

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE DEAF-BLIND CENSUS

Enclosed are the instructions for completing the Deaf-Blind Census Report that must be submitted by all programs serving children and youth with deaf-blindness. Reporting of this data is required under the Federal Program for "Services for Children with Deaf-Blindness." Please take your time to review the instructions which are detailed. Also included is a section on "Frequently Asked Questions" which may be helpful.

Deaf-Blindness means "those students between the ages of birth and 22 years old who have both an auditory and visual impairment, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational difficulties that he/she cannot properly be accommodated in special education programs solely for the deaf or blind child."

This does not mean that the child must be legally blind or have a specific decibel loss. It may also include those students who have difficulty with central auditory and/or visual processing. However, they must have a deficit in both vision and hearing. In many cases these children may be reported as severely intellectually disabled or multidisabled. Still include them on this report since it is to your advantage to identify these students. Additional benefits are provided to the school system, student, teacher, family, and others serving these children upon completion and verification of this census information. These benefits may be in the form of technical assistance, resources, and training. No direct funds are allocated to programs by this federal grant. We thank those of you who responded last year and took advantage of the resources.

If you have no students matching this description please fill out the "No Students" document. If you have students fitting the criteria, complete the "*Census Summary Form.*" Instructions are included so that you can print them out while you fill in the blanks on the Excel sheet. You may also enter the data on the Excel sheet and then print it out. Your data should reflect those students identified on or before December 1, 2008. In addition, you are also required to complete a *Student Information Form* on each student submitted with your census update. This form is also included and can be duplicated as needed. **Please be sure the information is accurate and legible.**

Your immediate response in fulfilling this request is greatly appreciated. The final report is due in our office by Friday, February 23, 2009. The project staff will then begin making follow-up contacts starting on February 27, to offer additional assistance, if your information has not been received. If you have any additional questions please feel free to contact Chris Jones at (919) 807-3991 or cjones@dpi.state.nc.us.

NOTE: THIS REPORT IS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF-BLIND AND SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THE LEGALLY BLIND REGISTRATION WHICH IS USED FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE. THESE ARE TWO SEPARATE REPORTS AND MUST BE SUBMITTED INDIVIDUALLY.

2009 Deaf-Blind Census Report Answers to Our Most Frequently Asked Questions

In an effort to make the completion of this year's census of individuals with combined hearing and vision impairments as clear as possible, you may find the following questions and answers helpful as you complete your form.

1. **What is the date for the deaf-blind headcount?** The deaf-blind headcount is conducted annually. Data should be reported for those individuals who qualify for services on December 1, 2008 and submitted to DPI by February 23, 2009.
2. **What is meant by the term "deaf-blind"?** A functional definition of deaf-blindness is: "If an individual has combined hearing and vision problems that are significant enough to require considerations (such as specialized adaptations, modifications, and strategies) when presenting information or interacting with the child, the child is eligible to be included on the census and receive services from our project. This also includes students who may have a central processing disorder in vision and/or hearing. The official federal definitions are included in the instructions.
3. **What is the census of children who are deaf-blind?** Our State Project for Deaf-Blind Services conducts an annual count of all children from birth through 21 who have both hearing and vision problems. The information on the census is confidential and only specific data is submitted to the federal government.
4. **Why is the census important?** The census is important for many reasons. Funding for specialized outreach services is dependent on having accurate information about how many infants, children and youth have both vision and hearing impairments. The census data is one factor used to determine the amount of federal funds allocated to North Carolina. It also enables our State Deaf-Blind Project to coordinate and provide additional services.
5. **When is the final census report due?** The completed forms should be received by DPI no later than February 23, 2009. The project staff will then begin making follow-up contacts starting on February 27, if your information is not received or incomplete.
6. **How will we benefit from providing this information?** These funds are used to provide technical assistance, resources, and training to individuals serving persons who are deaf-blind. The families, teachers and others working with this population will be entitled to take advantage of these opportunities and may be sponsored to attend a number of local, state or national conferences. Direct on-site technical assistance and additional resources are also available to teachers and families.
7. **Can a child be listed other than "deaf-blind" on the IEP and still be eligible under this project?** Yes. Many students are listed as multihandicapped or severe/profound and not deaf-blind on the IEP. As long as the child has both a vision and hearing problem and meets the criteria, they can be counted as "deaf-blind" and included on the census. However, it is best practice to list the child as "deaf-blind" on the IEP.
8. **What if the hearing and/or vision problems are cortical in nature?** Children with sensory impairments that are cortical in nature, such as cortical visual impairment and/or central auditory processing disorder (CAPD), should be placed on the census. These students usually require adaptations and modifications to their educational program. In addition, the hearing and vision problems must be considered when developing effective, communication programs for these individuals.

9. **Does including a child on the census obligate the school program to provide services such as vision, hearing, orientation & mobility, etc.?** No. Individualized needs and services are determined by the family and educators through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) process.
10. **What if my system does not currently have any students who are considered deaf-blind at this time?** Please return the data sheet indicating you have no students at this time. This will enable us to maintain data on those systems that have responded and allow us to cross-reference data.
11. **What if I don't have all the information requested on the census form for a particular student?** Provide as much information as possible and feel free to call our office for assistance. The most important information is the date of birth and documentation of the vision and hearing problem. The project staff will follow-up on any missing information.
12. **If we have ophthalmological exam data and audiological exam data, do we need functional assessment data as well?** Include both vision/hearing and functional assessment dates if they were performed. You **must** have data in both vision and hearing to verify the child has a loss in both areas.
13. **Is it okay to have Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) indicated and no primary classification of hearing impairment indicated?** Yes, if appropriate to individual hearing impairment. Also, in some instances it may be appropriate to have a primary classification of hearing impairment and CAPD marked.
14. **Can I indicate more than one race/ethnicity code for a particular individual?** No. Currently only one race/ethnicity code is allowed to be indicated.
15. **What is the date for the deaf-blind child census?** The deaf-blind child census is conducted annually, on December 1. Data should reflect those individuals who qualified as deaf-blind on December 1, 2008.
16. **May I add a student to the state deaf-blind census who was only recently identified?** Yes. However, the student should not be included on this report if not identified prior to December 1, 2008. Contact Chris Jones at 919-807-3991 or email: cjones@dpi.state.nc.us for further instructions.
17. **Where do I send the forms when completed?** You can mail the forms to:

Chris Jones, Coordinator
NC Deaf-Blind Project
Exceptional Children Division
NC Department of Public Instruction
6356 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6356

Or FAX to: 919-807-3243
18. **Who can I contact to answer my questions?** Chris Jones at 919/807-3991 or fax: 919/807-4045 or you may use e-mail: cjones@dpi.state.nc.us .