McCall Coombs, a senior special education major from Hyrum, prepares to begin a Virtual Home Visit.

Special education students from the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services who are completing their student teaching requirements are now being trained to do Virtual Home Visits.

The Virtual Home Visit project was funded through a grant written by Barb Fiechtl, clinical instructor in the department of special education and rehabilitation and Sue Olsen, director of exemplary services at Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities. The project uses technology such as two-way audio/video conferencing as a way to provide multidisciplinary early intervention services to young children with disabilities and their families.

“Across the United States, programs are using Virtual Home Visits now for people who are distant and you can’t get there easily,” said Emma Speth, service co-ordinator and family trainer with the CPD’s Up to 3 early intervention program. “Virtual Home Visits were piloted here, and how we have student teachers training here.”

Four students are currently being trained, with another four starting in mid-October, Speth said.

“They get this training throughout their student teaching,” Speth said. “They have to have at least four Virtual Home Visits before they leave the program, so they’ll know what they’re all about, and how to use the technology wherever they go in early intervention.”