to expanding her expertise reflects a real commitment to the students and families in Alaska. We're proud to have her on our team and excited for the impact this new credential will bring to her work. Congratulations, Abby well deserved! Abby and I will continue our work through the Alaska Deafblind Project serving students who experience deafblindness throughout the state.

This year, the Alaska Deafblind Project remains fully committed to supporting your students and your schools. We look forward to connecting with each of you in the months ahead. Please don't hesitate to reach out — no question is too small, and no community is too remote. Here's to a meaningful and milestone-filled year for every student we serve.

Angel Black, M.S.Ed., TSVI, COMS

Project Director, The Alaska Deafblind Project | Newsletter Editor

Interveners

By Angel Black, M.S.Ed., TSVI, COMS

To help prepare for our October 2026 Webinar on Interveners, I thought I might share some important information. "What is an "Intervener"? The term Intervener refers to a specifically trained individual who provides one-on-one support to a deafblind child or student in various settings like home, school, and the community. Intervening for deafblind students involves facilitating access to visual and auditory information connecting them to the world around them.

While the concept of personalized support for deafblind individuals is not a new one, what sets it apart now is the formal use of the title "intervener" for someone with specialized training in deafblindness skills, consistently working with one child or student.

Intervener services are provided by an individual, typically a paraeducator, who has received specialized training in deafblindness and the process of



Seeing the Whole Child: Early Identification of Deafblindness By Angel Black M.S.Ed., TSVI, COMS

Imagine a toddler who seems withdrawn, slow to respond, and difficult to engage. Well-meaning adults might chalk it up to temperament or developmental variation. But for some children, what looks like quiet or inattentiveness is something far more significant:

intervention. An intervener provides consistent one-to-one support to a student who is deafblind (ages 3 through 22) throughout the instructional day.

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a combined loss of vision and hearing that is quietly shaping — and limiting — every interaction with the world around them.

These children have deafblindness. And the earlier we identify them, the better their outcomes can be.

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The Alaska Deafblind Project (AKDBP)

By Angel Black M.S.Ed., TSVI, COMS

THE ALASKA DEAFBLIND PROJECT — FAMILY and EDUCATOR RESOURCE

- Support for Students with Dual Sensory Loss
- A guide for parents, educators, and school administrators across Alaska

Did you know there is a federally funded program dedicated to supporting Alaskan children with combined hearing and vision loss, and their families and schools? The Alaska Deafblind Project offers specialized expertise and hands-on assistance, free of charge, to families and teams working with deafblind students.

Funded by the federal government. Here for Alaska. The Alaska Deafblind Project is part of the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) and is funded directly through the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Every state has a project like this — and ours exists to make sure that children and young adults across Alaska with deafblindness get the specialized support they need, wherever they live.

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Upcoming Events

Communication Mode Option: Listening and Spoken Language Webinar

Presented by Dr. Dana Kan

September 17, 2026 - *Registration now open!*

Communication Mode Option: American Sign Language and Education Philosophy of Bilingual-Bicultural Education Webinar

Presented by Dr. Todd Czubek

November 11, 2026 - *Registration opening soon!*

Importance of Interveners Webinar

Presented by Beth Kennedy

January 2027 - *Registration opening soon!*

Events Calendar



Special Education Service Agency | 2600 Denali St. Suite 200 | Anchorage, AK 99503 US