>> Good morning everyone , my name is Jenny. Today's presentation is a visual languages , a crucial part of early language acquisition for deaf and hard of hearing children . Sorry about the technical difficulties , here we go.

>> SPEAKER: Good morning. My name is Bernice . I am a student in the doctoral program at Gallaudet University in bilingual education. I will be leading this presentation and this is my co-presenter .

>> EMILY: Hello everyone, my name is Emily small, I'm also the doctoral program at Gallaudet University. I have a background in working with families with newly identify children who are deaf and hard of hearing, thank you for coming .

>> BERNICE: I forgot to add that I am an international student from Nigeria as well. We want to start with a definition of what visual language is and what it is not. What we are going to try and talk about today is how visual language is a language that is use , that uses science in physical space . It is spontaneously developed , it is accessible, natural and uninhibited . It is used among some people as their native language. As an example, we have ASL, American sign language . But other visual languages that are used in communities around the world. Manual babbling in deaf and hearing babies can also be considered visual language. Gesture is a natural part of a young child language . This all contributes to visual language acquisition . It is important that this is acquired through interaction . Visual language is not just a manual communication system, it is not artificial. It is not manually coded English were signed exact English, for example. These systems follow rules of other languages . It is not to be confused with using two languages at the same time , sim com. I like to go over some common fears or myths and try to debunk some of those myths with factual research. One myth that parents often believe is that a child will be confused when two languages are used concurrently , or simultaneously . They also cite the visual takeover hypothesis , the idea that one part of the brain can only be used for either listening or seeing . Such that if a child has been exposed to visual language and use that brain language for visual language processing, they then cannot make the transition to using that same brain area for spoken language processing . However, we have some evidence that shows that children can use spoken language and language at the same time , and that their global language processing center is responsible for language processing no matter the modality. The auditory scaffolding hypothesis is often misunderstood . There is a misunderstanding that what the child learns or is exposed to in one language cannot be scaffolded into another language. Or that, one sensory approach injures another . That is also not true. We have evidence from Larson, 1971 , who shows that input from one language is not a hindrance to learning another language. That children can use input from a language to support their development in another language. Other authors have emphasized that the goal of language learning should be language in general, not necessarily spoken or sign language. Children have the capacity to develop language no matter what . Some really exciting research has come out recently from Harvard university, I don't know if you familiarize yourself with the website the center for developing child . It is quite interesting information in terms of what we know about the brain , biologically, neurologically and the connections that amazed and that brain. I would like to discuss a few of those. Speech only approaches , we know that time is of the essence when it comes to early intervention. From the moment of identification to the moment were a child has full access to language, that window is critical for exposure and comprehension . If we wait for technological intervention, that window closes and visual language input as a result does not take hold. So, the time to begin exposure is immediate. The gap between identification and intervention of technology , or whatever means are utilized , it means that we need to fill in that gap with visual language . Neurologically, babies don't care whether language is coming in visually or auditorily, their brains are hungry for language. There language systems, synopses are hungry for access to a full language . Maybe you have heard about the critical window when language is acquired most readily . It may be indisputable of one that window closes , that is certainly up for debate. What we do know is that the brain fires neurons immediately , millions and millions of neurons during that window and prioritizes specific neurons based on input . Those pathways become strengthened when exposed to language . That has to happen with immediacy from the very get-go for and if it's to have full access . That becomes the language, foundation for language foundation. Spoken language occurs through a number of different research as part of that outcomes can vary . Outcomes are not necessarily consistent . We need to figure out ways again , to fill in the gaps for that child's . Work according to the visual strengths that they bring as visual learners . So language again must be accessible , must be readily available throughout the environment and must also be smooth and swift to assimilate. Again, when it comes to be accessible, visual language , as long as the eyes are intact, vision is intact, that analogy can have its own issues , you are relying on external system and I can certainly augment what visual access children naturally bring to communication. I would like to not talk about the benefits of including visual language. When we focus on speech only, we do find some limitations . Visual language can cover the limitations that would otherwise exist . When we look at the brain development of the child's , the brain does have the ability to access full information at certain parts of the development cycle . Eventually leading to full literacy , emotional and cognitive development and personal achievements. Visual language can be used to support spoken language later on in the child's development . Unfortunately, if we wait for technology to become available to the child, then that window is starting to close and time may run out. The benefit then up visual languages one towards global language proficiency . We need to make sure that visual language is spontaneous for the child. If we used a spoken language only approach, the child may struggle to acquire that language, but with visual language as a tool, that child can acquire the language spontaneously or at the pace in which their brain is ready to acquire expert in this case, there are no longer any barriers to acquisition. It happened that the natural pace of the child. We have seen that many times, young children will struggle in speech only programs, but when they are exposed to visual languages, they begin to acquire language much more quickly. Richard emphasizes that the outcomes as they pertain to visual language are ongoing. This is true with deaf children , with deaf families . Much more so than in deaf children with hearing families. In hearing families with deaf children, we often find some hesitance to expose a child to visual language and the outcomes are worse . But, the research shows that in families who do not otherwise use visual language, the introduction of the visual language can help to ensure that the child's language acquisition happens at a natural pace. We are going to a great deal of research, hopefully your brains on her at this point. I promise there were a number of studies , what do we do about all of this? When you go back home and you will meet a parent next Tuesday who wanted to bring us some ideas for you to apply ? There are two different approaches at the macro level then removed the micro level. At the macro level we are thinking systemically within your states. Hopefully, you want your stakeholder meetings this morning with a variety of stakeholders and backgrounds are presented. Those are your people, right? You want to collaborate in a multidisciplinary approach because you all share a common goal of supporting deaf and hard of hearing families in your states. You want to take a look at who can collaborate with in your state or even the federal level , the legislature or policymaking level with various organizations or medical facilities . How you can improve upon the policy that are in play in order to achieve access for deaf and hard of hearing children. You also want to take a look at medical personnel, whether it is audiologist, hospitals and collaborating with them along this journey. Educational centers, schools or school districts, schools for the deaf, kind of the gamut , are important partners in this effort and need to be considered as well and collaboration. Also, collaborating with other states for technical assistance. Maybe this week is a great opportunity to utilize the networks they develop here to say how are you creating resources for parents or kids? It could be utilizing websites , online resources, apps, technology is out there and readily available and can be utilized by your programs as you are in the trenches and can be used throughout the year at any given time. Our discussion here today is really about language , right? It needs to be repeatable. Once a child is identified as deaf or hard of hearing, our media conversation need to be about language and early intervention that start the language. The parents themselves of the deaf or hard of hearing children who are deaf and hard of hearing may not offer spoken language immediately, but we want to be talking about language regardless of the modality immediately upon identification. Really what this all boils down to is that it does not happen overnight , of course. It takes intention, explaining and collaboration of course . Those are the key elements when designing a programming effort . We want to provide information immediately upon identification than repeatedly throughout the early intervention journey as time goes on up until the child leaves early intervention at the age of three. He also want to self reflect on our own programming in any biases that we might bring. If we have strong opinions or if you feelings, we need to set those aside in order to frame the priority of the child and language acquisition . How we make certain our biases do not inform what is of the utmost importance and that is language exposure for each child . Any thoughts of what you put into that conversation, they certainly need to be made collaboration and be thought about critically throughout the process. If we take a step back, we also look at the full child holistically. Families need to also have open communication with friends and other family members. Many talk about and think about cognitive development of the child as was discussed earlier, the importance of seeing the child as a whole and individual and step back and understand the whole child approach in all the different domains that child brings. That concludes our presentation , our confident information is on the slide. You will be available for you to reach out to us after the presentation. Thank you so much for attending, we hope everyone has a great conference.

