

FACT SHEET

Supported Education

Traditionally individuals with deaf-blindness have been educated in separate and specialized environments. Recently research and successful experiences have opened the doors to less restrictive educational program for these students.

Including students with their non-disabled peers in integrated environments provides individuals with disabilities the opportunity to interact with and learn from students with other abilities. Non-disabled peers model appropriate communication and behavior and provide opportunities for social interaction. Shared experiences between peers allow friendships to develop. These friendships often continue to provide support individuals need in future environments.

Supported education is an option chosen by the educational team, including the family as the primary member. The least restrictive environment (LRE) mandate states that the educational placement of an individual must be based on the IEP and located as close as possible to the student's home.

Supported education is the process of providing support, assistance and information to ensure the successful inclusion of students with disabilities within the general education classroom. This support is most generally provided by a team of general education teacher, special education staff, the individual and his/her family and peers. Supported education is not a way to abolish special education, nor a strategy to decrease services to individual students. It is, however, a means to deliver educational services to students with diverse needs within the general education system. It often results in an increase of services to both individuals with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

Supported education can benefit students with varying disabilities. While recognizing the unique learning needs of individuals, modifications and adaptations can be made to accommodate individuals with dual sensory impairments within a variety of educational settings. However, successful programming requires that the supports and supplemental services required by the IEP are provided and managed appropriately, and all involved work in a collaborative manner. Personnel specially trained in sensory impairments must work in a team approach to provide related services.

Supported education is an option that should be available to every individual with dual sensory impairments. Careful planning and collaborative efforts will ensure the successful inclusion of individuals in their school, community, and work environments.

**The Project for New Mexico
Children & Youth Who Are
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Fact sheets from the Project for NM Children & Youth Who Are Deafblind are to be used by both families and professionals serving individuals with dual sensory impairments. The information applies to students 0 – 21 years of age. The purpose of the fact sheet is to give general information on a specific topic. More specific information for an individual student can be provided through individualized technical assistance. The fact sheet is a starting point for further information. Information for this Fact Sheet kindly supplied by California Deaf-Blind Services and the Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project.