>> PRESENTER: All right. Thank you for coming. We know it's after lunch, after the break, everybody wants to take a nap, and we appreciate you being here. My name is Beth Jones and this is penny and we are from Nevada hand and voices and we are going to talk about how we use EHDI funding for literacy.

How many of you work for the EHDI program and have control over the funds that go out? Kind of? Yes? How many of you are parent-based organizations and have some control over what money you request?

Okay. Medical professionals? EI providers? Anybody I missed?

Kind of? Okay.

So hopefully this will kind of show what we do in our chapter and you can bring it back and hopefully give you guys I know on how you can spend your EHDI funding. Except I don't know how to advance.

[Pause]

>> PRESENTER: I see, thank you. So just a little overview for Nevada Hands & Voices, we do have a guide by your side program, this will be our 15 year with our parent guides, and in the 3 last 3 years we have brought on our advocacy support and training, which is our ASTra training. And in the last two years we brought on the Deaf and hard of hearing guide program, to go along with our Guide By Your Side parent program. We have tried to embed all of this within the EHDI funding within the last few years.

One to have biggest things is the lending library. As an example of huh this works, I've been attending EHDI conferences for many years and sat through wonderful presentations and I have my notebook out wanting to know how I can make our program better and how we can use some of this money. Especially when this conference is in March and our EHDI funding ends in the end of March and I have got some extra funds that I can spend, but I can also have input on how we can do it coming the next month. So we came up with this idea of a lending library that Hands & Voices would house to be able to let families borrow materials.

It really started with a slow accumulation of things, again, it might have been a few hundred dollars here, where I could buy a handful of books, it also evolved with our need and our use. Yes, sorry.

[Pause]

>> PRESENTER: It was freezing?

[Pause]

>> PRESENTER: We okay now? Okay. Let me know if it freezes again.

Part of our lending library ideas came from an evolution of a need for our families and what we have learned in conferences like this.

We are learned to pair our books with materials that we get from EI providers and conferences like this. And then we have really tried to figure out a way on how we would get these materials out to families. Do we connect it to our home visits? So we can continue making home visits, we let them check something out, we go and get -- pick it up, we lend them something else. It continues to grow like that. We've also tried to look at how we will deal with our families in the rural areas, that we don't get to see on a regular basis so how can we meet them, we kind of pack everything up in our trunk of our cars and we have it for them to borrow when we go meet with them.

I'll give examples of what we do have in our lending library. The first category is books for parents. We want to be able to support parents especially in those birth to 3 years where we know that education is important and we want to support the people that are working with them. So, we have a lot of things like Hands & Voices publications, books by Deaf authors, with diverse perspectives, and again we are going to talk a lot about self-care and fostering joy type issues to serve those families. Here is an example of some of the book we have on hand to be able to lend out to parents. But also, look at um, what the parents might not need -- they don't know that they need, yet. They might be talking about a certain topic that we can really make some recommendations. They might have come up with a book that we don't know about, so we can take those recommendations from them as well. Some of the books on your right also are some of those publications from different organizations, like Hands & Voices or rights law type books to support our educational advocacy program as well.

My favorite is the part where it's books for children. My kids are older so I don't get to do a lot of the kid books anymore, but we are able to provide all of these wonderful books on a wide variety of topics and themes, all the books you have seen and I'm sure you know about with the Deaf and hard of hearing character, the books that are culturally and racially inclusive. And we have a lot of books in English and Spanish.

Example of some of the books that we are able to have on hand, that families, might be some of their favorites, might be some that they have no idea what's. One of the things we strive with this library, too, is again, we want to make that representation really important. We look for as many books as we can, with the diversity of cultures, with devices, with language use, all of that type of stuff, to make sure that we -- that those families feel represented in the literature we are providing.

We also have a couple of examples of some of the resources we use to find some of those inclusive books, as well.

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>> PRESENTER: One of the newest things we've included are activities for families and staff to use. We know a lot of our families don't have access to some of these books. But we also know they don't have a lot of access to other materials in their houses. You can go to a regular library and check out some of those books, but you might not be able to pick out some of those activities that we are able to provide using this funding.

So we use things like storycubes and flashcards and tangible things for the families to use. I also like it because we are pairing this with our early intervention providers so if they have a goal and need some actual manipulatives to use with the kids, it's not all on the EI providers to do it. The family can check it out, have it at their house and the provider can help meet some of those goals with those materials.

