>> Okay hello everyone my name is Lauren. I'm the moderator for today's session titled the Colorado hearing resource. OrCOHEAR coordinator, the family wings. So again I'm the moderator. I will be sitting in the back if you have any questions about the conference. I can try and answer them but for now I will go ahead and turn the presentation over to our lovely presenters.

>> Awesome good morning happy Tuesday at the last day of the conference but if you are like me your brain and body are slowly starting to deteriorate but we are going to make it till the end of the day my name is Ashley Winslow and the early education coordinator at the Colorado school for the deaf and blind outreach department and I let my colleagues introduce themselves.

>> Hi I am Robin [indiscernible] and I am from the Colorado hearing source coordinator at the school for the deaf and the blind, the Colorado school for the deaf and the blind.

>> I don't think that microphone is working, this is Robin Getz one of the cochairs for the Colorado school for the my name is Jamie frames and I'm the director of the Colorado hands invoices and a parent of a child who is deaf.

>> I am Heather Abraham I work with Colorado EHDI as a family support and engagement manager and once upon a time I was a Co-HEAR as well in Colorado.

>> Today we are hoping that you learn a little bit about the role of the Colorado hearing resource coordinator but specifically as it applies to families and initial visits and the family lens. We hope that maybe you will see some of the challenges and roadblocks that we have for professionals and families during these first few contacts how we are overcoming those and understanding our multi-organization collaboration and how critical that is for families in our state. You're not going to hear from you for the rest of the presentation so I'm going to let everyone else take over.

>> So, I am here to familiarize you with the Colorado system on how we do things. When a baby or a toddler is identified with a hearing difference, they are referred to th Co HEAR coordinate her in the region the family resides in. So we have eight CoHear coordinators and we have each different regions around the state that we are responsible for. So the audiologist typically refers us to the Co Hear of that region as well as Colorado hands and voices which as you know is a parent to parent support organization. The CoHear coordinator again attempts to reach out to the family within the first 48 hours of referral. To introduce ourselves and our, or answer any immediate questions the family may have and reschedule that initial home visit with the family. We also communicate with, I'm sorry hands and voices parents side to coordinate, contact the family so that we are not overwhelming the family on the same day, or all at once. We will then have our initial home visit with the family. Within two weeks, typically within that first week of the referral. And we explain all the services that we are basing the money and the resources available, and what everything looks like. Then if the family is categorical, meaning that qualify for early intervention services we will then make the referral to our local part C agencies so that we can get fee services going for early intervention. We collaborate very closely with our part C working with Jason the service coordinator that is assigned to the family. And coordinate the scheduling with the service coordinator so that we can be there at the evaluation to help support the family, advocate for the family and also support the other evaluators as needed. Just because in a lot of the reasons in our state the evaluators on the team do not have that deaf hard of hearing expertise. Then we complete the assessment together and develop the individualized family service plan, or the IFSP with the family and to the evaluation team together. And once we have the IFSP completed, then we are able to get services going for the family. We will pair a CHIP facilitator with the family. We look at the skill set of the provider, the means of the family, scheduling and so forth. And we introduce the facilitators to the family together and CoHEAR will mentor and support and provide training for the facilitator. And we make sure that the family is connected to all the different support organizations available in the state. Again, it would be hands invoices. It could be our deaf hard of hearing adult support, deaf and hard of hearing adult family supports working adjacent, we call that the Ascent program. And if the family would like ASL instruction we will, depending on the region they live in we will get a sign language instructor assigned to the family either through the local early intervention program or through the Colorado [shared] reading program through the Colorado school for the Deaf and the blind.

So we are involved with the IFSPs every six months in the annual, and then as the child gets closer to three years of age we are very involved in that transition process. And we can pull in hands invoices as well to help support the family throughout that process from part C to part B services or preschool services. And we work very closely with individual school districts. In our regions as well.

Okay. Thank you. So the CoHear I talked about a lot of this on the previous slide, but again, we are the Colorado hearing resource coordinator. There are eight of us in different regions of the state. And we are typically in the first point of contact into early intervention from the audiologist. For the families. And we all have knowledge about the different state and local systems that are specific to young children with different hearing levels. We each have different backgrounds and expertise that we bring to the team. Some of us are teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, some of which are speech which pathologists and others are audiologists. And it really makes for a very nice balance of our expertise in working together as a program and in providing support not only for our families, but for all the partners that we work with throughout the state.

>> And as you can see by the picture that was on the last slide, we are all fun. So important. I'm not going to go over this slide comprehensively but one of the questions it has asked is how is a CoHear different from your service coordinator in the state so you will have access to this and can read through but the CoHear really is providing information to the parents related to deaf of hard of hearing opportunities resources opportunities while the service coordinator or the part C coordinator is the one providing the IFSP timelines and write for the family so those are the main differences because we only have 20 minutes we could spend all day talking about that we will leave that their end we can follow up.

