



MN DeafBlind Project News

Winter Greetings!

We're in that long stretch of winter in Minnesota where we start to get a little antsy for sunshine, melting snow, and pops of green as the grass returns and tulip bulbs make their debut. I hope that you can grab a cup of your favorite warm drink and enjoy quality time together with your family and loved ones.

This newsletter includes a new Family Spotlight with the Flaig Family, highlights from our Winter Party, upcoming family opportunities (including a special parent training on March 8th!), and some great local resources. Enjoy!

-Brandy

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Find and follow us on social media!

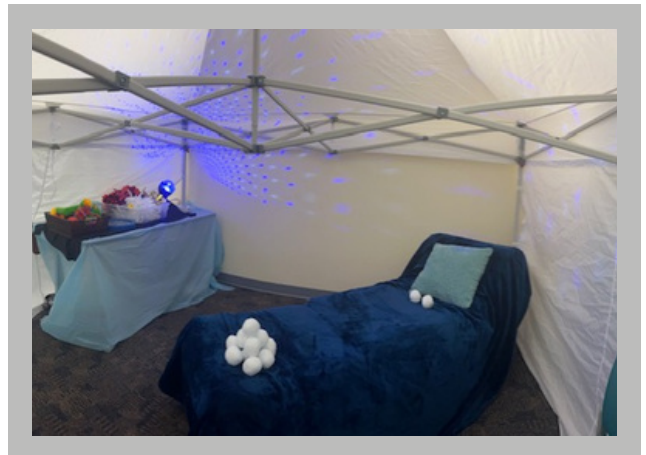


This resource was developed with a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. The source of the funds is from federal award – 84.326T, H326T230026 PL 108-446 PT. D IDEA. Special Education - Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities. The contents of this training do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal or state government.

MNDBP Highlights

Winter Party 2026!

We co-hosted the Winter Party with DeafBlind Services Minnesota and had a blast! Families mingled and kids enjoyed a variety of winter themed activities. The Calming Igloo was new this year and was a huge hit!



Family Spotlight

Flaig Family

Can you tell us about your child and their favorite activities or interests?

Payton is a 16-year-old girl, and she's in 9th grade at our high school. She very much enjoys school with the help of her intervener, Katie. She loves adapted dance, baseball, and bowling. She's in varsity band and plays percussion. She loves music, swimming and being around family and friends. Her smiles lights up a room. She's determined, silly, and such a smart teen.

What has been the most rewarding part of your journey as a family raising a child who is DeafBlind?

The most rewarding part of raising a teen who is deafblind is watching her discover new things around her. Finding new sights, sounds, and experiences opens up a whole new world for her. Having the ability to communicate through sign language, with an AAC device, and with sound, gives her the opportunity to advocate and communicate with the people around her.

Are there any strategies, tools, or resources that have been especially helpful for your child's growth and learning?

Having an intervener in school and in our home has really helped her navigate the world around her. An intervener not only helps her learn to advocate for herself, but also teaches her in a way that helps make things easier for her. Connecting with other families also is very helpful when navigating the system.

How has the MN DeafBlind Project supported your family?

When Payton was first diagnosed with bilateral hearing loss and lost her left eye to Retinoblastoma, we didn't know what the future would be like for her. When Payton was 3 years old, we got connected with MN DeafBlind Project. We were able to explore so many options for her with community, communication skills for her and us as parents. Deanna, Brandy, and Kim (DeafBlind Services Minnesota) have really taken us under their wings every step of the way. I've been able to attend workshops and conferences to better understand the world of what it's like to be DeafBlind. Having an intervener has really been a godsend for her and our family. It has given us new tools to use, different ways to think about what works for her, and new ideas to use when communicating with her. It's brought us closer together as a family, helped us connect within the DeafBlind community, and brought new friendships over the years. She really has grown so much over the last 13 years.

Without the MN DeafBlind Project, I'm not sure where our family or Payton would be. They have given us a wealth of information on how to advocate and communicate with our daughter. We are forever grateful for their love and support.



Upcoming Family Events

Family events hosted by the MN DeafBlind Project are FREE to families of DeafBlind children/youth.

Empowering Families Through DeafBlind Training

4th Tuesday of each month

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. OR 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Each month, we'll meet online to learn and connect. Meetings will include family-requested topics, guest speakers, and simple strategies or activities that you can try at home. You'll also get access to a monthly self-paced learning module (about 4 hours) to help you better understand and support your child with combined hearing and vision loss.

Don't miss this opportunity to build community, make meaningful connections, and learn from both experts and fellow families!



[RSVP Here](#) to get more details and meeting information.

Communication for DeafBlind Children Who Are Early Communicators

Sunday, March 8, 2026

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Arden Hills, MN



Guest presenter, Nancy Steele will guide parents in this training with a focus on understanding, and using strategies for, children who have emerging communication skills (body language, gestures, vocalizations, etc.)

[RSVP Here](#) by Monday, March 2.

Family & Intervener Appreciation Picnic

Saturday, June 6, 2026

11:00-2:00 p.m.

Join the Minnesota DeafBlind Project and DeafBlind Services Minnesota for our beloved annual picnic! There will be a caricature artist, face painting, outdoor activities and many opportunities to meet and connect with other families!

[RSVP Here](#) by Friday, May 15, 2026.



Resource Highlight



Audiology
ENT & Facial Plastic Surgery

This program receives grant funding and website support from Minnesota Department of Health.

Pediatric Hearing Device Loaner Program

This program provides loaner hearing devices for children (ages birth to 18 years) in Minnesota. These short-term loans give families time to decide and secure funds to purchase their own hearing devices or wait for medical interventions. A typical loan period is 6 months. If you are interested in learning more, connect with your clinical or school audiologist to help determine if the loaner bank is right for your family.



Minnesota's STAR Program

A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR)

STAR's mission is to help all Minnesotans with disabilities gain access to and acquire the assistive technology they need to live, learn, work and play.

Assistive Technology Device Loans

- Try a device in their environment.
- Collect data showing that the device meets the consumer's needs to justify a funding request.
- Use as a short-term loaner while a personal device is being repaired. Understand training and support needs associated with device or software.
- Make an informed purchasing decision.

Device Exchange

A listing of resources that helps Minnesotans donate, sell, and buy previously owned but still usable assistive technology.