An Introduction to Intervener Microcredentials and National Intervener Certification E-Portfolio

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The Paraprofessional Research & Resource (PAR^{2}A) Center and University of Colorado Denver

The PAR²A Center

CU School of Education & Human Development
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Introduction (cont.)

Interveners provide a key service, typically, in educational settings for students who are deaf-blind.
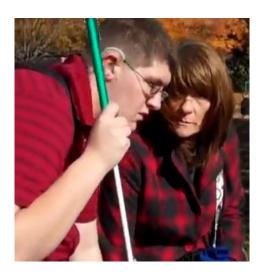
Introduction (cont.)

Interveners minimize the effects of multi-sensory deprivation and enable children to:

- Become aware of what is occurring around them
- Attach language and meaning to experience
- Become empowered to have control over their lives

Sources: Henderson & Killoran, 1995; NCDB, 2012a

Introduction (cont.)

Increasingly, interveners also work in home and community settings with individuals of all ages.

Introduction (cont.)

Despite the important role of interveners and the significant efforts made by families and professionals over the past three decades, support for intervener services remains fragmented and unevenly distributed across the country.

Source: NCDB, 2012a

Value of Intervener Microcredentialing and Certification

One effective way to increase the number of qualified interveners is by expanding the options for demonstrating competence through certification.

Offering more opportunities for intervener certification or credentialing will:

- Raise awareness and encourage the use of interveners

- Foster greater acceptance and recognition of the intervener practice

- Ensure consistent training and acquisition of standardized knowledge and skill sets

- Professionalize the role, establishing it as a recognized occupation

Source: NCDB, 2012

Value of Intervener Microcredentialing and Certification Continued

From a practical perspective, certification offers a means for:

- Schools to identify interveners who have acquired a core set of essential knowledge and skills.

- Interveners to demonstrate their proficiency in these knowledge and skills.

- Interveners to enhance their abilities through self-reflection during the certification process.

Source: NCDB, 2012a

Background: Intervener Microcredentialing and Certification

- From 2016 to 2023, the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) implemented National Intervener Certification Eportfolio (NICE) in collaboration with the Paraprofessional Research and Resource Center (the PAR^{2}A Center) at the University of Colorado Denver, state deaf-blind projects, practicing interveners, and university experts
- In June 2025 the new version of intervener microcredentials leading to NICE certification is managed exclusively by the PAR^{2}A Center at the University of Colorado, Denver.
- The previous version of NICE has shifted from a single portfolio that covered all seven Council for Exceptional Intervener Standards to seven separate microcredential portfolios, each aligned with an individual CEC standard.

Alignment of Microcredentials and CEC Intervener Standards

CEC Intervener Standards	Microcredential Titles
Standard 1: Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice within Ethical Guidelines	**Microcredential #1 – Intervener:** Professional Learning/Ethical Practice
Standard 2: Understanding and Addressing Each Individual's Developmental and Learning Needs	**Microcredential #2 – Intervener:** Support for Individual's Developmental and Learning Needs
Standard 3: Demonstrating Subject Matter Content and Specialized Curricular Knowledge	**Microcredential #3- Intervener**: Subject Matter Content and Curricular Knowledge
Standard 4: Using Assessment to Understand the Learner and the Learning Environment for Data-Based Decision Making	**Microcredential #4 - Intervener**: Assessing the Learner and Learning Environment
Standard 5: Supporting Learning Using Effective Instruction	**Micro credential #5 - Intervener:** Supports in Effective Instruction
Standard 6: Supporting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth	**Micro credential #6 - Intervener**: Supports for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth
Standard 7: Collaborating with Team Members	**Micro credential #7 - Intervener**: Collaboration with Team Members

Intervener Microcredentialing

- **Each microcredential is a portfolio on its own!**

  - The microcredential portfolio is a curated collection of artifacts representing their best work, showcasing their knowledge, skills, achievements, and experience aligned with each CEC Intervener Standard.

- The PAR^{2}A Center oversees the NICE Review Board and coordinates the review process.

- The PAR^{2}A Center relies on experts in deafblindness to evaluate artifacts/portfolios. All microcredential completion and certification decisions are made by the PAR^{2}A Center based on an objective review process, and these determinations are final and not subject to appeal.

NICE Certification

- Successful completion of **all seven microcredentials** leads to <u>**full** NICE certification</u> verifying that an intervener has acquired the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to support individuals who are deaf-blind in specific domains.

- Microcredentials are are valid for 5 years.

Eligibility

Individuals eligible to apply for Intervener Microcredentials and NICE Full Certification include:

- Practicing interveners and individuals who have completed intervener training. Formal training through a state deaf-blind project or university program is strongly encouraged, as applicants without formal training are unlikely to meet the portfolio requirements successfully.

