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ABSTRACT

This final report describes activities and accomplishments of the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness program, a 3-year federally funded technical assistance project concerned with early childhood education, training of personnel and families, transition services from school to adult services, parent support, and dissemination of information. The project provided three summer training sessions serving approximately 53 professionals, provided training during the school year to over 200 professionals and parents, and collaborated with a variety of related agencies and organizations. Project newsletters, brochures, and inservice training materials were also developed. Individual sections of the report address the project's purpose, goals, and objectives; conceptual framework; accomplishments; problems; evaluation findings; and impact. (DB)

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ED 391 267

**COLORADO SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH DEAFBLINDNESS**

**FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT:  
OCTOBER 1, 1992 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 1995**

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**PROJECT NUMBER:** H025A20006

**PROJECT START DATE:** October 1, 1992

**PROJECT END DATE:** September 30, 1995

**PROJECT DIRECTOR:** A. James Nezol, Ed.D. (October 1, 1992 - June 30, 1995)  
Tanni L. Anthony, Ed.S. (July 1 - September 31, 1995)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is the primary educational agency of the State of Colorado with the responsibility for assuring that all children with disabilities between the ages of birth and twenty-one receive a free and appropriate education. The agency applied for and received a three year (1992 - 1995) grant from the United States Department of Education to provide technical assistance to Colorado children and youth with deafblindness.

The project, entitled "Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness", addressed five goal areas based on the recommendations of the Colorado Deafblind Network, an interagency advisory committee to the project, and the approval of the federal granting authority:

- (1) Early Childhood Education;
- (2) Training of Personnel and Families;
- (3) Transition Services from School to Adult Services;
- (4) Parent Support; and
- (5) Dissemination of Information.

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## PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The ongoing purpose of the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project is to provide leadership within Colorado to strengthen the educational programs of children and youth (ages birth through 21 years) who are identified or suspected as having both vision and hearing losses. Leadership is demonstrated in three primary areas: (a) organization of a statewide leadership forum known as the Deafblind Task Force, (b) provision of training and information to personnel working with learners who are deafblind and their families, and (c) provision of technical assistance to children and youth with deafblindness and their families

Five broad goal areas with the following objectives were the focus of the project throughout the three year grant cycle during fiscal years 1993, 1994, and 1995:

1. Early Childhood: To provide a wide variety of coordinated services to young children with deafblindness and their families.
  - A. Contract with Colorado Department of Health's Home Intervention Program to extend home intervention services to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are deafblind. A F.A.M.I.L.Y. Assessment will be conducted two times a year on each enrolled child.
  - B. Contract with Anchor Center for Blind Children to provide both center-based and home-based technical assistance to children (ages birth to six) who are deafblind.
  - C. Contract with Colorado State University to gather data on children served by the Colorado Department of Health's Home Intervention Program. This will include analysis of the video taped F.A.M.I.L.Y. Assessments (for fiscal year 1993 only).
2. Training: To provide both families and professional personnel with training to meet their needs in providing an optimal learning environment for the child with deafblindness.
  - A. Contract with the University of Northern Colorado to provide a summer training course on the topic of deafblindness.

- B. Contract with a guest speaker to present at the Interagency Vocational Conference and/or the Affective Needs Conference that is held annually in Colorado.
  - C. Provide funding and coordination of an awareness workshop on deafblindness by staff at the Helen Keller National Center.
  - D. Coordinate procedures for screening the vision in students with hearing loss and the hearing in students with vision loss.
3. Transition Services: To expand interagency coordination to ensure effective transition from school life to adult services for secondary aged students with deafblindness.
- A. Submit an application to Helen Keller - Technical Assistance Center for assistance in coordinating transition plans for secondary aged learners with deafblindness in Colorado.
  - B. Coordinate transition planning activities with the Colorado Statewide Transition Project.
4. Parent Support: To provide parents and other caregivers with continuing access to known resources for training, support, and information.
- A. Contract with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind to coordinate an annual Family Learning Seminar/Summer Family Retreat.
  - B. Provide travel assistance for parents participating in trainings and parent advisory activities
5. Dissemination of Information: To provide information on topics related to deafblindness to every region within the State of Colorado.
- A. Purchase new materials for the Resource Lending Library.
  - B. Organize and implement the translation of the Resource Catalogue into Spanish.

