

**A SELF-EVALUATION GUIDE FOR ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF YOUR INTERACTIONS  
WITH A STUDENT WHO IS DEAF-BLIND**

By Gloria Rodriguez-Gil and David Brown  
CDBS Educational Specialists

When working with a child who is deaf-blind, the *quality* of the interaction between you and the child is as important as the *activity* the two of you do together. All interactions offer valuable opportunities to work on the development of general skill areas (e.g., communication and language, social and environmental awareness, self-regulation, positive self-image), as well as the teaching of specific discrete skills (e.g., fine motor hand manipulation in the motor domain or sorting and matching in the math domain). Through *appropriate interactions* the child can greatly increase their opportunities of learning on many different levels from these experiences.

The following is a series of questions that you may ask yourself to evaluate the quality of an interaction with a child who is deaf-blind. The more questions you can answer with a “yes”, the more likely that the quality of the interaction will be good.

Y   N   Not  
Sure

- |                          |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you start the “working session” by taking time to observe the child and get a sense of their physical and emotional states?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do you have a unique way—that the child can perceive—to let them know who you are to increase the likelihood that the child knows it is you?                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. When introducing an activity, do you have an appropriate way to label the activity for the child so that pre-symbolic and symbolic understanding is being aided and extended? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Once you have begun your interaction, do you have a familiar routine you follow with the child to help them warm up to you and to the activities you are presenting to them?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you remember to use language—at whatever level is appropriate for the child—to label the activity before it begins, during the interaction, and after it has finished?     |

**Y**   **N**   **Not  
Sure**

- |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Do you moderate your pace so the child is able to perceive, attend, understand and respond to the activities you are doing with them to reduce the chances that the child will become bored because the activity is too slow or lasts too long or become confused because the activity is too brief or fast? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Do you closely observe the child so you can be flexible and respond appropriately to their spontaneous responses, which might be very subtle, and shift the interaction into an unexpected direction if necessary?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Do you modulate your interaction with the child depending on their level of engagement, and honor the child's attempts to both initiate <i>and</i> terminate the interaction?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Do you create opportunities for the child to express their wants and needs throughout the session?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Bearing in mind that the child may be able to perceive your own emotional state, do you try to convey that you are feeling an appropriate level of engagement, enjoyment, and pleasure in mutual achievement?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Once an interaction is finished, do you review with the child what the two of you have done together and what is now different as a result of having shared this time with the child?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Do you share with others what you're doing to improve the quality of your interactions with the child so they can use these strategies in their interactions and understand the importance of these key concepts?   |

---

Notes

California Deaf-Blind Services  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94132-4158  
(415) 405-7560 VOICE/TTY  
(415) 338-2845 FAX  
[www.cadbs.org](http://www.cadbs.org)