- Those who are currently serving, or have access to, a student or client with deaf-blindness, as the creation of required artifacts must involve documentation from direct work with a deaf-blind individual.

Overview of the Intervener Microcredential and Certification Steps

A simplified overview of the process is:

1. Review training materials

2. Meet with your mentor

3. Determine what microcredential you will be attempting

4. Register for the microcredential (s)

5. Download the NICE Microcredential Templates

6. Build your artifacts

7. Submit your artifacts for review

Review Process

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Mentors

- A crucial aspect of the NICE process is that each applicant must have a mentor who offers guidance and feedback throughout the development of their portfolio.

- Ideally, this mentor is someone from the intervener's home state with expertise in both deaf-blindness and the intervener's role.

- Research consistently highlights the significance of mentoring as a key factor in successful portfolio development.

Working with a Mentor

Working With a Mentor

Submitting your portfolio for a microcredential is a significant undertaking—but you won't be doing it alone.
 Your mentor will be there to guide and support you throughout the process. Here are a few ways they can help:

- Engage in thoughtful conversation and offer encouragement as you review the NICE materials and CEC standards.
- Help you clarify your goals and develop a realistic timeline
- Provide ongoing feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement in your artifacts as you create them.
- Review and offer suggestions for your "About Me" section.

Working With a Mentor (cont.)

- Establish clear methods of communication with your mentor—such as phone calls, Skype, Google Hangouts, or in-person meetings.

- At a minimum, mentors are required to meet with candidates at least three times, totaling a minimum of six hours of mentoring.

The next few slides outline the roles and responsibilities of both candidates and mentors to help you build a strong and effective working relationship. Review the handout Candidate-Mentor Relationship for further detail.

More about mentorship in **Learning Activity 6: Effective Mentorship.**

MENTORS

Qualifications/Role	Responsibilities	Relationship
- Has training in deaf-blindness and is familiar with the intervener model - Supports the candidate in understanding the CEC competencies and how they apply to the microcredentialing process.	- Review and discuss the *Intervener Microcredential* Policy and Procedures and Candidate-Mentor Relationship with the candidate - Assist in creating an e-portfolio development plan and timeline - Hold regular meetings to monitor progress, offer feedback and encouragement	- Adapt mentoring style to match the strengths and needs of the candidate - Build a connection with the candidate - Help the candidate "tell their story" their way

MENTORS (contd.)

Qualifications/Role	Responsibilities	Relationship
● Encourages the candidate to engage in reflective self-assessment ● Models reflection by sharing relevant personal experiences	● Communicates in ways that align with the candidate's needs and preferences ● Notifies the candidate and relevant partners promptly if unable to provide agreed-upon mentoring ● Submits the Review Recommendation Form when the candidate is ready	● Respects the candidate's confidentiality, including their portfolio content ● Provides encouragement and professional support throughout the process

CANDIDATE

Qualifications/Role	Responsibilities	Relationship
● Has received intervener training and is serving a student who is deaf-blind	● Review and discuss the *Intervener Microcredential* Policy and Procedures and Candidate-Mentor Relationship with the mentor ● Create and share portfolio artifacts with your mentor and incorporate your mentor's feedback ● Use the explanation prompt questions to guide conversations about artifacts	● Is willing to be coached and open to constructive criticism as well as praise ● Professional and respectful of the mentor's time and expertise

CANDIDATE (cont.)

Role	Responsibilities	Relationship
● Engages in conversations with the mentor about all aspects of e-portfolio development	● Take responsibility for the process and engage in reflective self-assessment ● Keep appointments and communicate any concerns or timeline/submission challenges with your mentor ● Maintain the confidentiality of your student or client	● Is willing to be coached and open to constructive criticism as well as praise ● ● Professional and respectful of the mentor's time and expertise

Getting Started with Your Mentor

Now that you have a basic understanding of the roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and candidate, it's time to complete two important forms:

- [Candidate Information Form](#)
- [Mentor Information Form](#)

These forms are designed to support clear communication and help build a strong, collaborative relationship between you and your mentor.

Verification of Mentorship

Before submitting the portfolio, candidates must complete the [Review Recommendation Form](#), t to certify that they received mentorship.

This form also requires the mentor to confirm that they supported the candidate's portfolio development in accordance with the ethical guidelines of their role.

You'll learn more about this in **Learning Activity 4: Portfolio Submission and Review.**

NATIONAL INTERVENER CERTIFICATION E-PORTFOLIO

For more information on Intervener Microcredentials and NICE certification, contact Dr. Ritu Chopra at the PAR^{2}A Center

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https://paracenter.org/

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What's Next?

As you progress through the remaining learning activities,slide presentations and handouts in the training module, you will:

- Explore the Council for Exceptional Children's standards for measuring intervener competency

- Learn how to create effective artifacts

- Gain insight into the review process

- Receive tips for successful mentoring

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