



# The Beacon

## The Newsletter of the Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project

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June 2025

### June is Deafblind Awareness Month in Wisconsin

**Celebrating Strength, Advocacy, and Inclusion in Our State**

Governor Tony Evers has officially proclaimed June 2025 as Deafblind Awareness Month, recognizing the strength, resilience, and achievements of individuals who are deafblind across our state.

Deafblindness—a combination of vision and hearing loss—affects how individuals connect with the world and often requires specialized supports like interveners, interpreters, and Support Service Providers (SSPs). These services help ensure full access to education, community life, and meaningful relationships.

We also recognize the important work of the Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project (WDBTAP), which supports children who are deafblind from birth through age 21 and plays a key role in empowering families and educators.

This month is an opportunity to raise awareness, promote inclusion, and honor the legacy of Helen Keller, a symbol of determination and advocacy.

Let's work together to build a more inclusive Wisconsin for everyone.

### New DPI Deafblind Resources Documents

**Guidance on Disability Criteria and the Vital Role of School-Based Intervenors**

The Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project (WDBTAP), in partnership with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), has developed two new resources to help school teams and service providers better support students who are deafblind.

#### [1. Deafblind Disability Criteria – FAQ](#)

This resource provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding the criteria for identifying students with deafblindness. It is designed to support educators and evaluation teams in understanding and applying the deafblind disability criteria.

#### [2. School Based Intervenors](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's resource on school based intervenors explains the essential role intervenors play in supporting students who are deafblind. It covers what intervenors do, the training they receive, and how they help students access learning, communication, and social interaction in the classroom.

We encourage you to explore these resources and share them with your child's educational team. They're designed to build understanding and promote stronger social interaction in school environments.

## Empowering Intervener Training Series

**Tuesday, July 8th (6pm to 7:30pm CST):** *"Developing a Learner's Skill to Communicate with Others Intentionally"* with Susan Bashinski. This event is provided at no cost.

The link to register can be found here: [Empowering Intervener Training Series Registration](#)

**Tuesday, August 12th (6pm to 7:30pm CST):** *Topic to be determined*

# Helen Keller Education Act and the Congressional Deafblind Caucus



Pictured Here: Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Sullivan

Many children who are deafblind in this country are NOT receiving a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The Helen Keller Education Act will help alleviate this problem by recognizing the critical role that interveners play in providing access for children with deafblindness in educational settings. One of the key components of the act being advocated in recent legislative pushes, including through a [bipartisan Congressional DeafBlind Caucus](#), is the formal recognition and funding of intervener services in educational settings.

Please see the attached flyer to learn how you can support this important work.

[Read the flyer here.](#)



## WDBTAP Tips and Tools 2025: Active Learning

### Hands-On Strategies to Support the Whole Child Through Active Learning with Kirstyn Martino

WDBTAP is excited to host a two-day training on Active Learning this August 4th and 5th in Fond du Lac, WI! This in-person workshop is a great opportunity for anyone working with a child who is deafblind and at an early developmental level.

Led by Kristyn Martino, an Active Learning Specialist from the Penrickton Center for Blind Children, the training will focus on simple, effective ways to help children become more engaged and involved with their surroundings.

Participants will learn the foundations of Active Learning with topics such as active versus passive learning, using the dynamic learning circle, how Active Learning supports social-emotional learning development, and how to use assessment in the Active Learning approach to support and develop curriculum. There will also be opportunities to try out equipment you learn about.



Kirstyn Martino

To learn more and to register please click on this [link](#).



## New Parent Compass Event

### Join Our Virtual Small Group Life Coaching Sessions!

The Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project is excited to introduce a brand-new pilot program designed specifically for parents and caregivers of children with combined vision and hearing loss. This summer, WDBTAP will offer Small Group Life Coaching sessions through its Parent Compass initiative.



Certified Life Coach and Fellow Deafblind Parent, Bev Teeter

Led by Bev Teeter, a certified life coach and fellow deafblind parent, this unique coaching experience is tailored to help participants reconnect with their personal identities, reflect on what matters most, and make room for their own well-being. Parents often pour so much into caregiving that they lose touch with themselves. This program is here to change that!

Through guided conversations and peer support, parents will gain tools to feel more grounded, resilient, and supported, not just in their parenting journey, but as whole individuals. The group setting fosters connection and encouragement, helping families feel less alone and more empowered.

**Mondays, July 14 – August 25**

Choose a Session Time:

**Morning:** 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

**Evening:** 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM



To learn more and to register please click on this [link](#).

## Family Day Recap

### WDBTAP Families Enjoy a Day at Chula Vista

On Saturday April 11, 2025 over 25 families, deaf mentors, staff, interpreters, interpreter students and volunteers gathered at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells for a Family Fun Day.

