



# THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI MISSISSIPPI DEAF-BLIND PROJECT

FOCUSING ON QUALITY SERVICES TO INFANTS, CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE DEAF-BLIND

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## FOCUS FLYER

### TRANSITION: What it is? When should it be done and who is involved? Part Two of a Three Part Series

By Cassandra Holly, Project Support Coordinator

“The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker”

—Helen Keller

In the last *Focus Flyer*, I discussed different aspects of the transition process. I included information on

- **Person Centered Planning**
- **Individual Student Portfolios**
- **Student Manuals with Transition**
- **Pictorial and Video Resumes**
- **Applying for Home and Community Based Waiver Services and other adult services**
- **Training Resources**

In this addition, I would like to focus on transition timelines and what should be done in the transition process before a certain age. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, transition is most beneficial when started early in life. However, in most instances transition activities start at 14 years of age.

By the **Seventh or Eighth grade**, the parent, student and teacher should start thinking of transition with the mindset of **career portfolio/transition file development**. The transition file should include things like self-awareness activities, self-determination activities, exploring lifelong options and goals, career interest inventories, and personal data.

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One VERY important aspect of transition planning is to develop a plan and make it an **integral part of the IEP**. The parent and the student should be very much involved in making transition a part of the IEP goals. When thinking of the transition process as part of the IEP, it is never too early to think of different resources and agencies that should be a part of the student's transition plans.

This is also a time to investigate the need to photo ID, do a verification of social security number, consider a ton of aptitude/skills testing (based on need), and seek in school work experiences through community based education (job shadowing). In addition, a pictorial or video resume could be started at this time and continued throughout the high school experience.

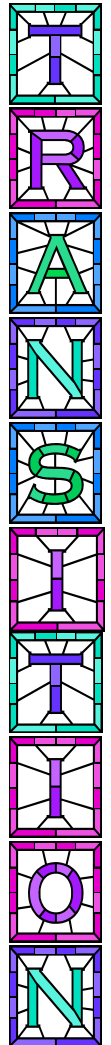
## TRANSITION... Part Two (continued from page 1)

The **Ninth grade**, is a time to update the career portfolio/transition file. This is done by continuing to do informal assessment surveys of future plans by the parent, student, and teacher. Look at and update **potential adult living, working, and educational environments** and continue to develop transition plans in the IEP. In addition, the parent and student should apply for social security benefits through the Social Security Administration. It is also a good idea to apply for medical assistance through the county social services. Community based work experiences should continue. A graduation date should be established and vocational options reviewed. The parent and individual should develop a four-year educational plan with the school counselor that meets the student's career goals.

In the **10th grade**, continue updating career portfolios and the transition file through IEP meetings, parent, student and teacher surveys, and updating adult living, working, and educational environments. Look into part-time work experiences through job services (WOTC). Other community businesses should be explored. Continue with the community-based work experiences. In addition, explore transportation options, postsecondary education options, talk with parents and other adults about career goals, take courses that lead to career goals, review educational plans, reassess educational and personal strengths, and review vocational options.

In the **11th grade**, continue with updating the career portfolio/transition file; the adult living, working and educational options; and update the skills the student already possesses. In addition, informal parent, teacher, and student assessments should continue to be used to see if there are any changes. The community based work experiences should continue and may include Vocational Education work experience and Vocational Education group classes. It is VERY important that the student and parent complete an eligibility/application for needed adult services. It is recommended that this be done by the 11th grade. In addition, students could take courses that lead to career goals or visit postsecondary institution options. The students should continue the community based work experience and update their pictorial or video resume, attend career fairs and review vocational options.

In the **12th grade**, the student should prepare his/her resume via paper, picture or video. Update the career portfolio/transition file with skills the student possesses; continue to update potential adult living, working, and education environments; continue to update transition IEP goals; continue with part-time work experiences; and seek new work experiences through Vocational Rehabilitation or other job services. The student and parents should visit postsecondary education options (if postsecondary education is the option the student decides on) and ask the admissions officer how to contact the office of Disability Support Services. Upon graduation the student should be given his/her career portfolio/transition file. During the special education termination conference at the school, it is important to make sure a list of all agency services offered with their telephone numbers be given to the student and family.



