A Framework for Intervener Training

A framework for the recognition and advancement of interveners, which encourages continuous growth and development, and elevates the intervener profession

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Most professions have some type of level or ladder system to indicate different degrees of training. The training of interveners should also be connected to a type of system that shows the degree of training, experience, and specialized skills that an intervener has. The field of deafblindness has never had such a system for intervener training. However, there have been a recognized and approved set of intervener training competencies, which were developed by the field and approved by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) in 2009. These competencies were last updated in 2022. They continue to be used to guide training practices and the implementation of intervener services.

In November of 2023, a committee consisting of administrators, state deafblind project personnel, university instructors, a parent, an intervener, NCDB personnel, and a deafblind consultant, was formed to discuss the challenges of having many variations of intervener training practices across the country. This committee spent months developing a national set of intervener training guidelines, which would lend structure, organization, and consistency to the training of interveners. Next, the committee interviewed 18 state deafblind projects over seven months, during which time the intervener training guidelines were shared, and the projects were asked for their feedback.

Overall, the intervener training guidelines were well received. When asked to describe their intervener training efforts, a few states had been doing more formal intervener training for a number of years, while other states were in various stages of addressing intervener training. In some states, constraints related to the acceptance of the role of interveners provided barriers to focused intervener training. Also, although these states used some of the CEC knowledge and skills Deafblind Intervener Competencies, the practice of training to all the CEC competencies was not consistent across the country.

This framework is intended to provide support for professional advancement and encourage continuous growth and development within the intervener profession. It promotes progression and involves multiple levels with each level representing a specific

set of requirements and responsibilities. Interveners can progress through these levels by demonstrating competence and acquiring additional training. Advancements through the levels may come with opportunities for leadership roles, increased pay, or other benefits, depending upon state or local policies. This document is also intended to help build and maintain a profession of qualified interveners, and to help elevate the intervener practice.

The framework is designed to reflect two paths of intervener training that have emerged in the field of deafblindness in the last 10 to 25 years. One path involves intervener training promoted through state deafblind projects, school districts, or agency, and this path is labeled as Path 1. The other path involves formal intervener training programs offered through universities or colleges, and this is labeled as Path 2. The framework beginning on page 4 provides a description of Path 1 and Path 2, along with a detailed outline of each of the levels within those Paths. It also provides a description of the recommended training requirements for progression through each level in each Path.

Path 1: Intervener training through a state deafblind project, school district, or agency

Level 1A Provisional Intervener in training - a person who has been identified and/or is in the process of training through a state deafblind project, school district, or agency.

Level 1B Proficient Intervener - an intervener who has completed a training program and has received a certificate or recognition of that completion.

Level 1C Advanced Intervener - an intervener who has additional years of experience as an intervener and has engaged in professional development and progressed in knowledge and skills beyond the basic requirements of a proficient intervener.

Level 1D Master Intervener - an intervener who has earned a minimum of an associate degree, who has pursued excellence in advanced knowledge and skills as an intervener, and who has additional years of experience as an intervener.

Path 2: Formal intervener training program established through a university or college

Level 2A Provisional Intervener in training - a person who has been identified and/or is in the process of training through a formal intervener training program at a college or university.

Level 2B Proficient Intervener - an intervener who has completed a formal intervener training program through higher education and has been awarded a national credential.

Level 2C Advanced Intervener - an intervener who has additional years of experience as an intervener and who has progressed in knowledge and skill development beyond the basic requirements of a proficient intervener.

Level 2D Master Intervener - an intervener who has earned a minimum of an associate degree, who has pursued excellence in advanced knowledge and skills as an intervener, and who has additional years of experience as an intervener.

INTERVENER TRAINING FRAMEWORK

Path 1

Intervener training through a state deafblind project, school district, or other agency

The state deafblind projects currently utilize a variety of training methods including in person training, online training, and coaching.