- C. Produce and disseminate a newsletter two to three times a year as a vehicle to disseminate information to families, service providers, and key administrators.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROJECT

The conceptual framework of the project included a combined philosophy of four values: (a) respect for the diverse learning needs of the individual with deafblindness; (b) respect for the importance of family support; (c) belief in an active technical assistance model; and (d) strong endorsement in an interagency model of statewide collaboration.

The project staff support that the learner with deafblindness is a unique individual with diverse needs. Each child is unique based on the age of onset of sensory loss, the presence of other disabilities, the severity of the sensory disabilities, and the level of current support to his or her family.

The project worked to include parents in all levels of its decision making process. Parents were members on the Colorado Deafblind Task Force which served as an advisory council. Parents were also involved in the planning process of the Summer Family Retreats, included in training events, and kept current on resources through the project newsletter.

The project staff valued a technical assistance model which could address the individual needs of the child. Technical assistance was embraced through a variety of means. The primary form of technical assistance during the three year grant cycle between the years of October, 1992 and September 1995 was inservice training. The goal was to provide high quality training to as many service providers as possible.

The first service providers included consultants in the fields of sensory impairment. It was important to build the bridge of "not just visually impaired" and "not just deaf/hard of hearing", but "deafblind". A common language was needed to state the importance of understanding the multiplicative results of a dual sensory loss. As training commenced over the three year period, the project worked diligently to include paraprofessionals, classroom teachers, and support personnel such as therapists.

The project further embraced an interagency model of collaboration. It supported the notion that no one agency can do it all. The Colorado Deafblind Task Force was highly instrumental in linking agencies together on behalf of persons of all ages in Colorado who are deafblind.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PROJECT DURING ITS THREE YEAR GRANT CYCLE

### Census Information

During the three year cycle of the grant, the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness has been actively reviewing statewide Child Find procedures and the collection of census information in an effort to ensure that all children in Colorado between the ages of birth through 21 years with deafblindness are properly identified. In order to "qualify" as being deafblind, there must be adequate documentation of a vision and hearing loss. As a result of careful scrutiny of existing files, the count was actually reduced between the years of 1993 and 1994.

The chart below depicts the Colorado Deafblind Census for the years 1993 through 1995. It is anticipated that the current count will continue to climb as improved child find practices are implemented statewide. It is estimated by TRACES that Colorado should have approximately 150 identified children and youth with deafblindness.

**TABLE A: Colorado Deafblind Census Numbers for the Years 1993 - 1995**

# of Children	January 1993	January 1994	January 1995
Children 0 - 21	143	120	126

### Project Goal Progress Summary

Key accomplishments concerning the five goal areas of the three year grant project include the following activities:

**Early Childhood:** The goal to provide a wide variety of coordinated services to young children (birth to age three years) with deafblindness and their families was addressed through several entities: (a) the combined efforts with the Colorado Hilton Perkin's Project; (b) delegated project funding to two early intervention agencies (c) specific training events; and (d) family learning seminars.

- The National Hilton Perkins Project funded a three year project in Colorado for the purpose of providing assessment and program consultative services to families of young (birth through seven years) children with deafblindness. This project was operated out of the



Colorado Department of Education during its grant cycle of October 1, 1991 to December 31, 1994.

In August of 1992, Tanni Anthony was hired to coordinate the Colorado Hilton Perkins Project on a half time basis. The other half of her position with the Colorado Department of Education was to serve as the Program Coordinator of the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project. As a result of the combined role, the two projects merged efforts on services to families of young children with deafblindness during the overlapping periods of October 1, 1992 and December 31, 1994.

Two transdisciplinary play-based assessment teams were formed during this time frame. Twenty-two children from across the state received a comprehensive assessment in the areas of (a) communication and (b) orientation and mobility skill development. Follow-up consultation was also offered to families and school programs.

- Two agencies received funding over the course of the three year grant cycle from the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project for provision of early childhood technical assistance. The two agencies were the Anchor Center for Blind Children and the Colorado Department of Health's Home Intervention Program (CHIP)

The Anchor Center for Blind Children, a non-profit private agency, provides early childhood services to families of children ages birth through five years who are blind/visually impaired. It employs specialists trained in the area of visual impairment.

