

## VALIDATION OF THE INTERVENER PROJECT

Project VIP studied the effectiveness of the Intervener Service Model for a period of three years. This model provides early intervention services in the home to children ages birth to three years, who are deaf blind and to their families, for an average of ten hours each week. The intervener is a trained para-professional who intercedes between the child and the environment, providing constant non-distorted information to facilitate learning and link the child to his/her world. In all activities, the intervener provides auditory, visual and tactile stimulation, helping the deaf-blind child to develop interactive behaviors.

Five VIP studies were conducted, studying the effect of intervener services on the children and families in the Utah Intervener Program. The purpose of Study #1 was to determine the development of deaf-blind children who received intervener services using the Callier-Azusa Scale and the INSITE Checklist in pretests and posttests. Research findings showed that children who receive intervener services make greater progress overall during their total treatment time than before treatment in all developmental domains. These same children score higher at posttest time than what would be expected due to maturation alone in the large majority of developmental domains. Children make statistically and educationally significant pre to posttest gains in all developmental domains.

Study #2 was to determine the effects of the intervener on the child's communication and self-stimulation behaviors. The parent advisor charted the child's communication and self-stimulation behaviors without the intervener, with the intervener, and then again without the intervener. Chartings for each child for the entire time each child was in the program were collected and studied. The outcome was that children who receive intervener services respond directly to the intervener with an increase in communication behaviors and decrease in self-stimulation behaviors.

Study #3 was a comparison study of children and families who did and did not receive intervener services. From the data collected, intervener services assist children in all developmental areas and result in greater child progress than the progress that is made by children who do not receive intervener services. Parents who receive intervener services report increased child interaction with others, improved understanding of the child's difficulties, improved abilities to help the child, and improved emotional well-being.

In Study #4 qualitative data was obtained on the effects of the intervener on service recipients and others involved in the program. The study obtained descriptive data primarily through the use of questionnaires, videotape interviews, informal surveys, case studies and daily logs. Parents reported significant help that they received personally as a result of having an intervener. They also reported that the deaf-blind children received great benefit from the intervener in several areas. Positive effects of the intervener on siblings was also reported.

Study #5 was conducted to determine how the intervener program can operate optimally to benefit service recipients. Qualitative information was gathered using surveys, parent meetings, intervener meetings, interviews and daily logs. Recommendations for a successful program operation were made for the roles of parents, interveners, program coordinator, intervener supervisors and parent advisors. Program operations such as personnel, referrals, selecting and hiring, training, transitioning, scheduling, pay and effective intervening in the home were studied.