



# Early Intervention for Children who are Deafblind



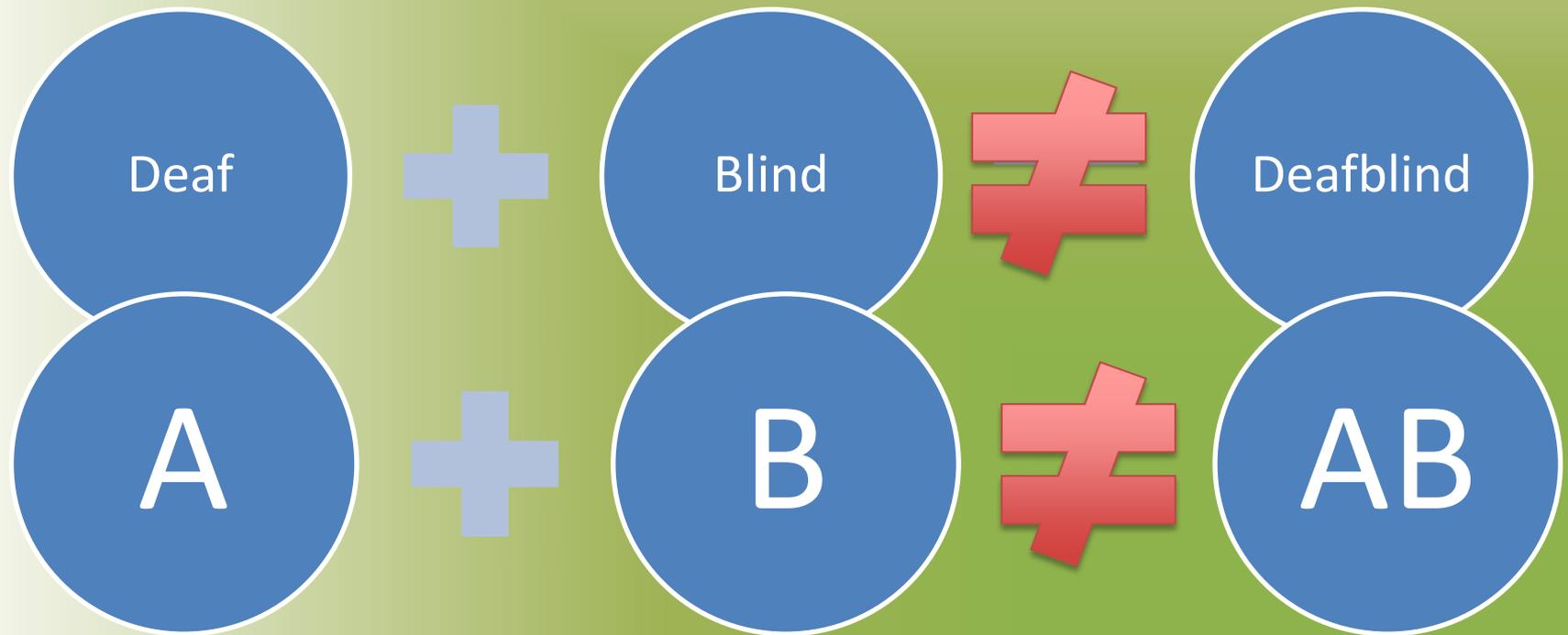
*Tabitha Belhorn, Ohio Hands & Voices*

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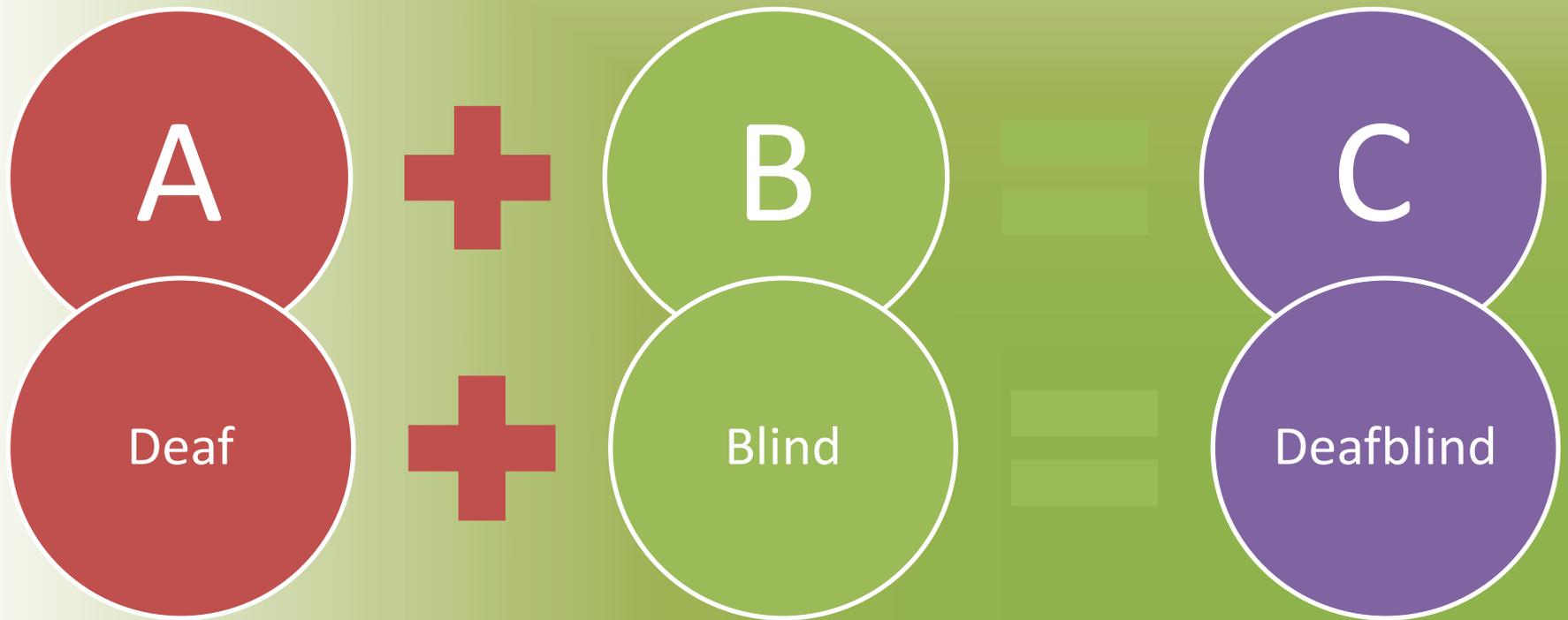
# Objectives

