



FOCUS FLYER

THE MAIN FOCUS

PROFILES AND PORTFOLIOS OF LIFE AND PROGRESS

What are the Mississippi Department of Education guidelines on Transition Portfolios?

All students whose IEP indicates that they will exit high school with an option other than a standard diploma or an occupational diploma must have a Transition Portfolio. This requirement will be phased in beginning with students entering the ninth grade in August, 2002.

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/sped/>

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Have you ever seen a new mother with a brag book full of pictures and milestones of her new child? Or a child who has a scrapbook full of awards and pictures? These are similar to profiles and portfolios.

There are various ways and reasons to create portfolios with individuals who have disabilities. *Students and parents* may want something that looks nice and shows accomplishments and events. *School officials* may want something that just has pertinent documentation of progress. We are advocating for a combination of these two thoughts.

At the Mississippi Deaf-Blind Project we have been using three different types of profiles with parents, students and providers. These are not the only options available to parents or providers, but they are the ones we have chosen to focus on.

The first type we have used is called **Home Talk**. This profile was developed by the Bringing It All Back Home Project in Oregon. It is a very positive tool that is focused on the **family** assessment of children who are deafblind. Answers to questions are handwritten into the booklet. The an-

swers then help identify possible general goals the student, parents and teachers can work on together.

The second type of portfolio is one that was designed by the Mississippi Deaf-Blind Project combining several portfolio's used around the United States. This is a com-

Mississippi Deaf-Blind Project

offers these types of portfolios as starting points:

- 1. HomeTalk**
A family assessment tool, handwritten, leading to identification of possible goals.
- 2. Student Portfolio**
A computer document that can be modified by families or schools that includes history, communication abilities, and students favorite activities.
- 3. Project SPARKLE**
A DVD/Internet educational/profiling system

puter-based **student portfolio** that is detailed documentation including a student's history, accommodations for successful participation, communication mode and favorite activities. It can be modified by the parent or school, and can be put into a notebook for ease of presentation.

The third type of portfolio is from **Project SPARKLE**. This is a DVD/Internet program that educates parents about deafblindness, and then asks them to fill out questions in conjunction with the module on the DVD concerning their child. This is a federal project through the SKI-HI Institute at Utah State University.

If you don't use one of these three options, it is still important that you document each child's favorite activities, disabilities, supports and history.





FUTURE FOCUS

September

17: MS Deaf-Blind Advisory Committee meeting at The Arc of Mississippi

24: Parent Meeting with NTAC Regional Rep, Amy Parker in Hattiesburg

Contact: MS D-B Project (800) 264-5135

24: An Overview of Eval/Assessment Process Workshop Institute of Disability Studies

Contact Sonia Carr (601) 266-4204

October

8: Comprehensive Assessment System Workshop; Institute of Disability Studies

Contact: Sonia Carr (601) 266-4204

21 & 22: Workshops on the Communication Matrix in Brandon (just outside of Jackson)

Contact: Jennifer Baker (800) 264-5135

22: Conversations about Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs (locations around the state)

Contact: Susan Phillips (888) 671-0051

22: Assessment of Dev. Through Play Workshop; Institute of Disability Studies

Contact: Sonia Carr (601) 266-4202

30-31: Healthy Futures Retreat at Henry Jacobs Campground in Utica

Contact: Sam Gleese (601) 969-0601

November

4 & 5: Workshops on the Communication Matrix in Oxford

Contact: Jennifer Baker (800) 264-5135

11 & 12: Workshops on the Communication Matrix in Hattiesburg

Contact: Jennifer Baker (800) 264-5135

17-20: TASH National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

19: Assessment of Motor Skills Workshop; Institute of Disability Studies

Contact: Sonia Carr (601) 266-4204

December

3: Assessment of Environments Workshop; Institute of Disabilities Studies

Contact: Sonia Carr (601) 266-4204

2005

April

14-15: 3rd Annual MS Early Intervention Conference (Location TBA)

Contact: Sonia Carr (601) 266-4204

2006

June

17-23: AADB Conference/Gathering at Towson University in Baltimore, MD

www.aadb.org

Funding assistance available for family members by MS Deaf-Blind Project. Call 800-264-5135 for more information.



Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature... Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.

Helen Keller

RESOURCES FOR PORTFOLIOS

Home Talk

A Family Assessment of Children who are Deafblind

Bringing It All Back Home Project

Available from:

DB-Link

(800) 438-9376 (voice)

(800) 854-7013 (TTY)

<http://www.tr.wou.edu/dblink/>

Project SPARKLE

Parent Guidebook

SKI-HI Institute

Utah State University

Contact Jennifer Baker at the Mississippi Deaf-Blind Project if you are interested

(800) 264-5135

jennifer.d.baker@usm.edu

HOW CAN PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS USE PORTFOLIOS EFFECTIVELY?

PARENT FOCUS

It is vital for parents to be able to share with others the history, preferences and accommodations for successful participation in meaningful activities of their child. In order to do this effectively there are some points to think about:

1. Is the documentation legible and easily understandable?
2. Is the documentation organized in a accessible manner?
3. Is the documentation usable by different professions (such as an in-home respite care worker and also a medical doctor)?
4. Is the documentation up-to-date?
5. Does the portfolio really show your child's personality and preferences?

Sometimes it is hard to motivate others and yourself to pay attention to bulky documents. Let your priorities lead you in the creation of this portfolio. Do not try to have a "finished" product. This should grow and change with your child, just as a scrapbook would.

SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL FOCUS

It is also vital for Support Professionals to be able to communicate information about a child to each individual working with a child. Not only the people working with the child in the present circumstances, but also future teachers and school personnel, as well as home service providers .

Here are some points to think about:

1. The information in the portfolio should be required reading for each staff member who works with this child
2. The information should be readily available and easily accessible to each staff member
3. This is a tool that can be modified to show progress and improvements needed, as well as showcasing accomplishments

Make it usable to you and your co-workers, and accessible to the family and supervisors.



When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.

Helen Keller

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PORTFOLIOS

Reach for the Stars

Developed by
Jennifer Greshem-Brown, Ed.D.
Diane G. Haynes, M.Ed.
1999, American Publishing House



"Could You Please Tell My Teacher?"

A Parent/Teacher Guide to Successful Transitions
Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project
University of Nevada, Reno
Developed by
MaryAnn Demchak, Project Director
Marty Elquist, Project Coordinator
April 2001

MISSISSIPPI DEAF-BLIND PROJECT

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We're on the web!
www.usm.edu/msdb



FOCUS ON SERVICES



(This month we are taking a look at **The Arc of Mississippi**)

The Arc is...

an organization of volunteers—parents, professionals, and others concerned with the well being of children and adults with developmental disabilities. The Arc of Mississippi is an affiliate of The Arc/US, the nation's largest volunteer organization devoted to improving the lives of persons with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities and their families. The Arc of Mississippi works with local grassroot groups throughout the state to address the needs and concerns of our citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.

The Arc Offers...

- Respite Services
- Parent Training and Information regarding education for children
- Individual and Legislative Advocacy
- Behavior management Training
- Parent Support Services
- Prevention Information
- Information and Referral
- Local Chapter Development
- Public Awareness
- Local Chapter Enhancement
- Training regarding best practices in serving persons with disabilities.

The Arc serves...

Any persons with developmental disabilities, family members of persons with disabilities, professionals, and interested citizens. In short, anyone who could benefit from the services of The Arc can be served.

To find out more about The Arc of Mississippi, please contact:

Matt Nalker or Cindy Dittus
7 Lakeland Circle Suite #600
Jackson, MS 39216

(800) 717-1180
(601) 982-1180