With the technical assistance funding, Anchor Center provided the following services to families of young children who were either identified or suspected as having both vision and hearing losses: FY 93 - 31 children received functional vision evaluations, 6 local school districts were impacted by outreach services, 13 children received quarterly outreach contact, and five families received assistance with transition services; FY 94 - 33 children received functional vision evaluations, two children received full team evaluations, 18 local school districts were impacted by outreach services, 9 families received home-based or center-based consultation visits on a monthly basis, 13 children received quarterly outreach contact, and seven families received assistance with transition services; FY 95 - 27 children received functional vision evaluations, 14 local school districts were impacted by outreach services, 12 children benefited from seven outreach trips, and six families received assistance with outreach services.

The Colorado Home Intervention Program is a statewide program for young children who are deaf/hard of hearing. Technical assistance dollars provided consultative services to families of young children with deafblindness: FY 93 - 28 children received monthly home visit consultation which included two video taped F.A.M.I.L.Y. assessments per child per year, approximately 85 service providers were trained to functional vision screenings; FY 94 - 30 children received monthly home visits consultation with two video taped F.A.M.I.L.Y. assessments per child per year, approximately 85 service provides were trained on the topics of transition and inclusion; and FY 95 - 29 children received monthly home visits consultation with two video taped F.A.M.I.L.Y. assessments per child per year, approximately 85 service provides were trained on the topic of play based assessment.

- Dr. Christy Yoshinaga-Itano from Colorado State University reported that 26 children participated in the F.A.M.I.L.Y. Assessment process of the Home Intervention Program in her final report dated December 1993. In this report, she detailed her findings of the developmental status of the 26 children.
- Tanni Anthony participated in a JFK Affiliated University sponsored course on transition during the fall of 1992. The course invited teams with four meeting opportunities to design an interagency transition plan. Members of the "deafblind team" included representatives from LISTEN, Anchor Center for Blind Children, Colorado Home Intervention Program, Colorado Department of Education, and a parent. The end product was a series of interagency approved transition procedures for children entering and/or exiting a birth to five program or a preschool public school program.
- Training was offered throughout the three years to professionals and parents of children within the birth to age three range. Key training events included: (a) three consecutive summer institute trainings which all had some content concerning the early years of development; (b) a two hour presentation by Tanni Anthony at the spring 1994 Colorado Home Intervention Program Conference on the topic of working with young children who are deafblind; and (c) a separate workshop offering exclusive early childhood content in January 1995 with Dr. Deborah Chen as the principal presenter. These workshop trainings are further detailed in the section on project accomplishments pertaining to training.
- Early Childhood Family Learning Seminars were offered in the winter of 1993 and spring 1994. More information about the seminars can be found in the accomplishment report section on parent support.

- Two back-to-back courses were sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education on educating young (birth - five years) children with sensory loss. Both were offered through the University of Northern Colorado; one fall 1994 semester and one spring 1995 semester. The eighty participants were all certified teachers of learners with vision loss or hearing loss. As a result of the course, the teachers received an expanded endorsement in their specific discipline from "K - Grade 12" to "Birth - 21".

While the courses were not funded through the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project, Tanni Anthony (project staff) and J. Greeley (former Colorado Hilton Perkins team member) offered content to several of the six class sessions on deafblindness.

**Training:** The goal of providing both families and professional personnel with training was addressed with several trainings offered throughout the three year period. Some of the trainings were not specifically sponsored by the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project, but were impacted by project staff who participated in the trainings.

- In the summer of 1993, the first ever course on deafblindness was offered as one of the Kephart Symposia series. The course entitled "Children with Deafblindness: Issues in Communication and Functional Assessment" was held in Vail, Colorado the last week of July. It was co-sponsored by the University of Northern Colorado and the Colorado Services for Children with Deafblindness Project.

Over 50 professionals from across the country, 44 from Colorado, attended the five day training which was offered for three university credits through the University of Northern Colorado.

