



**Early Intervention Services
for
Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children
with a
Combined Vision-Hearing Loss**

The Ohio Center for Deafblind Education (OCDBE) is a statewide project designed to provide technical assistance, training, distance education, and networking for families and individuals, birth through age 21, who have a combined vision and hearing loss (aka deafblindness).

What does deafblindness mean?

Deafblindness is any degree of a combined vision-hearing loss that may be caused by prematurity, a syndrome or chromosomal disorder, or unknown reasons.

How is a child assessed to determine if he/she has a vision and/or hearing loss?

At birth an infant is administered an infant hearing assessment to determine if the infant has a hearing loss. An audiologist may also evaluate the hearing of toddlers and young children.

Vision loss may be determined by medical professionals at birth however, because vision is developmental, vision loss may not be determined at birth and may require a vision assessment by a medical professional for toddlers and young children.

What can a parent do if a child is suspected of having a vision and/or hearing loss.

If a parent or early intervention provider suspects an infant, toddler, or young child has a vision and/or hearing loss, OCDBE offers several resources to help parents informally assess a child's vision and hearing. Information from the resources can assist parents in determining if a child needs a formal vision and/or hearing assessment completed by qualified professionals.

The following OCDBE resources, found on the OCDBE website (www.ohiodeafblind.com), can assist parents in assessing vision and hearing and determine if an evaluation is needed by a medical professional.

1. *Early Intervention Decision Tree*
2. *Early Intervention Guidance Document; Identification and Program Planning for Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children with visual and/or hearing impairment.*
3. *Hearing Loss Assessment and Vision Impairment Assessment,*
4. *Parents Guide to the Identification of Children with Deafblindness*

If an infant, toddler, or young child has a combined vision-hearing loss, what resources are available?

If a child has a developmental delay in any area, including vision and hearing, each county has a Help Me Grow (HMG) program offered by the Ohio Department of Health. HMG assists parents in addressing the needs of an infant, toddler, or young child. Referrals may be made to Help Me Grow at <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/help-me-grow/help-me-grow>

Ohio Early Intervention (<https://ohioearlyintervention.org>), a statewide early intervention program located in every Ohio county, provides coordinated services to parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays.

What services are available through the Ohio Center for Deafblind Education?

- The Ohio Center for Deafblind Education provides a variety of services for children identified with a combined vision-hearing loss who are registered on the Ohio Deafblind Census. Services include:
- Professional learning and training opportunities
- Information about organizations and resources related to vision, hearing, and combined vision-hearing loss
- Information about Early Childhood Services, School-age Services, Literacy, Transition, Interveners and more...
- Consultation Services for parents, families, educators, related services, and early intervention providers
- Ohio Deafblind Census
- Parent Retreat
- Scholarships to support parent attendance at conferences

What are Consultation Services?

The Ohio Center for Deafblind Education's Consultation Services, part of the Deafblind Technical Assistance Program (DBTAP), provides no-cost consultation services for children and youth, birth to 3 years and school-age children (3-21 years) with a combined vision-hearing loss who are registered on the Ohio Deafblind Census. Consultation services, provided in the home or early intervention setting, include:

- Interviewing parents and school personnel
- Observing students with combined hearing-vision loss at school or at home;
- Developing and providing a consultation report related to observations and recommendations;
- Following-up with parents and educators regarding implementation of the recommendations made in the consultation report.

What is the Ohio Deafblind Census?

The Ohio Deafblind Census, required by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, is a part of the National Child Count of children, ages birth through 21, who have a combined vision-hearing loss (deafblindness). Annually, OCDBE is responsible for identifying children throughout Ohio with a combined vision-hearing loss (aka deafblindness). Parental consent is not required to register a child and registration by educators or agency personnel does not violate FERPA, as outlined in Reg. 99.31(a).

How does a parent or Early Intervention Provider register an infant, toddler, or young child on the Ohio Deafblind Census?

To register a child on the Ohio Deafblind Census for the first time:

Step 1: Go to the OCDBE home page at www.ohiodeafblind.com. On the menu at the top of the home page, click on the **Deafblind Census** tab; then click on **Register a Child** or click on **Register/ Update a Child** on the home page.

Step 2: Enter the child's last name and birthdate and click on **Click Here to Begin** to enter information into the record.

Step 3: Upon completion, click on **Review** or **Cancel**.

Step 4: After reviewing the record, click on **Submit**. The record is submitted to OCDBE for review. If eligible, the child is registered on the Ohio Deafblind Census.

For further information about the Ohio Center for Deafblind Education and how to register for the Ohio Deafblind Census, contact us at www.ohiodeafblind.com.