



TOUCH CUES

Individuals who have little functional use of their vision or hearing are often unable to understand what is going to happen to them. Things seem to appear from and disappear into nowhere. People touch and move the students without warning and for seemingly no reason. These students often have tantrums or become fearful when they are handled in this way. Touch cues are one way to give the students information about what is going to happen.

The purpose of touch cues is to give the individual who is deaf-blind a way of understanding about activities, people and places through the use of touch and/or movement.

Touch cues are signals placed on the person's body to give a specific message (e.g., adult touches shoulder to "sit down"). Parents and teachers use many of these cues with young students with dual sensory impairments. Parents naturally touch their infants in a specific way before picking up or moving the child. These early cues given many times in the same way allow the student to know someone is present and that something is about to happen. Each person touching or moving the student may handle him slightly differently or may touch him in a specific place on his body to let him know who is there (e.g., Mom touches his chin; Dad touches his forehead, adult assists student to touch his hair, ring, or watch).

Using touch cues consistently in daily routines allows the student to understand his own surroundings and the people he meets in his daily schedule.

Each student needs a set of cues specific for his own situation at home, school, and work. It is very important to encourage everyone working with the student to use the same cue to help the student understand the meaning of the cue.

Fact sheets from California Deaf-Blind Services are to be used by both families and professionals serving individuals with dual sensory impairments. The information applies to students 0-22 years of age. The purpose of the fact sheet is to give general information on a specific topic. More specific information for an individual student can be provided through individualized technical assistance available from CDBS. The fact sheet is a starting point for further information.

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