>> Do we have time for questions? Okay, we do have plans for some questions, anyone who questions? You might need a microphone if you're using spoken language .

>> I want to advance folks, I know that much. Okay, right here in the middle .

>> SPEAKER: Hi, I am in audiology student. I was just curious if you could speak about how we can talk to our families about using ASL? We know a lot about deaf and hard of hearing children are born to hearing parents, so trying to help promote ASL as a viable language for the parents?

>> Thanks for that question. What is at the top of my mind is that deaf mentors are really an important part of this equation . Deaf adults are going to be important in the life of any deaf child . When deaf children connect with deaf mentors , they learn how to become deaf. They learn that deaf people can be successful, and they learn a lot more about the cultural capital that they can gain within their own community. Deaf mentors can help deaf children navigate their identity and language development alongside with the family and parents. There are a lot of deaf mentorship programs online that I can report recommend that you reach out to and work in collaboration with .

>> Thank you for asking the question, it shows the critical thinking and self reflection, thank you. Keep it up. I think when we think about terminology that is utilized upon identification, oftentimes we stigmatize and say hearing loss. We talk about screening failure, talk about diagnosis. Instead, framing is positively identified for instance, or your child has a different hearing level for instance , or your child is deaf or hard of hearing , normalizing terminology that frames things in a positive way which can help put parents at ease. This is going to be okay, right? I fully agree with Bernice about the deaf community being an absolute must along this journey, right? We must collaborate and work with stakeholders and deaf community members are essential to that. The child and the parents also need to consider communication as a rights. What other inflection they make, the child will be okay. We know the parents often change their minds along the journey . Pauly identification, for the first two months they would choose one approach. I forget the statistics but it is a high number of times that parents change their mind in terms of language modality. That is another important thing when it comes to having a discussion with parents. Maybe suggesting taking an ASL class to parents, taught by a deaf teacher. Work with the deaf professional, someone who can teach them their own native language, who was the background culture to teach that language effectively . Any other questions?

>> Hi, - - from the Beverly school from the deaf in Massachusetts. Something our program uses is the family sign language program through Gallaudet. I just can't tell you how positive that is for the audiologist to note too. When parents are hesitant and have a deaf person teaching the family, we have for the most positive things every single time there mind changes because they get so excited about learning.

>> That is great feedback, thank you. I believe that my draws to a close, with all dancing aside, thank you so much for coming .