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>> PRESENTER: Some of the examples of these are flashcards, which again, we want to make sure that we have lots of different things represented, so they might be sign language flashcards. We also have a lot of tactile flashcards for a DeafBlind families. We do a lot of board games for early interventionists to use with the kids, but also, to encourage families to have time together. We want the make sure that they have all these things that we are preaching, that they have access to. I like the roll a storycubes, that was a great activity for my kids, because you would take a bunch of dye and roll it and you sign and speak about -- make up a story. It does different every single time. The stupider it was, the funnier it was. We have things like the hand cubes that go along with it so it does promote things like hand shapes and different things so everybody has access with different modalities of language. And then along with the literacy part, we have books with a lot of manipulatives across the board.

So it might be felt boards, it might be a book with Velcro things, so somebody that doesn't have great motor coordination can use some of those things as well. Books that go along with puppets. All of these things that EI providers have that bring to the house and then they leave.

Families can check these out and be able to use these at their leisure and it teaches the families how to use these together.

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>> PRESENTER: Our program has grown with the need. Penni is one of the parent guides that has a background in -- her daughter is DeafBlind. So we've been able to use her of what are some of the other things that we need to include that these families might not have access to, that would be really beneficial?

So a couple of these things...

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>> PRESENTER: ...we have bought some tumble form chairs so kids that don't have accessible to sit up, they have these devices to be able to check out. Maybe they want to purchase it themselves, they can try them out with us first.

Acrylic cookbook holder, if a family is using sign language, they don't is have to try to hold the book and using sign language at the same time.

Little things like... these clothes pens or popsicle sticks on a book to help a kid turn the page. We have these things embedded in our library, it's a really great model for these families to know how to adapt them, themselves and to keep learning and having the children be independent.

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>> PRESENTER: I mentioned we also pair resources with our books. This is something that has grown, and it really depends on what the family is checking out. We do have all kinds of tip sheets and bookmarks. But again, it depends on what the family wants. If it's an educational advocacy book, I'm not going to put a little bookmark that has dinosaur stickers on it. I'm going to do something that has more meat to it. But again, if it's a book with a Deaf character and a board book, we might throw in a bookmark for the kids.

This also promotes follow-up service, one-on-one, whether it's the parent guide, the Deaf guide or AStra advocates to say, how are you using this book? How can we help?

We also know people want to learn things on their own. So if somebody asks for somebody to be mailed, we can continue to give them things passively, without jamming it down their throat.

He's is an example of resources. The clerk center has great bookmarks that you can print out and cut up and use for different advocacy tips. We go back to FL3 and fostering joy from Hands & Voices. It's okay to find the joy in reading with your kid. So we can stick that in the book and we always seam to have a lot of handmade bookmarks or store bought, they like it, they're kids, they are still going to want to collect all the junk. The kids enjoy it and look forward to it.

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>> PRESENTER: Some of the challenges that we found with having this great connection is we don't have a great way to manage our inventory. We are still searching how we can use it kind of like a regular library. How is that in our website for Hands & Voices where we can scroll down and people can select a book and reserve it? We are not quite there yet. We also want to make sure that our staff is trained on it. The new staff that comes in. Sometimes this is not the first training they get, but they also, we have people asking, can I have this book?

And sometimes staff is like "What are you talking about?"

We want to make sure that our staff and the EI providers are aware as well, so they can use that as a resource. And life storage is always a problem, so we are looking for that, as well as we have two main areas in our state, Rhino and Las Vegas that we house most of our staff in. We want to make sure it's equitable across the state. We have enough inventory to make sure that people across the state have what they want. We don't have one book that everybody many the state is trying to share. As we keep getting funding, as we keep getting bigger, some of our wish lists are we want to start having parent book clubs and getting what you would class classroom sets of books, so we can be able to provide a lot of different things for a lot of families at once.

We would love to have staff reviews of some of these so we can post it on social media and have our deaf guides being able to sign for a book. Especially DeafBlind or Deaf plus sharing how some of this works. We are also trying to figure out a store front. It's not fun to go online. We want to look for things but we don't have an office so we are trying to find a place to house this, to be able to have families get interested and be excited about some of the opportunities that we have for them.

So now Penni is going to share another resource called virtual story time.

>> All right. Growing book by book is the franchise that we use. It's ours, it's not like -- we branded all of our virtual story times, growing book by book.

Virtual. Which allows us to access everyone in the state, we have captioning, ASL and Spanish as the presenting language, with English transcription, or we have also done side-by-side where it would be ASL storytelling, then English storytelling or the same Spanish storytelling and then English storytelling of the same book. And it's worked. Because we are not always necessarily reading the entire book, we are reading parts of the book, and discussing.

We feel like it's a good way to modal to parents how to use different technology, or different modalities.

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>> PRESENTER: There's some pictures from our story time. Um... it's been fun. Lots of dress-ups. Lots of kids. So how do we choose our books? Well, we just ask staff what their favorite book is. That's easy enough. Right.