- Learn three ways families and caregivers can assist, participate, and support EI providers.
- Learn two ways to support early literacy development.
- Learn how to create safe interactive play spaces for children who are deafblind.

# What is Deafblind?



# Uniqueness of Deafblindness



# Deafblindness...

...means concomitant [simultaneous] hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

# Family Participation

- Establish a relationship
- Trust
- Respect
- Flexibility
- Guide
- Model

# Early Intervention Domains

- Physical
- Communication/Language
- Self Help
- Social-Emotional
- Cognitive

# Early Literacy Skills

- Building a Foundation\*
- Early Emergent Literacy\*
- Emergent Literacy
- Writing
- Vocabulary Development
- Comprehension
- Increasing Fluency
- Expanding Literacy

*[www.literacy.nationaldb.org](http://www.literacy.nationaldb.org)*

# Building a Foundation

- Develop a trusting relationship with the child.
- Find communication opportunities through the day.
- Design learning experiences that are meaningful to the child.

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# Early Emergent Literacy

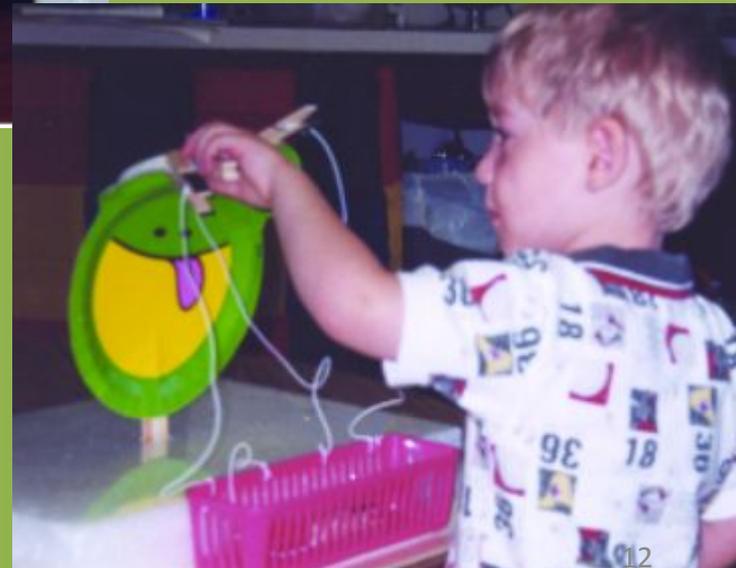
- Model reading and writing behaviors.
- Embed the use of objects, symbols or words throughout the child's day.
- Incorporate rhythm, music, finger play, and mime games.
- Provide opportunities for handling and exploring reading and writing materials.
- Teach print and book awareness.
- Teach name, name sign of child and of persons the child interacts with regularly.
- Embed literacy learning activities into routines.

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# Creating Safe Play Spaces

- High Interest, multi-sensory materials
- Anchored down
- Self-initiated Exploration
- Easily adaptable
- Individual use or with others
- Inexpensive and Easy to create

# Examples



# Let's Create Your Space

# Interacting with a Deafblind Child

- Don't be afraid
- Ask questions
- Learn about the child's useable vision
- Learn about the child's residual hearing

# Deaf vs. Deafblind

## **Deaf /Hard of Hearing Child**

- Focus on Visual
- Visual Presentation
- Voice Qualities
- Facial Expressions

## **Deafblind Child**

- Focus on Tactile
- Hand Under Hand Technique
- Voice Qualities
- Facial Expressions
- Focus on Movement

# Communication Skills of a Deafblind Child

## Obvious

- Speech
- Sign
- Pictures
- Drawings
- Communication boards and systems

## Less Obvious

- Moving you to an object
- Standing near an object
- Eye gaze
- Withdrawal
- Changes in muscle tone
- Acting out

# More Information

- Hold Everything
- National Center on Deafblindness
- “Strategies for Creating Communication-Rich Environments for Children who are Deaf-Blind,” *Maurice Belote, California Deafblind reSource Spring 2008, Volume 13, Number 2, page 5*

# Resources

- National Center on Deafblindness (NCDB)
- Helen Keller National Center (HKNC)
- National Family Association for Deafblind (NFADB)
- Perkins School for the Blind
- American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)
- American Association of the Deafblind (AADB)
- State Deafblind Project

# For More Information



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