Annual Resources Update for Serving Students with Sensory Disabilities (Revised October 2026)

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provides information on its website about educational services and resources to support students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or deaf-blind. The following resources are sourced from the VDOE Sensory Disabilities web page and websites for partnering agencies, centers, and college/university programs in Virginia.

Guidance Documents

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (including Deaf-Blind)

- Guidelines for Working with Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Virginia Public Schools (Revised September 2019)

- Virginia Communication Plan for a Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Revised September 2019)

Blindness and Visual Impairment (including Deaf-Blind)

- Guidelines for Working With Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired in Virginia Public Schools (Revised December 2017)

- Unified English Braille Implementation Plan for Virginia Public Schools (Updated September 2019)

State Agencies

- The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB), located in Staunton, Virginia, provides comprehensive PreK-12 educational day and residential programs, as well as transition and outreach services, for Virginia students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or deaf-blind who receive special education services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Information on VSDB's admissions process is available on the VSDB website or by calling 540-332-9004. The VSDB Public School Partnerships assist professionals, local school divisions, and caregivers in meeting the needs of children with sensory disabilities across the Commonwealth.
    - Contact: Charity Warigon, Superintendent; telephone: 540-332-9000

- The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) offers several programs that support children and teens who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind. The Educational Services program provides consultation and learning materials to families, teachers, and early intervention providers to help children succeed at home, in school, and in their communities. The DBVI Library and Resource Center provides

accessible books and materials to school divisions for students who are blind, vision impaired, or cannot read standard print. The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired teaches important independent living skills. DBVI also offers Student and Transition Services for students (ages 14-22) to help them learn about work and prepare for future jobs.

  - Contact: Donna Cox, Director of Education and Library Services; telephone: 804-887-7327

- The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) provides telecommunication relay services, distributes assistive technology equipment, develops and oversees assessments aligned with K-12 educational interpreter standards, requests for information and referrals to service providers, offers Deaf Mentors to families with young children (birth to age eight) who are deaf or hard of hearing, and provides training, technical assistance, and other services. These resources promote accessible communication so that students and parents who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing may fully participate in programs and services throughout Virginia.

  - Contact: Eric Raff, Director; telephone: 804-404-9090 or 800-552-7917

Technical Assistance Centers

- The Center for Family Involvement (CFI) at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University provides information and training to support children with disabilities, their families, and professionals.

  - Contact: Lisa Eickel, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Family Engagement Specialist; Dawn Snow, Blind/Visual Impairment Family Engagement Specialist; or CFI Office; telephone: 877-567-1122

- The Technical Assistance Center for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TAC-DHH) provides information, training, and technical assistance pertaining to children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Assistance is available to Virginia public school divisions, including early childhood special education and early intervention programs, through the Virginia Network of Consultants for Professionals (VNOC) - Professionals Working with Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

  - Contact: Tracey Yurechko, Project Director; telephone: 804-828-1342

- The Virginia Deafblind Project (VDBP) provides technical assistance, training, distance education, and networking information to service providers and to families of children and young adults (birth to age 21) with combined vision and hearing loss (deafblindness).

  - Contact: Dr. Ira Padhye, Project Director; or VA Deafblind Project; telephone: 804-828-3876

- The Accessible Instructional Materials Center of Virginia (AIM-VA) developed an extensive library and alternative system for providing accessible instructional materials under standards set by federal law to students who meet the federal requirements for print disabilities and who are eligible for accessible materials through an Individualized Education Program. The AIM-VA Center, in conjunction with partnering agencies, provides required accessible instructional materials to students and training for school division staff at no cost to local educational agencies.
    - Contact: AIM-VA Help Desk; telephone: 888-496-0252

- The Commonwealth of Virginia Loaner Hearing Aid Program is a collaborative initiative between Blue Ridge Care Connection for Children, the University of Virginia Department of Pediatrics School of Medicine, and the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Family Health Services, that provides hearing devices to Virginia residents from birth to age 21 who have confirmed hearing loss diagnosed by a licensed audiologist. The program maintains a selection of new and refurbished hearing aids, as well as a limited number of sound field and FM systems, available for loan to school systems and families at no cost.
    - Contact: Penni Crist, Program Manager; telephone: 434-924-8685; or Sandra Woodward, Program Director; telephone: 434-924-0222

Professional Education and Training Programs

- Radford University's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program offers undergraduate, graduate, and certificate options that prepare individuals to serve children and youth who are deaf or hard of hearing across all educational settings. Undergraduate courses are delivered on campus, while graduate-level courses, including those for the certificate, are delivered online. The comprehensive curriculum includes communication and instructional approaches commonly used with deaf and hard of hearing learners. Tuition assistance is available for qualified Virginia educators.
    - Contact: Jessica Williams, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program Faculty; telephone: 540-831-5549

- The Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Blindness and Visual Impairment (VI Consortium) is the only academic program in Virginia for teacher preparation leading to Virginia teacher licensure with an endorsement in Special Education-Visual Impairment PreK-12. Classes are offered through a combination of on-campus, video, and web conferencing through George Mason University, Old Dominion University, and Radford University. Tuition assistance is available for qualified Virginia teachers.
    - Contact: Dr. Kimberly Avila, Coordinator; telephone: 703-993-5625

- The VDOE Educational Interpreter Services Training Program is supported with grant funding from the VDOE to assist Virginia educational interpreters and cued language transliterators with acquiring and maintaining the required skills and qualifications to work with children who are deaf and hard of hearing in Virginia public schools. Free regional workshops and mentoring support are available.
    - Contact Becky Hillegass, Region 2 Interpreter Training Grant Coordinator; telephone: 757-319-2657

- American Sign Language (ASL) courses and Interpreter Training Programs are offered at the following Virginia community colleges and universities:
    - Liberty University; telephone: 434-582-2064
    - Northern Virginia Community College; telephone: 703-323-3192
    - Radford University (ASL courses only); telephone: 540-831-5549
    - Reynolds Community College; telephone: 804-523-5604
    - Tidewater Community College; telephone: 757-214-6157

  For additional ASL learning resources, including community classes and recommended websites, videos, and apps, see the Virginia Department of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) ASL Resources in Virginia Packet.

For questions regarding this guidance, contact Amy Scott, Coordinator of Sensory Disabilities and Supports, at 804-418-4724 or Amy.Scott@doe.virginia.gov.