Presenters and key topics included: Dr. Barbara McLetchie (Boston College), Dr. Sherrill Butterfield (Boston Children's Hospital), and Dr. Julie Jones (Maryland Deafblind Project) - Developing Communication Skills; Debbie Gleason (Perkins School for the Blind)- Functional Hearing Assessment; and Tanni L. Anthony (Colorado Deafblind Project) - Functional Vision Assessment.

- In October of 1993, twelve people participated in a teleseminar sponsored by Helen Keller National Center in cooperation with Virginia Commonwealth University. It was held in the Denver area.

- Sister Bernie Wynne from Helen Keller National Center offered an awareness training on deafblindness for teachers and parents within the Denver metro area on December 2 and 3, 1993. Fifty-three people participated in the free training which included information on communication, behavior, community access, orientation and mobility, and transition planning. A particular learning highlight was the luncheon on the second day where participants experienced simulated deafblindness during a family-style-served meal.
- Tanni Anthony presented on the topic of "Working with Young Children with Deafblindness" at the annual Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) Conference which was held in spring of 1994. The participants were home intervention providers of CHIP which is a statewide program for young children with hearing loss (0-3 years) and deafblindness (0-5 years).
- A guest speaker was hired to present at the 1994 Statewide Transition/Vocational Conference and the Spring 1994 and 1995 Affective Needs Conference. The presentations were geared to meeting the needs of learners with deafblindness.
- Tanni Anthony presented at the May 1994 School Nurse Conference on the topic of "Screening the Child Who is Young and/or Disabled for Vision Problems". This session specifically addressed the need to modify current Colorado vision screening protocol to include procedures which would assist in the identification of children who have an identified hearing loss and should be identified as having a vision problem/loss.
- The second Kephart Symposia course on deafblindness co-sponsored by the University of Northern Colorado and the Colorado Deafblind Project was offered in Vail, Colorado on July 25 - 29, 1994. The course was entitled "Assessment into Intervention: Effective Strategies for Students with Deafblindness". Over 50 professionals from across the country attended the course with the majority being from Colorado.

Presenters and topics for the five day course included: Dr. Harvey Marr (Columbia University) - Psychosocial Issues Across the Lifespan ; Tanni Anthony, J. Greeley, Linda Stewart Hazelbaker, Arlene Stredler Brown, Dr. Paula Hudson (Colorado Hilton Perkins Team) - Early Intervention Assessment and Programming; Dr. Barbara McLetchie (Boston College) - The School Age Learner with Deafblindness; Dr. Madeline Milian (University of Northern Colorado) and Nancy Sall (New York's Roosevelt Hospital) - Strategies to Promote

Social Interactions in Inclusive Settings; and Jaime Fradera, Julie Hunter, Diana Chavez, Sherry Weiss, and Tim Weiss parent and self advocate panel.

- Sister Bernie Wynne from Helen Keller National Center returned to Colorado on November 21 - 22, 1994 to give a two day training to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. This cost of this event was absorbed by CSDB based on the favorable results of the early training sponsored by the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project in 1993.
- A one day workshop entitled "Understanding and Developing Communication with Young Children Who Are Deafblind" was offered to parents and professionals on January 14, 1995. The key presenter was Dr. Deborah Chen from California State University in Northridge. The training was co-funded through the Colorado Governor's Council for Persons with Disabilities, Anchor Center for Blind Children, the Colorado Department of Health, and the Colorado Services for Children with Deafblindness Project. There was no registration fee for the 80 participants.
- A one day workshop was offered on April 7, 1995 on the topic of "Transition from School to Adult Services". This training was offered in conjunction with the Colorado Association of the Education and Rehabilitation of Blind/Visually Impaired. The workshop was attended by both parents and professionals. In total, approximately 50 people attended the workshop.

Presenters included Maureen McGowan of Helen Keller National Center (Rocky Mountain office); Candiss Leathers and Julie Deden from the Colorado Rehabilitation Services; Angie Wood and Dan Wenzel from the Colorado Center for the Blind; Ellen Condon from Developmental Pathways; and Pat Longo and Sue Schierkolk from the Colorado Transition Project.