Um, we have been lucky enough to have guest authors, both have come and shared their books with us. We partnered with the Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project to talk about the book Haya Maray. It's a beautiful book that talks about the needs of a child in a wheelchair, with a feeding tube, with a tracheostomy, in a beautiful cheerful way. We also have used books from the Our Project from Hands & Voices. This is a great list of books that talk about all aspects of being healthy and safe. And we have leveraged the interest of our Deaf and hard of hearing guys. One who is a service forest fighter who came and talked about his work and a book that goes along.

In the past we have had a Deaf and hard of hearing guide who has worked a as mermaid, she read a book with us in costume, was very fun.

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>> PRESENTER: An alternative has been story walk. This came out of we are not in shut down for COVID, but we need to be careful. Right? So it allowed us to come and go, to separate into groups, to be outdoors. And then it was also easy to take the items that we used and to do drop offs or to mail to families that were rule.

And here are pictures of two of those events. One was the book sticks. And we had several story stations in the park.

And when you ended you got a pops cal. And this is Rhino. It looks like Brown Bear Brown Bear.

Outside door, easy. So some challenges we have had with the virtual story time has been consistent scheduling, like marking that time off every month so that families know this is -- it's story time. This week, this day. And we feel there is no true equity in accessibility, there's always going to be a challenge, someone is always going to be somehow left out. If you have discussions on that, we would love your input. We also feel like the books we have selected have been limited somewhat in age, to that -- like, 5th grade and under. We would like to be able to offer something for teens. And we feel kind of that families are a little bit Zoomed out. There's some fatigue for virtual meetings and maybe that's just the parent leaders that feel that way.

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>> PRESENTER: And Beth is going to tell us about reading week and we are almost there.

>> PRESENTER: We used to have several other family-based organizations in Nevada and they would have a Christmas party. They would have the day at the ballpark, they would have a spring picnic, all of these things and we never wanted to compete with them. We wanted to have something where we would collaborate on their wonderful events and offer something in those gaps.

And that, reading week, is the last week of February, first week of March. So we thought "Great, this is a perfect time to us up that EHDI funding and throw it into a literacy event."

Forgetting that this conference is the exact same time.

So again, when we first started this, we had wonderful attendance because it was an area that was not being addressed in our community, already. We were not trying to reinvent the wheel. We were trying to do something different. This is one of those events because we made it big, we got a lot of food. So we went through not using EHDI funding but donations or we would charge a minimal amount for families to come, so we could make it bigger and better.

Every child would get a book and just like some of our story times, there would be lots of different activities where kids were walking away with lots of different things.

We first started by trying to make it easy and saying "Let's keep the same theme as the Nevada Department of Education. We're not going to reinvent the wheel."

The kids have done a week of that theme, they didn't care for it. So we came up with our own theme. So here are some of the events we have had over the years. Again, Dr. Seuss, love it but it's played out.

We did a superhero theme where we were able to embed some of the Eldefo.

We did cowboy event called the -- cowboy gingerbread man or something like that, where we held it at a farm and offered horseback riding to the kids and sat in the barn and read the book with chickens walking around and stuff, it was a blast.

Then COVID hit and we had to bring it back virtually and we decided to do the book, couch potato and we mailed a potato so we could do it virtually. We tried to embed all of this literacy into what we had been doing with this event. One of the examples of our best event was we did dragons love tacos and we were able to bring in a taco truck and this event we had several 100 people at which we never have anybody at our events, that much. The amount of early intervention kids that came, was just remarkable and that's when we started realizing, these events have to draw in, nobody is going to come to a book event, they are going to come to a taco truck.

So things like that, we had to get really creative.

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>> PRESENTER: Again, we also learned we had to be adaptable with this. Like I mentioned, great events for the family, really bad planning on our part when we are coming to conferences the same time, every year. So, we have decided to move it to September to Back to School. Same concept, it's not a book event, it's a fun event. This year we did Wonder and it was a great theme but it worked out a little easier for us.

We have also learned to adapt one book to many different ages or many ages -- or excuse me, many different um, themes to be able to really target especially our younger kids.

So, this is an example of how we adapted this year's um, from reading week, to back to school. And we used the theme Kindness and the Wonder Book.

There's a couple of different variations of the Wonder Book so we were able to give the picture book to the younger kids. The older kids were able the use the typical Book, Wonder. We had a great time, the kids had a wonderful time.

But again.

Wonderful time. Yes.

[Slide Changed].

