**What is Deafblindness? Descriptive Transcript**

**[On-Screen text]** Deafblindness is…

Maurice Belote, Former Project Coordinator, California Deafblind Services

**[Visual Description]** A series of images. A young boy and his teacher sit on the floor of a classroom and lean over a tiny toy piano.Two children standing in upright walkers, a guide dog is next to them. A teacher sits next to a student with glasses and a hearing aid. The student’s hand is on top of the teacher’s. A boy and a girl in a woodshop class, the boy sands a piece of wood.

**Maurice Belote:** Deafblindness is a spectrum disability. It's a spectrum in terms of the presence or absence of any available vision and/or hearing, the presence or absence of any additional disabilities, and whether or not the deafblindness was from birth or acquired later in life. And all of those three factors have a huge impact on how the student functions.

**[On-Screen Text]** Children Who are deafblind are…

[light music]

**[Visual Description]** A series of images - Children of various ages, ethnicities, and etiologies of deafblindness.

**Maurice Belote:** A really remarkable group of students, they are all very different. So, when we think about how to teach a child who is deafblind, so much of it is dependent on that individual child and meeting the child's individual needs.

[upbeat music]

**[Visual Description]** A teenage boy and his teacher have a conversation by talking and signing while sitting in front of a large board showing the days of the month in April. There are a number of tactile symbols on different days. The boy places his hand over the teacher’s hand, and together they explore the symbols. At one point, they give each other a high five.

-(teacher) Monday. - (student) Shopping. -(teacher) Shopping. - (student) Tuesday. -(teacher) Tuesday. - (student) Science. -(teacher) Science. - (student) Wednesday. (teacher) Wednesday in three, two weeks. -(student) New month! -The new month, whoo! Good job!

**[Visual Description]** A woman sits behind a small girl who is wearing glasses. They use the hand-under-hand technique as the woman picks up a ball of dough and rolls it between her hands.

**Teacher:** Let's break it in half. We're gonna put one down here, and then we're gonna use this one, okay? Let me see your hands.

**Student:** That one's Amber’s

**Teacher:** Yes. Can I see your hands? Can you put them on top? This one too. All right, okay. And you're gonna roll, roll.

**[On-Screen Text]** Sandra Gillam, Mother of a Child Who is Deafblind and a Teacher for Students With Visual Impairments

**Sandra Gillam:** I wish they knew how capable he was and that, you know, he can do things and it just is gonna look different and it might take a little more work. You just gotta think outside the box and be creative, but that he is able and he wants to do things, and he can communicate and he does have things to say, and he wants to have those connections with his peers, with the staff. He wants to know what's happening. He wants to, you know, say what's on his mind. He wants to be included.

**[Visual Description]** A series of images. A boy who is deafblind smiles at the camera. The boy stands next to a girl, both are holding white canes.

[upbeat music]

**[On-Screen Text]** To begin supporting a child who is deafblind…

Donna Carpenter, Ed.D., Kentucky DeafBlind Project State Coordinator

**Donna Carpenter:** We need to be the detective and find out how they take information in. What are they doing with that information? How do we keep growing and building on those concepts?

**[Visual Description]** A student and their teacher sit at a table. The students writes on a binder.

You know, just observe and watch and take that information in and then build on it and go for it, and set up communication opportunities.

**Teacher:** What letter?  
**Student:** K, kuh, kangaroo. Kangaroo!

**Teacher:** "K, kuh, kangaroo." Good job.

**[On-Screen Text]** Jessica Meisel, M.S.Ed., Early Childhood Special Educator, Deaf-Blind Specialist

**Jessica Meisel:** That foundational trust between a teacher or an intervener and the student with deafblindness is crucial. And so letting the child know that they are safe in the environment at school is the first step in communication.

**[Visual Description]** A young girl who is deafblind sits on the floor. She is supported from behind by a mobility device and an adult female. Together they explore a ukulele.

[upbeat music]

**[Visual Description]** A student and a teacher sit at a school table. On the table is a tablet which is playing a video. The student and teacher sign to each other while they watch the video.

**[On-Screen Text]** Knowing a child who is deafblind will change you…

Madeline Cheney, Mother of a Child Who is Deafblind

**Madeline Cheney:** But it's so great to see, like, when they do have like, you know, progress or improvement they're just as excited about a skill they've learned. It's so fun.

**[Visual Description]** A young boy sits in a rocking chair, Madeline sits on the floor beside him.

**Child:** I love you. **Mom:** I love you!

**[On-Screen Text]** Donia Shirley, Mother of a Child Who is Deafblind, President, NFADB

**Donia Shirley:** You know, the professionals in the hospital were like, "Well, we don't know if he'll ever see, so he may never read and do all of the things."

**[Visual Description]** A series of videos of a young boy doing school work.

And so that's been like one of my greatest joys in this process, I think, is seeing him achieve all of these things that we were told he could never achieve, and then far surpassing even what I thought he could achieve.

**[On-Screen Text]** Kari Harbath, Mother of a Child Who is Deafblind

**Kari Harbath:** Like, "Oh my gosh, this is so fun. Look, this is so fun," around Sloan. She was pointing-- "Look, Sloan's engaging with this. This is so cool and fun."

**[Visual Description]** A series of images of a young girl (Sloan) with specialists.

And slowly, as specialists started coming through, every specialist had something to offer like that, where they would come in and make a fun moment for us. And so we had the support from the therapists and the interventionists and the experts saying, "Hey look, this is fun. Do these things." And then we were like, "Okay, Sloan, we'll do these things while those people are gone." And suddenly she was developing and growing and engaging, and it was transformative.

**[On-Screen Text]** For more information, visit the National Center on Deafblindness at nationaldb.org.   
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