- Lindy Rucker, a parent, and Chris Clark, Director of Anchor Center for Blind Children, attended a two day workshop on "Working with Families: The Grief Cycle" in May of 1995. The training was sponsored by TRACES and hosted by the Arizona Deafblind Project.
- With the financial support of the TRACES Western Region office, Colorado was treated to two on-site technical assistance visits by Kathee Keller and Bob Huven of the Washington State Deafblind Project. Kathee Keller made a two day trip to Colorado in early April 1995 and Bob Huven came a month later for a two day visit. The purpose of their visits was to model technical assistance consultation with a variety of Colorado youngsters.

In total, seven children were seen. A eighth child had to be canceled due to inclement weather during Ms. Keller's visit. The seven consultation visits were video taped for later use in training. A highly informative technical assistance report was generated from each visit's concluding session with the team members of each child.

- The pre-conference session of the Third Annual Rocky Mountain Conference for Paraprofessionals was dedicated to the topic of sensory impairment. The three hour overview session on June 14 , 1995 covered the physical/functional aspects of a vision and hearing loss and classic environmental strategies to enhance sensory performance. Twenty paraprofessionals attended the training session.
- A third summer institute training was offered in July of 1995. A two and a half day course, "Behavior as Communication: Strategies for Learners with Deafblindness" was offered with Jo Mascarro presenting. Just over 40 Colorado professionals and one parent attended the one credit training which was held in Winter Park, Colorado.
- Two Colorado educators participated in the Perkin's National Deafblind Training Project's summer institute which was held in San Diego, California on July 10 -14. Gwen Carroll, a vision service provider in Jefferson County, and Rosemary Harrer, a Home Intervention Program specialist attended this five day training.
- In addition to offering training to Colorado families and professionals, the project staff pursued outside training to enhance their abilities to provide leadership in Colorado on behalf of learners with deafblindness. Such trainings included: Functional Vision and Hearing Screening\* (October 1993); Services for Infants and Toddlers\* (February 1994); Identification of Usher Syndrome (May 1994); Movement and Communication Development by Dr. Jan van Dijk (April 1995); Usher Syndrome\* (May 1995); and Hand-in-Hand Curriculum\* (September 1995). The trainings denoted by a "\*" were sponsored by the TRACES Western Region.

**Transition Services:** The goal to expand interagency coordination to ensure effective transition from school life to adult services for secondary aged students with deafblindness was addressed with ongoing correspondence, in-state and out-of-state sponsored technical assistance, and training to families and professionals.

- A letter was mailed to the parents of identified youth ages 14 - 21 in the spring of 1993 for the purpose of detailing the importance of developing a transition plan from school to adult services. A response form was enclosed for families interested in further assistance with transition planning. Dr. Jim Nezol coordinated the follow-up activities to the letter.
- Dr. Jim Nezol requested assistance from Helen Keller Technical Assistance Center on the topic of transition from school to adult services. As a result of his request, Joan Houghton from Helen Keller TAC visited Colorado on two separate occasions in 1993 and 1994. Dr. Nezol and Ms. Houghton visited four different school sites over the course of the two visits for the purpose of observing students with deafblindness between the ages of 14 to 21 years. They then met with the teams of twelve individual students and drafted a transition plan document.
- Sue Olson from the Rocky Mountain Regional Office of the Helen Keller National Center presented at the 1993 Family Learning Seminar on the importance of transition planning.
- Of particular importance, was the technical assistance provided to two families of Hispanic heritage during fiscal years 1993 and 1994. Dr. Nezol coordinated extensive efforts with the school personnel, the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Colorado Division of Mental Health, the Helen Keller National Center - Rocky Mountain Region Office, and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind's adult role model team.
- As noted in the section on training, a one day workshop on the topic of transition from school to adult services was offered to Colorado parents and professionals in April of 1995.
- Ongoing collaboration occurred with the Colorado Statewide Transition Grant Project. This five year federal project has developed replication sites in 51 administrative units within Colorado.

**Parent Support:** The goal to provide parents and other caregivers with continued access to known resources for training, support, and information was addressed through a series of family retreats/seminars and ongoing correspondence with families.

- Early Childhood Family Learning Seminars were offered in the winter of 1993 and the spring of 1994. Each seminar focused on sensory loss in the early years. Families of young children ages birth through five were invited to each of the sessions. A total of seven

families participated in the two seminars which were hosted by the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind.

