



Deaf + Blind = Hearing Loss + Vision Loss

What is Deaf-Blind?

The term “Deaf-Blind” is a general term used for the population who has combined hearing and vision loss in varying degrees. Often, when we see the word “deaf-blind,” we think of a person who is totally deaf and blind. However, each individual who has hearing and vision loss is different.

What are the types of vision loss?

- **Visual acuity:** 20/70 or higher requiring large print to read.
Legal blindness: 20/200 or higher.
- **Visual field loss:** peripheral vision loss; experiences difficulty in locating things in a timely manner, bumping or hitting things that are out of their visual field.

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A person is legally blind if vision field is less than 20 degrees in their better eye.

- **Light sensitivity:** (1) Sensitive to light/glare requiring adaptations to the environment, (2) Lack of sensitivity to light requiring more light than a normal person would or (3) night blindness—difficulty seeing in dark/dim environments as well as at night.
- **Contrast sensitivity:** Has difficulty seeing similar colors (i.e.: white/yellow, black/blue, red/pink, blue/green) requiring high contrast in clothing, printed text).

How do you identify a person with combined hearing and vision loss?

- **Hearing:** Misses certain sounds, has difficulty understanding in certain situations, or has difficulty understanding any speech, (relies on other avenues of communication such



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as printed text, sign language or gestures).
Some people wear hearing aids.

- **Vision:** The individual may exhibit one or any combination of the following:
 - 1) Difficulty reading regular print and prefers reading large print or is unable to read any print.
 - 2) Misses certain items in the environment, or needs “guiding” assistance by following a person or by holding a person’s arm. Some use white canes.
 - 3) Has difficulty seeing things because of too much or too little light in the environment.

What label do I use for individuals who have combined hearing and vision loss?

When interacting with individuals who have both hearing and vision loss, ASK them how they identify themselves:

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- Hard of Hearing-Visually Impaired
- Hard of Hearing-Blind
- Deaf-Blind
- Deaf-Visually Impaired

Use their preferred identifying label. RESPECT is one of the most important considerations in working with this population.

*For more information contact
the Deaf-Blind Services Specialist
at the Charlotte Regional Center
(704-568-8558 or 800-835-5302)
or the Wilson Regional Center
(252-243-3104 or 800-999-6828).*



State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing
www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh

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How to contact us: We have seven Regional Centers throughout the state to assist you with your needs. Please contact the center nearest you for assistance:

Asheville:

12 Barbetta Drive, Asheville, NC 28806
828-665-8733 V/TTY • 828-333-5830 VP
800-681-8035 TTY • 800-681-7998 V
828-670-5054 Fax

Charlotte:

5501 Executive Center Dr., Suite 101
Charlotte, NC 28212
704-568-8558 V • 704-918-1554 VP
704-568-8505 TTY • 800-835-5302 V
800-835-5306 TTY • 704-568-9615 Fax

Greensboro:

122 North Elm Street, Suite 900
Greensboro, NC 27401
336-273-9692 V/TTY • 336-429-5644 VP
888-467-3413 V/TTY • 336-256-0689 Fax

Morganton:

517 C West Fleming Dr., Morganton, NC 28655
828-432-5335 V • 828-475-6606 VP
828-432-5336 TTY • 800-999-8915 V
800-205-9920 TTY • 828-432-5341 Fax

Raleigh:

2301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2301
919-874-2250 V/TTY • 919-890-0858 VP
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Wilmington:

3340 Jaeckle Drive, The Randall Bldg., Suite 104
Wilmington, NC 28403
910-251-5702 V • 910-777-5770 VP
910-251-5767 TTY • 800-205-9915 V
800-205-9915 TTY • 910-251-2677 Fax

Wilson:

2705 Wooten Blvd SW, Wilson, NC 27893
252-243-3104 V • 252-674-1141 VP
252-243-1951 TTY • 800-999-6828 V
800-205-9925 TTY • 252-243-7634 Fax

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919-874-2212 V/TTY • 919-890-0859 VP
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