Level 1A: Provisional Intervener in Training (All requirements must be completed)
Is involved in training through a state deafblind project, school district, state agency, etc. based on all the CEC knowledge and skills Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Is participating in on-the-job training and experience with a child/student who is deafblind and thereby the team
Is receiving support, coaching and guidance from someone who has knowledge and skills in all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Is developing skills in the communication system specific to the student they are working with
Level 1B: Proficient Intervener (Assumes a minimum of all requirements from Level 1A)
Has completed a training program based on all the CEC knowledge and skills Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Has at least one-year experience as an intervener with a student who is deafblind
Has received support, coaching and guidance from someone who has knowledge and skills in all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Has successfully completed a portfolio which demonstrates their knowledge and skills based on all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Has increased their skills in the communication system specific to the student they are working with
Is engaged in ongoing professional development

Level 1C: Advanced Intervener (Assumes a minimum of all requirements from Levels 1A and 1B)
Has completed additional training and professional development in deafblindness
Has completed additional years of experience as an intervener
May have experience with more than one student who is deafblind
Has received support, coaching and guidance from someone who has knowledge and skills in all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Has developed communication competence in the communication system specific to the main student with whom they have worked
May have earned an associate degree or higher
Level 1D: Master/Distinguished Intervener (Assumes a minimum of all requirements from Levels 1A, 1B, & 1C)
Has completed additional training in deafblindness and has developed additional skills and advanced competence in communication and literacy (i.e., sign language, tactile sign language, braille, tactile development, etc.)
Has earned an associate degree or higher
Has a minimum of 5 years of experience as an intervener
May have experience with more than one student
May have additional time with a mentor, coach, or instructor who has knowledge and skills in all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies

Path 2

Formal intervener training program established through a university or college complete with practicum, coaching, and portfolio development, covering all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies

University/college level coursework offers rigor, professionalism and consistency through coaching, supervision, feedback and qualifications of the instructors. These programs typically take 1 to 2 years to complete, depending upon the university/college.

Level 2A: Provisional Intervener in Training (All requirements must be completed)
Is enrolled in a formal university/college level intervener training program based on all of the CEC intervener knowledge and skills competencies, with accountability & oversight by university/college instructors/professors who have knowledge and skills in all of the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Is receiving on-the-job training and experience with a child/student who is deafblind as part of the training program
Is participating in a practicum with coaching by their instructor or someone approved by the instructor to provide coaching who has knowledge and skills in all of the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Is developing a portfolio based on all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Is developing skills in the communication system specific to the student with whom they are working
Level 2B: Proficient Intervener (Assumes a minimum of all requirements from Level 2A)
Has completed a formal intervener training program based on all the CEC intervener knowledge and skills competencies, with accountability & oversight by university/ college instructors/professors who have knowledge and skills in all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Has at least one-year experience as an intervener with a student who is deafblind

Has successfully completed a practicum with coaching by their instructor or someone approved by the instructor to provide coaching who has knowledge and skills in all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
Has successfully completed a portfolio based on all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies, which demonstrates knowledge and skills competence
Has submitted a portfolio to be reviewed by a credentialing body. Upon approval, has applied and received the Intervener Specialist for the Deafblind Credential, or the National Intervener Credential
Continues to be engaged in ongoing professional development
Has increased their skills in the communication system specific to the student with whom they are working
Level 2C: Advanced Intervener (Assumes a minimum of all requirements from Levels 2A & 2B)
Has engaged in additional training in deafblindness
May have experience with more than one student who is deafblind
May have additional mentoring/coaching by someone who has knowledge and skills in all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies
May have re-credentialed after 5 years
Has developed communication competence in the communication system specific to the main student with whom they have worked
Level 2D: Master/Distinguished Intervener (Assumes a minimum of all requirements from Levels 2A, 2B, & 2C)
Has completed additional training in deafblindness and has developed additional skills and advanced competence in communication and literacy (i.e. sign language, tactile sign language, braille, tactile development, etc.)
Has earned an associate degree or higher

Has a minimum of 5 years of experience as an intervener
May have experience with more than one student who is deafblind
May have additional time with a mentor, coach, or instructor who has knowledge and skills in all the CEC Deafblind Intervener Competencies

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