- A Family Retreat was offered to Colorado families during the summers of 1993, 1994, and 1995. Each retreat was held on the campus of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. Both a Spanish interpreter and sign language interpreters were available during the retreats for family members. On-site respite care was available for the children whose parents attended the retreats.

The Summer 1993 Retreat had four speakers: Dr. John and Mrs. Jacqueline McInnes from Toronto, Ontario presented on intervention with learners who are deafblind; Mary Ellen Simmons, the regional representative from the National Association of Parents of Visually Impaired (NAPVI), provided a family craft night and a presentation on being a parent of children with profound disabilities, including deafblindness; and Sue Olson from Helen Keller National Center - Rocky Mountain Region Office presented on transition planning. Ten families participated in the retreat.

The Summer 1994 Retreat also had four dynamic speakers: Mary Ellen Simmons from NAPVI was back to provide a family craft night and a presentation on parent advocacy; Terry Dennison and Cyndi Berg gave a hands-on Personal Futures Planning session; and Dr. Madeline Milian from the University of Northern Colorado gave two presentations on social skill development and securing family resources. Ten families attended the retreat.

The Summer 1995 Retreat had one primary speaker, Marlyn Minkin from Washington State. Ms. Minkin is both an educator and a counselor. She presented on gathering support for the family. She met with the entire group of participants and was also available to individual families for one on one time. Due to illness and last minute complications, several families canceled at the last minute. Five families participated in the retreat.

- Information was shared with families of the children on the Colorado Deafblind Census on the Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences in Colorado. Each year three conferences were offered in different regions of the state. The conferences are organized by parents. The mission is to offer support, information on legal rights, and training to families of children with disabilities. These conferences were explained and advertised in the project's newsletter. The cost of PEP Conferences is free to parents.



- Through the project newsletter, families received ongoing information about state and national resources (e.g. PEAK Parent Center, DB-Link, the Deaf-Blind Family Association, and CHARGE Association Foundation) and conferences/training events.
- Two parents and one self advocate were funded to participate in the meetings of the Deafblind Task Force. One other parent regularly attended the meetings, but declined financial assistance as she felt she was representing a statewide parent group and as such did not take her own private time to attend the meetings.

**Dissemination of Information:** The goal of providing information on topics related to deafblindness to every region within the State of Colorado was accomplished with the use of a project newsletter and brochure, and some important committee work.

- The project newsletter 'VIBRATIONS' was disseminated two to three times a year for the three year grant cycle. The newsletter has a mailing list of over 800 readers. Readers include parents, teachers, therapists, administrators, and the 307.11 Project Directors. Content includes: an update on project activities, "how to" articles, resource information, and a calendar of events.
- The project has a brochure which explains its services. The brochure is published in both English and Spanish. It was disseminated at state conferences and in parent and professional mailings during the three year grant cycle.
- New materials such as video tapes and books were purchased for the Lending Library. These new items were advertised in the project newsletter.
- Information such as handouts were routinely sent out to families and service providers as a form of technical assistance. Library loans of materials such as video tapes and books were also routinely sent to interested parties.
- The Resource Catalogue was continually updated throughout the three year grant cycle. In addition, the catalogue was translated into Spanish in the fall of 1994. The Resource Catalogue was disseminated at Family Retreats and per individual requests.
- During 1994 and 1995 of the grant cycle, the Colorado Department of Education designed several procedures to support Standards Based Education. One was a large committee to

address "Opportunities to Learn", focusing on what needs to be in place in order for special populations of students to be able to best achieve their optimal educational outcomes.

One subgroup of this large committee was a task force on deafblindness. Task force members represented the University of Northern Colorado, public school education, private consulting, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, Helen Keller National Center - Rocky Mountain Regional Office, and the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness.

This group drafted the document entitled "Opportunities to Learn: Guidelines for Students with Deafblindness". The document was sent out to over 100 reviewers (parents, self advocates, and professionals) in Colorado and within the USA. It was then revised and submitted to CDE for inclusion in the soon-to-be published monograph on Opportunities to Learn. Once published, it will be disseminated to all of the school districts within the State of Colorado.

