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 HomeTalk. 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 answers 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 computer-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

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.

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 an 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.

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**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
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 grassroots 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