## National Family Association for Deaf-Blind

SUPPORTING PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF-BLIND AND THEIR FAMILIES



The National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB) is a nonprofit, volunteer based family association. Our philosophy is that individuals who are deaf-blind are valued members of society and are entitled to the same opportunities and choices as other members of the community. NFADB is the largest national network of families focusing on issues surrounding deaf blindness.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

To join, contact [NFADB@aol.com](mailto:NFADB@aol.com) or 800-255-0411.

### **TRAINING FOR PARENTS FROM NFADB and NTAC**

NFADB and the National Technical Assistance Consortium (NTAC) are sponsoring a wonderful workshop specifically for parents with children who are deaf-blind.

The workshop is July 13-15, 2006, in Tampa, FL.

The workshop will focus on *advocacy and leaderships skills for parents, issues impacting individuals who are deaf-blind, advocacy skills at the local, state, and national level.*

For an application and more information, please contact Cassandra Holly –MSDB Project at 601.259.2575.

## Southern Miss Offers a Master's in Severe Disabilities



In the Spring of 2004, The University of Southern Mississippi (Southern Miss) embarked on a new opportunity for teachers and service providers, working with children and adults who are deaf-blind. Through the collaboration between Southern Miss and Texas Tech University (TTU), a master's program in special education with an emphasis on dual sensory impairment was started. This five-year program is projected to train up to 45 students in four different cohort groups. This master's is a two-year course of study containing 12 three-credit classes.

The funding for the new master's program was provided by the U.S. Department of Education to Southern Miss through a low incidence personnel preparation grant. The grant covers tuition, books, travel, and childcare expenses.

This new master's emphasis area provides strategies and techniques specific to deafblindness, that teachers and service providers can implement in their daily service delivery. The courses for this new program are provided online. Using the Internet format helps make taking classes easier for students who are working and cannot commit to taking classes on a college campus. The courses use a variety of teaching tools in order to help meet the needs of each student. The courses use the Internet format with asynchronous and real time, CD-ROM's, e-mail, discussion boxes, online live chats, videotapes, telephone dialogue, observation, Interactive Video Network (IVN) and at least two face to face meetings at Southern Miss a semester.

The students have come from a variety of settings which include parents, special education teachers, regular education teachers, and home and community-based waiver services. The first cohort group graduated with a class of 13 in December 2005. The second cohort group is scheduled to graduate at the end of 2006 with a class of 10. The third group started in January of 2006 with a class of 14. Selection for the fourth cohort group is currently underway. If you are interested, please contact Liz Grantham at 1.800.264.5135 or via e-mail at [deaf-blind@usm.edu](mailto:deaf-blind@usm.edu).



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**We're on the Web!**  
[www.usm.edu/msdb](http://www.usm.edu/msdb)

## 2006 Seminars

### \* **American Association of Deaf-Blind**

27th biennial conference in Baltimore, MD  
June 17-23, 2006

For more information: 301.495.4402.

### \* **Southern Miss Recreational Conference**

Pearl River Resort in Choctaw, MS  
July 6-7

Professionals \$60; Families \$30

Contact Rick Green 601.266.5576

### \* **ARC Annual Conference**

Eagle Ridge Conference Center  
Raymond, MS

July 20-21, 2006

Contact Cindy Dittus 601.982.1180

## PROJECT STAFF

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## Project News

After four years of dedicated service to the Mississippi Deaf-Blind Project, Janet Salek left to pursue a career in teaching and research. She will continue to work with individuals who have visual impairments. We will miss her but also know that she is happy to be near her family.

We are happy to announce that Jennifer Baker is back working with the project. Jennifer has agreed to contract with us on a part-time basis, updating student portfolio's, tracking project activity and outcomes, and assisting with project material development, including poster presentations. Welcome back, Jennifer!

We would also like to welcome Nancy Harmon to the project. Nancy has agreed to contract with us on a part-time basis to assist with our early intervention students. Thank you, Nancy, for sharing your expertise with us!