>> So, I am here today to give a little bit of my parent perspective, I'm in the UK position of having a child that was diagnosed as profoundly deaf at six months old, so we did have CoHear and early intervention come into the home and I have the unique perspective of being able to watch the transition now as a director with hands and voices in our state. So the point of the CoHear is to come in and connect with the parents I remember the day vividly when they came and sat down at the kitchen table my husband didn't get home from work on time so she came in and was amazing and just waited for him to be able to get home so that we could do it together as a family. She sat down, went through everything, she was very patient with us. I'm pretty sure I was probably crying and my husband was probably ignoring her. But we went through it and she left us with this amazing resource packet that we could go through together afterwards. And we were able to go through and reread the information. She had everything written down for us, contact information. Some amazing pieces inside of the book with schedules, excuse me, schedules for us and we just were able to make a connection at that point. We saw our CoHear throughout the three years that we had her and also out in the community she had a lot of events that she would hope for us and also with other families along the same journey as a so we had to meet the parents and we kind of work through it. She was an amazing source for us, whenever we had questions and it may have been out of her scope, everything from physical therapy or occupational therapy she was amazing for us to be able to connect with her. And she took it over for us so we didn't have to continue to ask those questions. Even though that was outside of her role. She was an amazing person that made us very simple for us as a family to work through the system. Any questions we had she was very knowledgeable and very quick to get back to us even if it was at 530 at night outside of her time. And it was such a great piece of mind for us as parents to be able to have that. Our early intervention system is amazing in Colorado and I am so grateful that we have that. COHear follow-up we talked a little bit about this providing in-depth information and checking with all members of the team. Every time we would have evaluation she was always there and present which was great to have somebody we knew there is kind of our backbone for those evaluations. Assessment support, coordinating events again I set out in the community, so we go out and meet other families that has been our biggest piece, and she is a friend. I still talk to her this day. My son is now seven and we still packed with her, talk with her on Facebook come over text message, she will always be a part of our life. Providing support of the IFSP reviews and the annuals and then the transition, we did have our COHear come to the initial transition in the initial IEP meeting for evaluations. Even though I knew what I was doing, and I don't think she said an entire word the entire time she was there for me. Because I needed that extra support. And that in and of itself was such an amazing thing and it made me feel so strong as a mom to let me know if I missed stepped in our meetings that she was there to gently help guide me back into the position. Now that's what I do with other families through my role. So I get that unique perspective from both sides.

>> No problem, just losing my badge over here on the table. These are some of the successes that we have, and you can read the bullets but I want to point out some of the actual quotes that are coming from families. So one parent said that she emailed COHear insured the sun never got lost in his medical and language journeys and they had every resource that they needed to make the best decision for their family. Another one, it was really helpful to be connected with a program that was full of people that had a ton of experience with what hearing loss can look like in kids. And this is why we all do what we do. Whether you are a professional or a parent guide or in the field in any capacity this is why we do, we want to see his parents have successes. We also have some challenges so we are going to talk about that. Jamie will talk about family start and then we will switch over. So.

>> So some of the challenges I have heard quite a few presentations on this today is timelines. Who is who. Some of people are coming into your home and in so many roles and new supports because there are so many people, new acronyms coming in. It can be overwhelming. Information overload. Language and cultural differences. Real opportunities, things that come up with teen and single parents and then siblings. Our siblings, our children's siblings are always going to be there as well. So some of the things that have been amazing with this has been where COHear comes into the home she's made it inclusive for the entire family so she brings one thing for my son to do and she always brought the same thing for my older son to do. We made it a family event which was so helpful. One thing that I cannot stress enough, timelines here are things that we have worked on through Colorado Hansen voices and the CoHear Robin talked about this we've worked hard to make sure we are not overwhelming the family so we want to work hard to make sure we are not coming the same day or sharing information at the same time and making it kind of a step-by-step approach. But I will say as a parent, and this is something I've heard over and over again in this conference this week is that I as a parent I'm so grateful for the massive information that we were given. We were given a huge binder with probably information that I have not even made it through to read all of it at this .7 years later. However, when I needed information I knew where to go to find it and I had the information there and I am powered me as a parent to be able to make the strong educated decisions we needed to make. Those are some of the challenges and hurdles from the family side that we have seen.

>> So as there are challenges from the family's perspective there's also challenges from the professional perspective as well. To build on what Jamie just said that there's an individual plan for families and the professionals need to be able to individualize as well. So that ability to determine is this a family who wants a lot of information, is this a family who may be is telling me that they want a little less information over time, those are the decisions that the COHear had to make in order to move forward with families in an effective way, timelines have been going over I will just say capacity is something that we are all monitoring at the CSTD level and the state level and most times these guys are part time trying to do a lot of work on levels there's a lot of work that needs to be done so we are always trying to build and expand their capacity.

