



DB STAR

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Michigan Services for
Children & Young Adults
Who Are DeafBlind

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From the Director's Desk

By Beth Kennedy

Through the process of talking to people to update census information, it has come to our attention that people across the State may not truly understand the role DB Central plays/can play for children/young adults who are DeafBlind, families, and the people who support them. We have devoted this issue of the DB Star to describing project services. If you have any questions, or would like to pursue services, please call us toll free at 1-888-758-0508 (V/TTY) or via e-mail at dbcen@cmich.edu.

2003 Census is Done !

By Laura Welch

963 census packets were copied, stapled, stuffed into envelopes, stamped, and sent to the parents and service providers of children and young adults in the state of Michigan who are DeafBlind. Some of the census forms were returned immediately — within a week of our mailing them on the week of February 9, and others trickled in at the last minute — within a week of when they were due on March 5. Either way, Linda Kleinhans, DB Central's administrative secretary, was happy to tabulate the results and even more happy when she turned them in to the Federal Government on March 23.

In all, there were 247 children and young adults reported on the census. 100% of the families who were registered previously were again registered for 2003. There were 40 new cases added as a result of the census. Of the new cases, five are from birth to three years old, 29 are from four to 13 years old, and six are from 14 to 26 years old. Five of these new cases are active. Two new counties, Alpena & Marquette, were added to the rest of the counties that have children and young adults registered with DB Central.



Become a Part of Our “Family”

By Linda Kleinhans



This issue of the DB Star contains a Family Consent for Services form. The form, once it is completed and signed by a parent/guardian, gives DB Central permission to become involved with the student and/or family. Along with registering the child/young adult on our census, this is the starting point for any and all contact for our services. Once it is received in our office the Family Services Coordinator will make telephone contact with the family to initiate a meeting. This initial appointment will be held at a location convenient to the family (often the family home or another mutually agreed upon location). At this point, our Educational Consultant also becomes involved, if appropriate, and will make an appointment to observe the child/young adult in the classroom setting. During the visit, the consultant will want to see typical daily activities and interactions and have time to discuss the observation with staff. I encourage you to register your child/student on our census, if you have not already done so, and to use the enclosed Consent form to become part of the DB Central family!



Watch your mailbox for announcements
of our upcoming events !

Transition Conference
Kellogg Center, East Lansing
July 18-21

Family Retreat
Valley Plaza, Midland
September 10-12



FAMILY CONSENT FOR SERVICES

I agree to participate in consultative services for my child, _____, offered through DB Central.

Consultative services are available year round to help address the child's learning and/or family support needs. I understand that services are free and that I will not be charged for services.

Strict confidentiality will be respected at all times, unless permission to exchange information with an identified organization is granted.

This consent is valid for one year from date of signature and may be revoked at anytime.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

CONSENT TO SHARE INFORMATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The following agencies provide services to individuals who are deaf-blind and their families. **Please place your initials beside each agency to which you authorize DB Central to exchange information.**

- ___ Child's school (*insert name*): _____
 Best contact person: _____ *Telephone*: _____
- ___ Medical Provider (*insert name*): _____
- ___ MI Department of Education, OSE-EIS
 Office of Special Education & Early Intervention Services (517-373-0923)
- ___ MI Department of Career Development - MDCD (866-694-6257)
- ___ MI Family Independence Agency - FIA (517-241-7210)
- ___ MI Commission for the Blind - DB Unit (800-292-4200)

- ___ Community Mental Health / Contract Agency
- ___ Helen Keller National Center (516-944-8900)
- ___ SHI-M=DB, Self Help for Independency in Michigan Equalizing the Deaf-Blind (517-764-6178)
- ___ NFADB, National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (800-255-0411 ext 275)

- ___ MADB, Michigan Association for Deaf-Blind
- ___ Other (*insert name*): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____
Date



Services Geared Toward Families

DB Central services are available year-round and are provided upon request of the family. DB Central services are always provided free of charge. Family support services are provided in the following formats:

- 1. Telephone Contacts:** The initial contact upon referral to DB Central will occur via telephone, wherein staff will ask basic information about the child who is DeafBlind and their family and share information about DB Central. Following initial contact, telephone contacts are made between the project staff and families for the purposes of setting up and coordinating activities requested in the formal referral, dissemination of information regarding best practices, and activities related to a family's particular need.
- 2. On-Site Consultation:** DB Central staff will visit the home, school or community setting to work with children and families who are impacted by DeafBlindness. The purpose of consultation is to identify specific needs for individual families and determine the ways in which DB Central staff will be able to assist.
- 3. Information Dissemination:** DB Central disseminates publications, media, products and toys that reflect best practices in the field of DeafBlindness through a variety of means. These include access to a lending library, quarterly newsletters, mailings to target audiences (for example, parents of transition aged students), a website (www.dbcentral.org) and an e-mail distribution list to families.
- 4. Meeting Support:** DB Central staff are available to attend a single meeting (such as an annual IEPC meeting) or a series of meetings (such as monthly transition team meetings) aimed to provide input to local, ISD, or state teams in planning appropriate services and supports for children who are DeafBlind and their families.
- 5. Parent Networking Opportunities:** DB Central recognizes the value of parents as resources for one another and aims to connect parents of children who are DeafBlind through a variety of means. Parents can opt to participate in a family support listserv (which encourages dialogue among parents), a Family Directory, family social events or relevant parent training opportunities.
- 6. Educational Technical Assistance:** If assistance specific to education or school is required, a referral will be made to the Project Director/Educational Consultant, who will provide on-site educational consultation.

What are Family Support Services?

