

Deaf-Blind Child Count Work Group

Facilitators: Julie Durando and Mark Schalock

**Session Attendees**

Jana Villemez (AR)

Jo Ann McCann (OSEP)

Amy Richards (IL)

Susan Bonner (MO)

Dottie Snyder (NC)

Michelle Ragunan (NJ)

Mike Fagbemi (NCDB)

Susanne Morrow (NY)

Leanne Parnell (OH)

Mark Schalock (NCDB)

Luz Robles Burmudez (PR)

Danna Conn (TN)

Brent Pitt (TX)

Susan Patton (UT)

Julie Durando (VA)

The session revolved around four discussion points:

1. **Reviewing the pilot year of collecting data on intervener services**
2. **Share strategies to address other critical issues identified by states**
3. **Reviewing current data elements for elements for possible deletions and or additions**
4. **Reviewing current reporting formats for added utility**

**Reviewing the pilot year of collecting data on intervener services for improvement:**

It was reiterated that this past year was a pilot year for collecting information on intervener services. Participants shared their experiences in collecting this data: challenges, strategies, suggestions for next year, etc. Forty-four states/territories submitted data on Intervener Services with a total of 420 children and youth receiving intervener services.

Each participant shared somewhat different challenges, though certainly a common theme was one of awareness and definition of intervener services. Several of the participants indicated that since they had trained all the interveners in the state they were able to identify which children/youth were receiving intervener services. Several states indicated that adding a new data element to the Child Count was problematic.

The process of collecting data on intervener services was aided by including the definition on the form, or in states that have recognized intervener services.

Participants liked the idea of including the definition on the data collection form, and would like to have instructions developed on how to do this in File Maker Pro. Additional requests from participants included adding an element on whether the “intervener” had received training and to include one for paraprofessional so that school districts do not mistakenly identify interveners.

**Identification of other critical issues identified by states and strategies to address them**

Hard to understand individual state system. The LEA doesn’t always know the child and the child find efforts are important. The understanding of the regulations and reporting requirements are uneven across systems and specific agencies. Participants thought that some sort of letter from NCDB and possible OSEP indicating the need and authority to conduct the Deaf-Blind Child Count would be very helpful.

The challenge of adding anything to the census format is difficult. The decision making committee are very careful about anything that might add to the burden the school districts are already feeling.

There is some confusion regarding the APH federal quota data collection and the Deaf-Blind Child Count, especially when they are done at the same time. States have color coded the forms, provided training, etc. to overcome this confusion. Since there is money attached to the APH there is some advantage seen in sending the forms out together as a way to increase responses. Several participants indicated that if a child/youth had been on the child count the previous year, the on-page form was sent out, rather than the four-page form.

Families moving in and out of states can be problematic. Sharing information across states would be beneficial if there was a consistent, legally viable way to do so.

Participants discussed the pros and cons of developing a single national database rather than each state having their own.

Finally, there was a call for continued discussions (informal via Adobe Connect) for states with similar challenges or characteristics, such as size, where the project was housed, etc.)

**Reviewing current data elements for elements for possible deletions and or additions**

The list of current data elements in the Deaf-Blind Child Count was shared with a discussion of what was required and what was open for discussion as to possible elimination.

Little consensus was reached by participants about adding to or deleting from the current data collected through the Child Count. One area of general agreement was around collecting additional information around assistive technology. This could be done through the supplemental form. In addition, knowing classroom support services would also be useful.

It was generally agreed that we would not eliminate any elements this year.

**Reviewing current reporting formats for added utility**

The final discussion focused on reporting formats for the Child Count. Currently the data is presented in the annual report and the mapping tool.

Little discussion took place as it was getting close to lunch. One idea that was surfaced was to develop or research existing tools that would allow states to map their data by geographic region. Several participants indicated that seeing the distribution of children on the deaf-blind child count against the broader population was useful in identifying areas to target for child find activities.

**Summary**

The definition for Intervener Services works. It needs to be added to the form sent out or as an additional page.

States need directions on how to add Intervener Services to their file maker pro databases and form. Possibly a webinar to guide people through the process.

A letter from NCDB/OSEP should be drafted that states could use to document the mandate to collect this information.

Conduct a webinar in early October for any new things related to the child count and to share strategies, materials, etc. used to conduct the child count. Possibly use the Forum and Wiki tools on the NCDB website to continue these discussions.

Explore developing a national on-line data collection system for all states to use.

Keep all existing data elements in the child count

Explore breaking out assistive technologies and classroom support services

Provide the opportunity for discussion/sharing sessions for alike states (size, location, etc.) to share challenges and solutions.

Research potential GPS mapping tools and longitudinal data display tools