>> PRESENTER: Again, like everything, some of the challenges, scheduling is always a beast for anybody that is working it. Um, again the bigger the events get, the more help you get and volunteers and staff are always um, in high demand and hard to manage. Keeping the various ages engaged because again, if you're aiming it for some of the EI kids, and then older kids and teenagers, it can be difficult. And we also realize with parent leaders, keeping our own children out of trouble and we want to add, keeping our husbands out of trouble. Because we are running a lot of the events. Doesn't work out that well, sometimes, so we are starting to learn especially with the little kids, we need a lot more help and we cannot rely on our own children and husbands anymore, for that.

Just for that part.

So Penni is going to finish it off with some extra bonuses when we have additional money left over.

>> PRESENTER: I know we have been moving fast, if you want additional resources, we are happy to chat with you after.

These transition kits are my heart and I'm thankful for Executive Director that let's us present ideas and come up with solutions to problems.

So um... like all of you, COVID kids are a real problem. They are not ready for preschool. So we developed a transition kit, for 2.5-year-olds. It's a gift from Nevada Hands & Voices. I see your child is getting ready to go to preschool, I have a present for you. It's valued at over $50. Would you like me to come and visit and talk to you about getting ready for preschool?

Yes, I would love for you to come over.

So this is what it contains, educational advocacy book from Hands & Voices. My first IEP binder.

It's got a notebook, hole punch and we have created several worksheets for parents, including how to draft a statement of concern, a school contact list so you know who your team is and how to get ahold of them. And a visual schedule for children, includes crayons, pencils, erasers and a school bus so you can tell your kid that today's school. Having a tactile representation is really important. This one we offer to kids in that 18 months to 2.5 year age range, fostering joy kit and we haven't been able to deliver it because I thought we had English and Spanish.

I offered it to families but I only had Spanish. So this is what it's going to look like. It is the fostering joy journal for parents. Um... and the tip sheet that we have talked about. Tissues, and pens and it is a conversation about fostering joy in your home and searching for those good moments. And if you're not familiar with the foster and joy movement, you're behind.

We have also purchased the fostering joy journal for kids and that's going to be distributed exclusively by our DHH guides. That will be a tool for them to visit with families because we struggle a little bit as a chapter, in engaging children after they have gone through kindergarten. They need us, and we are making our quarterly EHDI contacts, birth to 3. They need us socially, and in that bridge, getting used to school, and then we kind of lose them. They make come to story time, but we don't have a system to actively care for them. And we feel like this might be one way to get more um, more visits with our deaf and hard of hearing guides. I think that's it. If you have any questions, we would be happy to answer them, or snack time. Early.

Yeah, please, Janell is coming with the mic.

>> AUDIENCE: Okay, I have a question regarding your library. Which is amazing. We just launched our DeafBlind resource library last week in our state and I just put it on our website. How are you ensuring you get those items back, specifically for families you're not doing home visits for?

>> PRESENTER: [Chuckles].

We're not. We're trying.

>> AUDIENCE: I guess, what does the check-out process look like, was my other question.

>> PRESENTER: Wish list.

I'm trying to find what we are talking about. Yeah, like here. Um... it all lives in my garage and her garage.

>> PRESENTER: So basically what it looks like right now is we have an internal list that our staff is aware of. So we are really relying on their expertise to know their families and say "Would you like this? Can I throw a bunch in my car and pick from something?"

That's our really bad check-out, right now. When it comes to getting the materials back, we are trying to set up those home visits with that "Hey, let me pick up this book, do you want something else?"

So to keep that going. Or again, just hounding families "How is that book? Are you done with it? Okay, no? I'll check back in in a month."

I don't it doesn't apply to the early intervention, but I lent out a book to a male teenager that plays football in a very rural area of Nevada. Really struggling with a couple of things. Mom reached out to me, former EI client and I said "Would we like Derrick Colmans book? He's a former football player."

I thought there wasn't a big demand for it, especially with our younger kids, but yes, let's connect again, let's go for coffee. What else can we chat about?"

That's one of those things the bigger we have grown, we don't have 4 books anymore like we did when we started, but good question. Thank you. One more question.

>> AUDIENCE: Is this on? So this is just the Hands & Voices.

>> PRESENTER: Correct. Through funding from our Nevada EHDI program.

>> AUDIENCE: Okay, and so for those who don't live in Nevada, can we look on your website to see what kind of things you have so that we can buy those things for ours?

>> PRESENTER: I can e-mail you a list, that's where unfortunately we don't have anything up on a website. Yes, absolutely, if anybody is curious to see what materials or where we got them from, I'm happy to share that.

>> AUDIENCE: Perfect. Thank you.

>> PRESENTER: Thank you. We appreciate your time and thank you for coming and if you have any questions, feel free to come up and have any questions. So... thank you.