



March 4, 2008

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT to PARENTS

Because you are the parent of a child who is deafblind, we wanted to make sure that you understand some important changes to the NH Vision/Hearing Network (NHVHN) that will go into effect on July 1, 2008. These changes are necessary due to a reduction in funding for NHVHN.

Starting in the 2008-2009 school year, NHVHN will operate differently than it does now. It is very important for you, as a parent, to understand the changes and how they may impact your child. A letter similar to this one that outlines the changes has been sent to the special education administrator in your district as well as the building level contact for your child.

To summarize the important changes for you, here is an explanation of what remains the same and what will be different in the program as of July 1, 2008.

- NHVHN is still funded by the NH Dept. of Education to operate an Instructional Materials Center where students can borrow available FM system equipment on a short-term basis. Students can also borrow large print and braille books from the library. We can still help schools determine the best place to purchase needed FM technology and/or large print and braille materials. Your school district is responsible to purchase the large print, braille, and/or FM technology that is needed by your child in school but not available for loan through the library.
- Kim Conlon, certified Teacher of Students who are Deafblind/Multihandicapped is still available to help your school district identify the service and support needs of your child that are related to the dual sensory impairment.
- However, one very big difference is that Kim will only be able to provide on-going consultation to your child's school if the school district pays for that service. This is particularly important if your child does not have another teacher with Kim's specialized credentials working directly with them. For the remainder of this school year, Kim is able to visit and offer consultation to the school regarding your child's needs at no cost. Starting in school year 2008-09 this is no longer possible. If your child's team needs on-going and regular consultation with Kim in school year 2008-2009, they will have to pay for the services.
- As of January 1, 2008, the project no longer pays for assistive technology evaluations. If your child needs an evaluation to determine the best assistive technology solutions for them to use while in school, other funds will have to pay for that evaluation.
- NHVHN will still maintain a statewide information source for issues related to the education of students who are deafblind, and we encourage parents to call us with questions.
- The New England Center Deafblind Project at Perkins School for the Blind is still able to offer trainings and other statewide activities in NH related to the needs of students who are Deafblind. (www.necdb.org)
- NHVHN and the NE Center will continue to offer training events at our office in Concord, and those trainings will remain free to parents.

Change is difficult, and these changes are certainly no exception. It is important that you understand the changes and how they may impact your child. Please feel free to call me at 226-2900 x 109 or email me at catew@atechservices.org with any questions or concerns that you have. As you plan with your child's educational team for next school year, please keep in mind these important changes. Remember that consultation services will still be available, but that there will be a fee to the school district for those services.

Cate Weir
Project Director, NHVHN