#### **DISCUSSION OF IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS**

The project fared quite well over the course of the three year grant cycle. It is important to note that the presence of the Colorado Hilton Perkin's Project made a significant difference to the leadership activities across the state. Without the half-time position of the Colorado Hilton Perkins Project, it is doubtful that the other half-time position on the federally funded Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project would have been filled. Together the full-time position dedicated to activities concerning deafblindness greatly enhanced the statewide leadership effort.

The project sought to enhance parent support across Colorado. While it is true that more parents are involved with the project than three years ago, this remains an area of strong need. The Family Retreats have had fair, but minimal attendance considering the large number of identified children in Colorado. Parents were included in the planning process on all three of the retreats, the cost was minimal, and Spanish interpreters were present at the retreats to heighten the incentive for Spanish speaking families to attend. While these efforts helped, the retreats still could be strengthened. The project intends to poll families during the current project cycle to gain more information about what kind of support is truly helpful to families. It may be that the retreat is redesigned to regional day events. Whatever the outcome, the plan is to include families in the assessment and decision making process.

While much work was done and continues to still need to be done with ensuring quality education programs for Colorado's deafblind students, only one proposed area of the three year (1992-1995) grant cycle was not fully addressed to the satisfaction of the project. The restructuring of vision and hearing screening programs across the state went virtually untouched. This is a major area of need, as well as a major area of needed dedicated time. It was, however, an overly ambitious goal for this grant cycle.

The beginning work with the school nurses launched a "foot in the door", but further work is needed to bring an actual restructuring outcome. Due to the limitations of the time of less than one full FTE on the deafblind project, this work had to be left to another grant cycle. It is now being addressed in the current four year grant cycle of the federal project.

### **EVALUATION FINDINGS**

The primary means of evaluation of the project has come from evaluation surveys that have occurred following technical assistance events such as trainings. All evaluations have been highly favorable. The need for further training, however, is a continual recommendation of the participants. It is apparent that there is still training to do with classroom teachers, consultants, and families of all cultural backgrounds. This only makes sense, however, as the educational issues of the learner with deafblindness are diverse, complex, and multi-faceted.

The Colorado Deafblind Task Force (comprised of representatives from over ten agencies, parents and self advocates) spent a large portion of the fiscal year 1995 preparing a matrix of lifespan services to individuals in Colorado who are deafblind. The TRACES Project Evaluation Tools was used to complete the matrix. The matrix depicts all aspects of service to individuals who are deafblind, their families, and their service providers. As a result of the matrix activity, the Task Force has now focused their efforts on ways to strength the identification process, the service/support process, and the preservice/in-service training process.

### **IMPACT OF THE PROJECT**

The Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project has directly impacted the inservice training needs of professionals across the State of Colorado who work with learners (birth through 21 years) with deafblindness. The three consecutive summer trainings have provided important foundation knowledge to approximately 28 professionals who participated in

the entire series. Over 25 other Colorado professionals benefited from at least one of the trainings.

In addition to the summer series, over 200 professionals and parents benefited from trainings during the school year in topics such as early childhood education, transition services, and general awareness level information. It was extremely helpful to link with other organizations to provide training efforts to families and service providers.

One of the greatest achievements during the three years grant cycle was the collaborative work with agencies and organizations such as the Colorado Association of Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired, the University of Northern Colorado, the Colorado Hilton Perkins Project, the Colorado Statewide Transition Project, Helen Keller National Center, the Colorado Department of Health, Anchor Center for Blind Children, and the School Nurse Association. These contacts have broadened the scope of deafblindness from just the education arena to the health and rehabilitation arena. Comments such as "I now am thinking about deafblindness", have come from several sources outside of the classic education forum.

Actual products were restricted to project newsletters, brochures, and inservice training materials that were developed for specific training events.

#### **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT**

For more information about the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project during the grant cycle of fiscal years 1993, 1994, and 1995, please contact Tanni L. Anthony, Colorado Department of Education, 201 East Colfax Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80203.

A copy of this report can also be obtained by contacting ERIC/OSEP Special Projects, ERIC Clearinghouse, Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091.

#### **ASSURANCE STATEMENT OF REPORT SUBMISSION TO ERIC**

This report was submitted to ERIC Clearinghouse on December 29, 1995 by its author Tanni L. Anthony, Project Director of the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness, Colorado Department of Education, 201 East Colfax Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80203.