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JUNE 2023



VOL. 3, ISSUE 6

# BEST NEWS

Blind Early Services TN - Newsletter for Caregivers and Providers

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## Deaf-Blind Awareness Week is June 26-July 2

This year's Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week will be June 26th to July 2nd. This national advocacy campaign has been in place since 1984 when President Reagan issued a proclamation to increase awareness and understanding of deaf-blindness. Each year during the last week of June, and in honor of Helen Keller's birthday on June 27th, people around the world participate in activities that draw awareness to both the difficulties and misperceptions that those in the deaf-blind community face. If you are a

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

June Release

**BEST Together Podcast**

**Rachel Bennett**

**Perkins School for the Blind/**

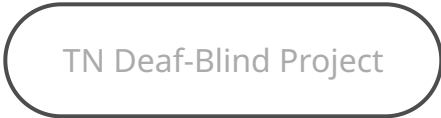
**CVI Now**

July 5th

**6:30pm - 7:30pm CT**

**Parent Connect Support Group**

parent of a young child experiencing both vision and hearing loss or impairment, the National Center on Deaf-Blindness has great resources about how to communicate with your child and the Tennessee Deaf-Blind Project, a federally funded program, informs and trains families, educators and other professionals in an effort to improve outcomes for those birth to 21 with combined hearing and vision loss. Services include on-site consultations, training workshops and conferences, educational and functional planning and resource referrals. Visit the link below to learn more!



## Rachel Bennett is Our Next Guest on the BEST Together Podcast

**Monthly Meeting**  
**\*Canceled this month due to  
4th of July holiday\***

July 13th  
**12:00pmCT**  
**Ask the TVI Monthly Meeting**

July 24th  
**5:30pmCT**  
**Vanderbilt Eye Institute Low  
Vision Monthly Support Group**



Rachel Bennett is an Assistant Director at the CVI Center at Perkins School for the Blind, where she leads CVINow.org and parent advocacy and support. As parent to Henry, who has CVI and other disabilities, she knows the duality that comes with being a disability parent—feeling overwhelming love and, at the same time, grief and pain. In 2020, Rachel completed UMass Boston’s CVI Certificate program. Before joining Perkins, Rachel was a special educator and secondary instructional specialist in Maryland. Rachel joins us for this month’s podcast conversation to discuss her perspective both as parent of a child with a visual disability and advocate for other families of children diagnosed with Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment.



## Let’s Learn About the ECC!

Did you know that children with visual impairments are entitled to and taught an additional curriculum separate from the general curriculum already taught in school or other educational environments? The term expanded core curriculum (ECC) is

used to define concepts and skills that often require specialized instruction with students who are blind or visually impaired in order to compensate for decreased opportunities to learn incidentally by observing others. In addition to the general education core curriculum that all students are taught, students with visual impairments, starting at birth, also need instruction in the ECC. The ECC is made up of 9 core areas that can also be further categorized into 3 distinct outcome goals (*ref: Robbin Clark, 9MoreThanCore*). In upcoming newsletter issues we'll be exploring each area of the ECC in more detail and offering ideas of how to incorporate lessons at home! Listed below are the different areas of the ECC. Follow 9MoreThanCore on Facebook and Instagram for great ECC resources!

- ACCESS
  - Assistive Technology
  - Compensatory Skills
  - Sensory Efficiency
- COMMUNITY READINESS
  - Orientation & Mobility
  - Career Education
  - Self-Determination
- INDEPENDENT LIVING
  - Independent Living Skills
  - Social Interaction
  - Recreation & Leisure



## BEST READS

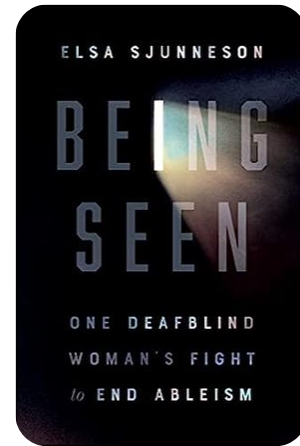
Our latest book selection is *Being Seen: One Deafblind Woman's Fight to End Ableism* by Elsa Sjunneson. Read the description below to learn more about this compelling memoir.

As a Deafblind woman with partial vision in one eye and bilateral hearing aids, Elsa Sjunneson lives at the crossroads of blindness and sight,

As a media studies professor, she's also seen the full range of blind and deaf portrayals on film, and here she deconstructs their impact, following common tropes through horror, romance, and everything in between. Part memoir, part cultural criticism, part history of the Deafblind experience, *Being Seen* explores how our cultural concept of disability is more

hearing and deafness—much to the confusion of the world around her. While she cannot see well enough to operate without a guide dog or cane, she can see enough to know when someone is reacting to the visible signs of her blindness and can hear when they're whispering behind her back. And she certainly knows how wrong our one-size-fits-all definitions of disability can be.

myth than fact, and the damage it does to all.



## Being Seen



## Interested in Sharing Your Family's Story?

American Printing House (APH)'s FamilyConnect team is looking for families who would be interested in sharing their story through a blog, and BEST is always looking for stories to share in our newsletters! For more information, please reach out to Melisa Matthews, APH Digital Content Manager at [mmatthews@aph.org](mailto:mmatthews@aph.org) or Alison Clougherty at [aclougherty@blindearlyservices.org](mailto:aclougherty@blindearlyservices.org).

## What We're Loving This Month





The Bumble Ball for babies and toddlers is a vibrating toy that also plays music. Bright colors and patterns makes it a great toy for children with low vision. The easy to grip, textured knobs are great for working on grasping and hand-eye coordination. Follow the ball across the room by vision and/or sound to work on mobility skills.

Bumble Ball



**BLIND EARLY SERVICES TN**

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