



Preparing Early Interventionists for Young Children Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Their Families

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Grant (H325K120161)

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

A \$1.25 million grant, [Preparing Early Interventionists for Young Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Their Families](#) (H325K12061), was a 36-credit hour graduate degree (MA) in early intervention in deaf education that prepared 32 graduate students to work with young children who are deaf and/or hard of hearing (DHH) and their families, facilitating the development of listening and spoken language (LSL). This project offered a mentorship component for students to successfully transition into professional positions.

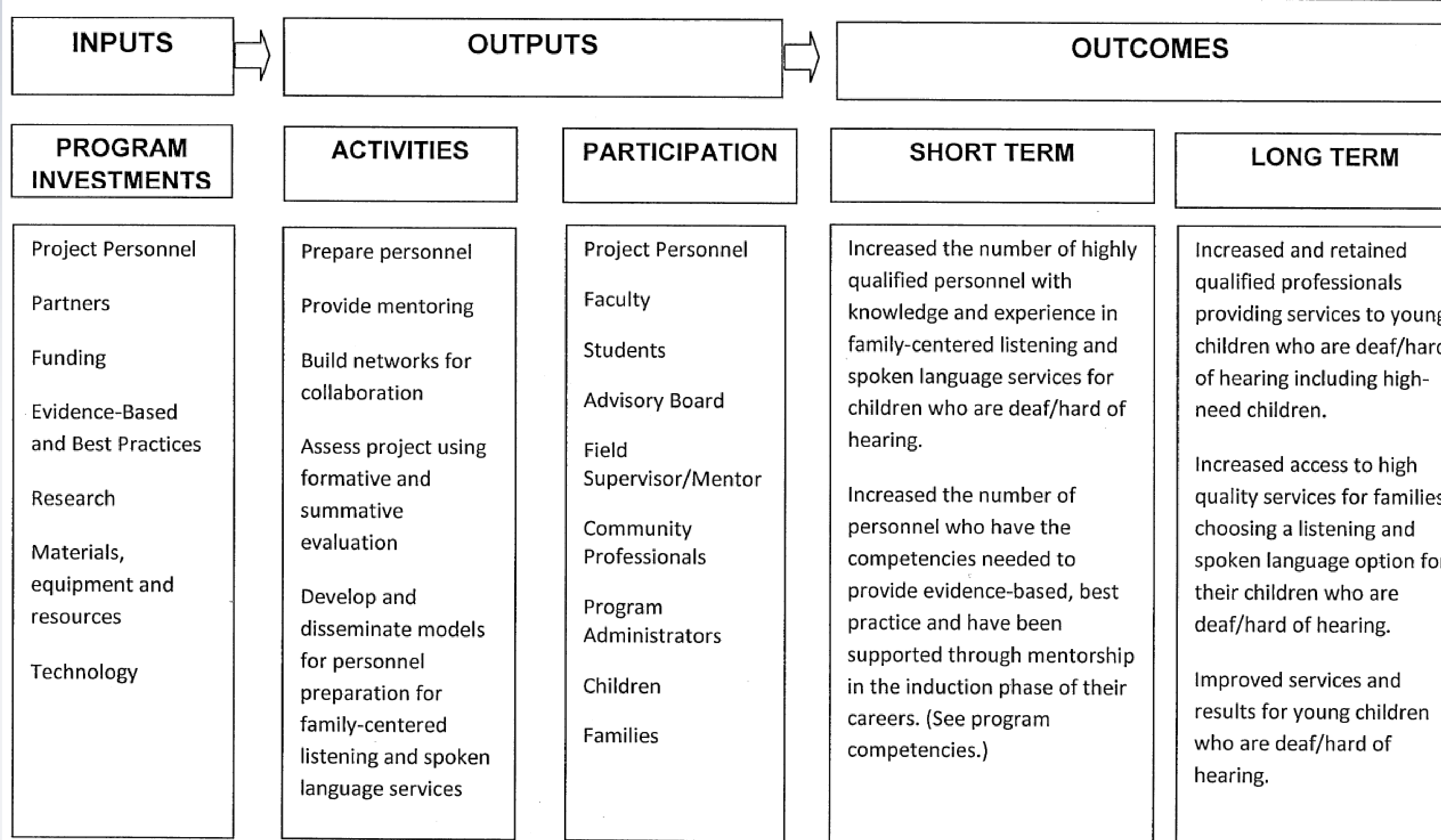
Rationale. Fontbonne University has been preparing teachers to work with students who are DHH since 1960. In response to the implementation of the Walsh Act, calling for newborn hearing screening, Fontbonne designed a graduate program in Early Intervention in Deaf Education (EIDE) and enrolled the first cohort of students in 2001. Focus groups consisting of parents and professionals at partner organizations in early intervention and early childhood deaf education identified competencies most needed by teachers and service providers. The program was designed so that students would develop these competencies through course work and field experiences. The competencies needed by professionals working in early intervention with infants and toddlers are very different than the knowledge and skills needed by professionals in school-aged deaf education (Compton, Niemeyer, & Michael, 2004; Proctor, Niemeyer, & Compton, 2005; Rice & Lenihan, 2005). The emphasis on family-centered services and the unique needs of infants and toddlers who are DHH require a different professional skill set than traditional K-12 deaf education. Like all early intervention service providers, these professionals must be competent in providing family-centered intervention, but in addition to these skills they must also be knowledgeable and skilled in meeting the needs related to hearing loss and communication development.

PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

1. Understands the development of infants, toddlers and young children who are DHH including specialized audiologic and communication needs.
2. Collaborates with professions in audiology, education, psychology health and social services in a transdisciplinary approach to provide services for young children who are DHH applying the research relevant to early intervention and early childhood.
3. Assesses the development of infants and young children and prepares individual family service plans that address the social, emotional, health and educational needs of children and their families reflecting an awareness of multicultural issues.
4. Implements family-centered intervention strategies that recognize the crucial role the family plays in the development of a child who is DHH, using appropriate counseling strategies, including referral, when needed.
5. Develops curriculum and effective instructional plans, including appropriate techniques and strategies, resources, materials, equipment and media for young children.
6. Understands program administration and develops skills for supervising service providers in early intervention/early childhood in deaf education
7. Advocates for the provision of high-quality services for all children who are DHH and their families including programming in least restrictive environments.

LOGIC MODEL

GOAL: To improve communication development and academic achievement for children who are deaf/hard of hearing



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Scholar Benefits:

- Tuition remission of 36 credit hours
- \$200 book stipend/semester, for four semesters
- Funds for professional development
- Collaborative seminar

Scholar Requirements (post-grad):

- Service obligation - Two years of employment for every one-year scholarship reimbursement (IEP/IFSP eligible children ages birth-21)
- Participation in mentorship program for first year of employment
- Development of professional in-service or family resource materials

Key Assessments:

- GPA
- Content Exam (Praxis, Pearson)
- Essential Knowledge and Skills
- Competency Based Portfolio
- Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment (MoPTA)
- Exit Interview

Mentoring:

- Asynchronous Online Platform
 - Articles, Discussion Topics, Resource Sharing
 - Peer Staffing of Challenging Cases
- Synchronous Cohort Meetings
- Individual Mentoring
 - Observation of Instruction
 - Consultation/Coaching

Advisory Board –

- Monica Fanning; Administrator, Special School District of St. Louis County
- Kathy Fenske; Parent of Child Who is D/HH
- Dawn Gettemeier; Itinerant Teacher, Individual Who is D/HH
- Mariana Helbig; Bilingual Early Intervention Provider, Moog Center for Deaf Education
- Sarah Huisman; Associate Professor, Director of Early Childhood Education, Fontbonne University
- Carrie McDaniel; DHH Program Coordinator, St. Louis Public Schools; CODA

Director of Grant Support –

Janice M. Johnson, M.S., M.M., MBA

External Evaluator –

Melody Harrison, PhD; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

FIELD EXPERIENCE PARTNERS

RESULTS

The knowledge and skills along with key competencies in family-centered practices which were central to the professional preparation of these scholars, have resulted in a workforce who apply family-centered practice, and specialized listening and spoken language approaches, across a variety of employment settings, thereby strengthening the impact of this Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services funded project on the early hearing detection and intervention workforce.

Objective 1: Prepare 32 early interventionists/ early childhood educators to work with young children (0-8 years) who are DHH using a LSL approach.

- (Jan 2014- Aug 2017)
- 28/32 scholars have completed program and graduated. 4 remaining scholars on track to complete program in August 2018.
- All employed in educational settings providing services to IFSP/IEP eligible children.
- 97% serving children who are DHH

Objective 2: Support retention of qualified professionals working in early intervention/ early childhood deaf education through mentorship and ongoing professional learning opportunities.

- Graduates participated in mentoring at least 5 times during mentored year, through group cohort meetings, synchronous and asynchronous discussions, and individual mentoring sessions.
- Employer surveys consistently rate overall graduate effectiveness to be “adequate” or “thorough”.

Objective 3: Prepare and disseminate written and electronic information from project.

- 20/22 scholars have submitted in-service projects, posted on project website. 12 scholars continue developing in-service projects.

CONTACT & REFERENCES

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