

The CART approach is a summary of basic strategies to remember when working with children who have deafblindness.

## CART

Consistency, Analyze, Respond, Time

Consistency - Be consistent; do the same thing in the same way. The child will begin to anticipate and then be able to take part in and enjoy their world. They will know what is going to happen next. Children with deafblindness need a predictable environment. Routines are essential. Establish routines with a clear beginning, middle and end. They need to be able to anticipate; what is going to happen, what is happening and when it is over.

Analyze – Evaluate; look at what happened; think about it; can it be changed; what would help; what could you do different; can they see it from where they are positioned, etc. Remember to enhance whatever vision and hearing there is. Use a video tape of the child to help you analyze. Use common sense - think about how you would like to be taught something, put yourself in their shoes. Remember the garbage in - garbage out rule. If the information our child receives is garbage, what do you think will come out?

Respond - respond, respond, and respond to everything. Use implied intentionality. Assume what the child is trying to communicate and respond. Even if you have assumed wrong, the child will learn cause and effect. Use multiple methods to communicate. Make sure the environment is reactive. Be sure to give the child appropriate feedback. How would you feel if no one responded to your efforts to communicate?

Time - Deafblind time is not the same as our time. Pause, wait, give the child time to process and respond. Sometimes the communication effort has to travel through detours in the brain and it takes a while longer than we may think to finish the process. The pathways to the brain to get information processed and then get responses back are not straight; they are very complicated. Always give the person enough time to initiate a response. Sometimes we are too eager to 'help' and we shape or prompt the person's hands into a response before they have had enough time to process their next move. Not only is this frustrating for the person, but it also develops learned helplessness.