- ✧ **A primary aim of family support services is to identify the dreams and goals of families regarding their children who are DeafBlind and provide support in the process of making those dreams a reality.**
- ✧ **All family support services are conducted using a family-centered/person-centered approach.**
- ✧ **Since family support services are intended to reflect the specific needs of each individual family, they may look different for each family. Among the services available are: referrals to organizations and agencies, the opportunity to link families who are or have experienced similar situations or experiences, and access to relevant resources and training.**
- ✧ **When a family is referred to DB Central, the following steps are taken:**
 1. The family is sent an information packet through the mail. A blue form entitled, "Family Consent for Services," will be included in the information packet.
 2. Once DB Central receives the signed "Family Consent for Services" form, telephone contact will be made with the family to coordinate an initial appointment. This initial appointment will be held at a location convenient to the family (often the family home or another mutually agreed upon location).
 3. DB Central staff will meet with the family and the specific needs will be determined.
 4. If multiple needs exist or a family requests ongoing family support, a family-centered plan of action will be developed.

Staff at DB Central take pride in being family-friendly.

Please let us know if your family has support needs not mentioned above.

Samantha Wood began working at DB Central in November, 2003. She moved to Michigan from New York State where she worked as a counselor in a public school. She comes to DB Central with grant experience on the state and federal level related to low incidence disabilities. Samantha is enthusiastic about picking up where Patti left off and looks forward to meeting and working with the families connected to DB Central.



Services Geared Toward Professionals



DB Central services are available year-round and come in the following formats:

- 1. Telephone Contacts:** Telephone contacts can be made with the project and those it serves for the purposes of setting up and coordinating activities requested in the referral, to disseminate information regarding best practices, and to follow-up specific activities recommended by the consultant.
- 2. Dissemination:** DB Central disseminates publications, media, products, and toys that reflect best practices in the field of DeafBlindness through a lending library, newsletters, brochures geared toward target audiences (physicians or families, for example), and a website () focusing on specific aspects of DeafBlindness. The project will also respond to individual requests that require a literature search or the production of specific training materials.
- 3. Meetings:** DB Central staff will attend a single meeting or series of meetings to help provide input to local, ISD, or state teams in planning appropriate services and supports to children/students.
- 4. Videotape Reviews:** Videotape reviews are a useful tool to help determine the initial direction of a technical assistance activity, to conduct informal assessment of student skills, and to follow-up for further recommendations.
- 5. On-Site Consultation:** Project staff will visit a home, school, or community setting to observe the children/students who are DeafBlind, families, and/or staff. Specific activities are determined in collaboration with staff/families prior to and during the visit. Follow-up activities are determined through the collaborative process involving the whole team (including parent/guardian) and may result in future visits, resource dissemination, phone contacts, videotape review, in-service training, and/or workshops to meet specific team needs.
- 6. In-Service Training:** Training sessions can be offered to individuals and groups on child/student -specific topics as determined by the team.
- 7. Family Support:** DB Central maintains the belief that people who are DeafBlind flourish in environments that provide consistent services and supports. A full range of family support services are available to all of the children/young adults/parents/guardians on the project census. The services are intended to promote and foster consistency with educational efforts.

Technical Assistance / Educational Consultation

- ✧ **DB Central provides free on-site consultation to anyone providing support services to children and young adults who are DeafBlind. Services are provided upon request of family and/or staff.**

- ✧ **When a team member (teacher, parent, consultant, therapist, etc.) calls to request assistance, the following steps are taken:**
 1. DB Central staff determine if the student is listed on our census, which is a requirement for services.
 2. Information is exchanged about project services and the type(s) of assistance being requested.
 3. If DB Central services seem to be an appropriate solution to the team's issue (s), project staff will ensure that a signed parent/guardian release is on file. If services are not appropriate, a referral to a different agency/organization will be made.
 4. Once a release has been received, an appointment to observe the child/student will be scheduled. During the visit, the consultant will want to see typical daily activities and interactions and have time to discuss the observation with staff.
 5. After the visit, the consultant will follow-up by providing any recommendations that were discussed during the visit in writing (or on video). A copy will be mailed to a key member of the educational staff and to the parent/guardian of the child/student.
 6. Follow-up visits and/or trainings will be requested as needed by the team (including the family), and/or resources will be provided to help insure implementation of the recommendations.

Beth Kennedy is the Director and Educational Consultant. She has worked in the field of Deaf-Blindness for twelve years: seven at Perkins School for the Blind in the DeafBlind Department, two consulting on a Federal grant in Florida, and has been with DB Central for three years.





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Who Are DeafBlind

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Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
Permit No. 93



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 13-14, 2004

Annual Michigan WIC Conference

Radisson Plaza Hotel
Kalamazoo MI

517-335-8625

July 18-21, 2004

DeafBlind Transition Camp (DBTC)

East Lansing MI
Contact DB Central

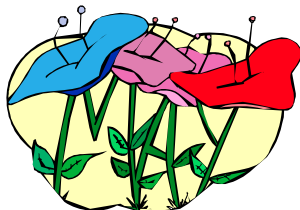
888-758-0508

July 28-29, 2004

Transition Conference

East Lansing MI
Contact DB Central

888-758-0508



August 5-7, 2004

NTAC / NFADB Parent/Family Workshop

“A Training on Socialization and Recreation
Strategies for Families with Children who are
Deaf-Blind”

St. Louis, MO

Contact Samantha Wood at DB Central

888-758-0508 or email: wood1sb@cmich.edu

September 10-12, 2004

Family Retreat

Midland, MI

Contact DB Central

888-758-0508



Check out our website at
www.dbcentral.org for
more information,
events, and updates!