

Module: **Communication and Emergent Literacy:
Early Intervention Issues**

**Session 1: Overview of Communication and
Literacy**

Deborah D. Hatton, Ph.D.
Wendy K. Sapp, Ph.D.

Introduction

Communication is an important developmental milestone for infants and young children and is integrally related to literacy development. Literacy includes reading and writing; and without communication and literacy, children are severely limited in their ability to interact meaningfully with other people. In some children, visual impairments present unique and significant challenges to the development of communication and literacy. The purpose of this session is to define *communication*, *literacy*, and other basic terms, and to discuss the potential impact of visual impairments on communication and literacy development.

Objectives

After completing this session, participants will

1. define receptive and expressive communication, nonlinguistic and prelinguistic communication, and emergent literacy.
2. describe the relationship of nonlinguistic/prelinguistic communication to social development and language development.
3. describe the concepts of literacy and emergent literacy.
4. discuss the concurrent and interrelated development of communication and literacy.
5. describe the three contexts—communicative, situational, and sociocultural—in which communication and literacy develop.
6. describe how early attachment between children with visual impairments and their caregivers might impact social-emotional and communication development.
7. describe why children must develop concepts about the world in order to develop communication and literacy skills, and why children with visual impairments are often delayed in their development of concepts.
8. recognize that children with visual impairments may not have incidental exposure to literacy events such as opportunities to observe use of print or braille in daily

activities, and that they may not have access to appropriate and accessible literacy resources such as braille books and braille writers.

9. describe the potential impact of multiple disabilities on communication and emergent literacy development.
10. describe the role of teachers of children with visual impairments in planning and implementing family-centered, collaborative interventions that promote communication development and emergent literacy in infants and toddlers with visual impairments.