1.B. Identifying Deaf-Blindness: Red Flags and Risk Factors

BEFORE A VISIT: What information is needed?
- Etiology of visual impairment
- Etiology of deafness
- Birth history
- Diagnosis, if any

DURING A VISIT: What do we observe?
- How does the child use her vision?
- How does she respond to auditory information (startles, stills, searches)?
- Is he aware of, respond to a stranger (temperament, hearing level, and vision info)?
- How do the parents/others interact with their child? What can be reinforced?
- What does communication look like (tactile, visual, auditory)?
- How does he move and interact with the environment?

AFTER A VISIT: What do we do with this information?
- Red flags – What risk factors did you note? What did you observe during your visit?
- Next steps - Contact WSDS; CDHL – contact Kris Ching; WSSB – contact DeEtte)
- The role of B-3 TVIs and TODs - Gather information; document for your conversation with DeEtte, Kris, and/or DB Project.

Remember your A-B-Cs
A. Appearance
B. Behaviors
C. Conditions

Signs & Symptoms
Appearance
- Abnormalities of shape or structure of eyes or ears
- Atypical formation of face, head or neck

Behaviors
- Atypical listening or vocalizing
- Unusual eye movements, gaze or head position
- Difficulty tracking, reaching, responding
Risk Factors

- Hereditary syndrome or disorder
- Certain prenatal, perinatal and postnatal conditions (see below)
- Premature (preterm) birth
- Severe head injury
- Trauma to the eye and ear
- Multiple disabilities
- Family history of visual impairment and/or deafness

Prenatal Conditions

- Maternal Infections: TORCH
  - Toxoplasmosis
  - Other viruses (e.g., HIV, measles)
  - Rubella (German measles)
  - Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
  - Herpes simplex
- Prenatal exposure to drugs, alcohol

Perinatal Conditions

- Low Apgar scores (1-4 at 1 minute or 0-6 at 5 minutes)
- Hyperbilirubinemia (jaundice) requiring transfusion
- Mechanical ventilation for > 5 days
- Preterm Birth (birthweight < than 1500 grams (3.3 lbs.))
- Infection or illness shortly after birth
- Stay in the NICU

Postnatal Conditions

- Syndrome associated with hearing loss and/or visual impairment
- Meningitis or encephalitis
- Hydrocephalus/hydrocephaly
- Craniofacial abnormalities
- Cerebral palsy or other neurological disorders
- Brain disorders, brain tumors or malformations of the brain
- Loss of oxygen to the brain
- Severe head trauma – e.g., shaken baby syndrome
- Prolonged fever
- Non-fatal drowning
Red Flag Terms

- Anoxia, asphyxia, hypoxia
- Atresia
- Cerebral hemorrhage
- Cerebral palsy
- Ischemia
- Meningitis
- Periventricular damage
- Fetal alcohol syndrome

Red Flag Comments

“Sometimes he seems to see things, other times, he doesn’t.”
“She has a syndrome called CHARGE, but the eye doctor said her vision is fine.”
“This little guy spent two months in the NICU. His records say that he lost oxygen at birth.”
“This child has cortical visual impairment as a result of head trauma when he was a baby, but there’s nothing in his records about a hearing problem.”
“This little girl has a syndrome I’ve never heard of.”