Rural areas in Colorado as in many of your states always a challenge.So we have a statewide plan to help address the needs in the rural communities in particular the needs of the Spanish-speaking families. So Colorado is a big state. It's very geographically diverse. So that alone as a challenge for our COHears. I think you can read these. I wanted to say also the responsibility to communicate at the local and state level adds a whole other layer as well. So I will just jump to the next slide to talk about that. I will do statewide and you can talk about the family does that work? Or Jamie, I don't know who is taking that. As the statewide resource for EHDI we realize we ask a lot of the COHears they participate we have a system in Colorado EHDI where we have taskforces that address the different areas of the system that meet monthly and we have a statewide alliance of stakeholders so we have our COHears that participate in a lot of that work we also work a lot of interagency coordinating Council so we have the local and regional responsibilities. So it just adds layers for the collaboration, which is essential for the model to work. We are doing virtual site visits at the EHDI level so we have birthing facilities that we are working with to do some virtual site visits to determine what the screening practices look like and the COHears relevant to that area are participating in those visits but as we talked about there's involvement with the family to family support. They get us, they get the family's connected with the Ascent program. One of our COHears is actually an adult who works with the Ascent program as well so there's a lot that happens at the state level that they are involved in. And then we also as a family teams, we are just going to be COHear coordinator, the facilitator, the service coordinator, the audiologist come the family practitioner and then we do have other providers and we updated this but the new slide doesn't show it. We also have the family support needs to come up as well so family to family support needs to be in the family team. So we all work closely together to make sure it is a cohesive operation and trying to put less stress on the family with the number of people coming in to make it a coordinated support system.

So, family impact and benefits. Relief and knowing there is support along the journey. We talked about this a lot that support system is so important when you have a knowledgeable professional to be able to go to for information and guidance throughout your journey. We know that our journey changes very quickly as we move through it. It's not a one-size-fits-all and we don't know what we don't know in the beginning. So having that person there that we can go to that we know can help find us our answers is very very important. Connections with other families at events, again that has been something that has been so helpful for us and multiple other families that I still connect with to this day. I will sell you my son attends a center-based program about an hour away from her house and one of his best friends that we have connected through in the early intervention program is on the bus with him for they both go to the same out of district school. So it's just amazing to be able to provide those supports and his mom and I are very close friends and it's great to be able to have those connections and supports. Something that I don't think we would have had had we not attended all of the community events together. Specific resources and supports for families unique needs. Again as we move through the journey, those change. So that's so helpful. Highly qualified providers meeting Deaf and hard of hearing adults we were given the amazing opportunity of meeting deaf and hard of hearing adults all the way through our journey. We had somebody that came into our home every single week. Through the shared reading program to teach us ASL and she still one of my best friends. I talked to her all the time. Best practices and making sure we have a provider that understands best practices so that we as parents again can feel empowered and know that we are on the right path and the best path for our child. Connecting the family as a whole. Successful strategies and supports I cannot tell you how many times my son did not want to cooperate with our service providers in our home and they very quickly and knowledgeably changed our path and tried something different and still made it fun for my son so that way again he was interacting again.

Connecting with other trained parents for family to family support who have been down this road. The COHears are amazing at this. They do an initial outreach for families that initial contact to try to get them in with Colorado Hansen voices and if at that point in time they are not ready for it, they continue on the path and keep saying when you are ready, here is the information. Would you like me to make the referral for you? That way it doesn't feel the pressure and it's not pushed but when the family is ready we can connect and make the connection and have those discussions.

>> Even, I just wanted to add that even if the family is not ready to connect directly with the [indiscernible] there are still resources that the hands and voices program provides to the family and directly, like the newspaper that comes out quarterly and also we have the monthly E newsletter that Jamie writes. And sends out with all the news, the latest and greatest that is happening around the state for different age levels. For all families.

>> Thanks, Robin, for throwing that into the other piece that we do just to throw it in there is the Facebook pages are also really helpful for parents. You know, social media can be amazing. It can also be daunting. But it is a great connection point for parents to connect and ask in a safe area. I'm just going to leave this up here for a second while Ashley comes up if anybody has any questions all of our email addresses are up here please feel free to contact us.

>> I will just add that we are waiting for Jamie to get on the Instagram Reel train so we can start seeing some reels. Just kidding. We are open for some questions but I will say this I know we just have a few minutes. We also have a video that was just produced that is not public yet. It's about five minutes. It's interpreted so our interpreters can go. We will still have the captions but if you're interested in staying for that I think we have flexibility to stay for a few minutes to show the video when questions are done so just know you would get the first glimpse outside of this group. Are there any questions? all right if there are no questions let's jump in. The video is interpreted. So. I need to be able to pull it up. Where is my little folder. Do you know?

>> Yay!first glimpse and yes I'm wearing the same clothes I was wearing in the video if you are interested. So thank you for staying. I appreciate your time. If you have questions we are available.

>> Thank you.