It was a fantastic day filled with smiles, laughter, and unforgettable moments.

Here are a few of the highlights:

Dr. Kasee Stratton-Gadke, executive director of Mississippi Institute on Disabilities and Associate professor of School Psychology, presented on challenging behaviors. As an expert in the field, she shared insights on identifying the root causes of behaviors and offered practical strategies for effective support. Attendees also had the opportunity for one-on-one meetings with her to receive personalized advice tailored to their specific situations.

The teens had the opportunity to tour the resort and learn about the different jobs involved in running a hotel.

Jodi Anderson and Rose Bandt shared their family stories and provided resources to help others begin reflecting on and writing their own story. Please contact Jodi if you want to continue what you started or weren't able to join us and are interested in sharing your story.

Families had the chance to connect and network with one another and make meaningful connections. Thank you to everyone who came out and made the day so special.

Keep your eye out for future family gatherings!



Young girl pets guide dog at family day

## Be a WDBTAP Teen Boss:

### Join to Build Skills, Make Friends, and Have Fun!

This past school year, the WDBTAP Teen Bosses group has been meeting virtually twice a month. It's a space where teens who are deafblind can connect, share their experiences, learn from each other, and have a real voice in the work WDBTAP is doing to support kids and teens across Wisconsin.

The group talks about all kinds of topics, builds leadership skills, and most importantly, supports one another.

If you know a teen who might be interested in joining next school year, we'd love to connect! Keep an eye

out this summer for more details about the group starting up again in the fall. The WDBTAP Teen Bosses is a great way to meet new friends, build confidence, and be part of something that makes a real difference.



Pictured: Teens TeRina and Sid

## Meet Our New WDBTAP Team Member

### Megan Olson Accepts Office Associate Position

We're excited to welcome Megan Olson to the Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project (WDBTAP) as our new Office Associate!

Megan comes to us with a background in public service at the Baraboo Public Library, along with advertising and marketing experience at a multimedia retail chain based in Texas.



Megan Olson

She brings a passion for organization, communication, and supporting meaningful programs that make a difference.

Outside of work, Megan enjoys hiking, traveling, gardening, and spending time with her family.

We're so glad to have her as part of the team!



## Lending Library Resources

Looking for books, literacy activities, interactive equipment, technology, or toys to support a child with combined vision and hearing loss? The WDBTAP Lending Library offers free access to a wide range of resources for families and educators across Wisconsin. Items are shipped directly to your home or workplace. Browse our collection and discover what's available to borrow today:

<https://wesp-dhh.wi.gov/wsd/library/>



**Teeter Popper** - Whether they rock it, roll it, sit in it or stand...kids want to move with Teeter Popper! How wildly fun it is! "POP-POP-POP... POP-POP-POP!" Senses go for a ride every time they play.

To get this item mailed to you, email [Jennifer.Gettelman@wesp-dhh.wi.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Gettelman@wesp-dhh.wi.gov)

## Resource Corner

### Recordings of Recent WDBTAP Training Sessions: Expert Insights and Resources for Families and Professionals

WDBTAP has been offering a training series for interveners, professionals, and families. Be sure to check out the recordings of these trainings, along with the linked resources, on the [WDBTAP YouTube channel](#). Some of our recent trainings include topics such as "Unique Needs and Characteristics of Learners Who Experience Deafblindness" with Susan Bashinski, "Expanded Core Curriculum Considerations for Students Who Are Deafblind" with Kaycee

Bennett, "Tactile Language Development" with Kaycee Bennett, and "Functional Hearing" with Kaycee Bennett. For more information on upcoming presentations in this series, please take a look at the [flyer](#).



Use this QR code to access the WDBTAP YouTube video channel

## What Types of Technical Assistance Does WDBTAP Provide?

- Parent/Family trainings and assistance in connecting families with one another
- Statewide and regional workshops for service providers and families
- Observation, support and coaching in programming for children
- Intensive deafblind training series for paraprofessionals who work one on one with children and youth who are deafblind
- Assistance in identifying children and youth who are deafblind
- Referral to relevant local, regional and national agencies
- Lending library with materials, equipment and toys to benefit deafblind children/youth on the child count



**WESP-DHH**  
**Wisconsin Deafblind**  
**Technical Assistance Project**  
WDBTAP

### Connect with WDBTAP

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## The Beacon Online

You can view this version of The Beacon, along with past issues on our website at [wesp-dhh.wi.gov/wdbtap/newsletter](https://wesp-dhh.wi.gov/wdbtap/newsletter) or by scanning the QR code.



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