

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO SERVE CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

EHDI Annual Conference
Cincinnati, OH
March 7, 2023



What We'll Cover Today



An overview of a pilot project in Kentucky to serve a vulnerable population of children who are deaf or hard of hearing who are in out-of-home care.

Considerations in developing new partnerships for data collection and funding to address unmet needs in your state/territory.

Ways to engage Deaf or Hard of Hearing adults to positively impact children who are deaf or hard of hearing.



WHAT IS OUR "WHY?"

- How the program evolved
- Building partnerships and engaging stakeholders

Individuals' Needs Slowly Leading To Systems Change 2014 to 2022

BBHDID, Michelle Niehaus – Met with EEO/Civil Rights Compliance Branch within CHFS to discuss a formal complaint and systems issues.

Foster Parent V-Log
A video was created and disseminated to DCBS foster care Recruitment & Certification teams statewide emphasizing the need for signing or deaf foster parents to serve youth in care.

2014

Individual needs, a formal complaint to CHFS, system pressures to return youth to KY, and lack of accessible placements drove early work

Children's Home of Northern Kentucky- (CHNK) worked with DBHIDD, KCDHH, and DCBS to ensure a youth returning to KY had language access, alerting devices, and both staff and other youth ready to accept him. ASL and Deaf culture classes were offered weekly and the youth and clinical team received mentoring from a Deaf professional.

Southern Bluegrass Regions DCBS workers assisted in developing a recruitment video and hosted foster / resource parent information sessions, but we had no statewide approach

- Partnered with trusted entity - the KY Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Four segments:
 - Introduction
 - Interview with former foster child about having language access and not
 - Interview with former foster parent who signs
 - Interview with DCBS staff about process

"COFFEE CHAT"



- Children in KY who were in the child protective system (DCBS) were sometimes labeled as medically fragile. Those with unilateral hearing loss often had nothing in their records noting hearing loss.
- The referral packets did not always accurately represent the child's strengths and needs - statewide rejections common
- Interpreters would be requested for initial investigations but not for follow up services
- No system exists to track foster homes where resource parents know ASL or know about Listening and Spoken Language and the psychosocial effects of permanent childhood hearing loss.
 - Foster families / Resource parents who said they only wanted children who were Deaf or Hard of Hearing would be removed from the system if placements weren't made on a regular basis

“LOW INCIDENT” AND “DIFFICULT TO PLACE”



Relationship-Building and Cross-Training 2014 to 2022

2015

DCBS Point Person for DHHS was established.
Relationship-building as a foundation to systems change.

System of Care- (SOC)
“Making Strides in DCBS Services for Deaf Family Members”- panelists included those who work within DCBS systems (BHDID, KCDHH, KSD Outreach, DCBS, P&P, and the parent of a child in OOHC)

DBHIDD and KCDHH met with EEO/Civil Rights Compliance Branch within CHFS. Discussed disparity in approach for LEP vs access for those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Started Drafting the Standard of Practice (SOP) - Working with Deaf Member Families

Central Office Support Allowed Exploration of Potential Solutions

- Revision of DCBS Standards of Practice,
- The need for training for frontline workers,
- The need for recruitment of deaf/signing foster parents,
- The need for properly trained residential facilities,
- The need to train interpreters working with DCBS
- A Mentoring program for youth in DCBS custody.
- Data collection and sharing

Pam Cotton appointed Jenny Thornhill as the first DCBS Point Person for DHHS after attending the SOC workshop!



Imagining Together: A Coordinated SOC for Families

System of Care

Core Values

- Community-based
- Family-driven & Youth-guided
- Culturally & Linguistically Competent

Guiding Principles

- Comprehensive
- Individualized
- Provided in the least restrictive, appropriate setting
- Coordinated at both system and service delivery levels
- Involve family members and youth as full partners
- Emphasize early identification and intervention

EARLY ROLES OF PARTNERS

Entity	Primary Role
Department for Community Based Services	Investigation and protection for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Over 10,000 in general population were in out of home care at one point)
Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Interpreter coordination for DCBS Educating DCBS staff on Deaf culture and working with interpreters
Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, & Intellectual Disabilities	Troubleshooting Determining points for collaboration Educating partners about one another's roles
Family of Children with Hearing Loss and Members of the Deaf community	None

INDIVIDUALS' NEEDS SLOWLY LED TO SYSTEMS CHANGE 2015 TO 2019

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2015

- DCBS Point Person for DHHS was established.
- Relationship-building as a foundation to systems change.
- SOP- Started Drafting- Working with Deaf Member Families

●

2016

- Turnover and transition will always challenge progress!
- DCBS Point Person moved to a different position. This position is now on old.
- DBHDID and KCDHH continue working with CPS and P&P workers

●

2017

- Persistence is vital to ensuring continuity despite changes in personnel or structure.
- Ongoing consultation and TA to DCBS staff as needed.

●

2018

- Creating and keeping a good paper trail helps with transition training.
- CHFS DCBS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Point Person- Angela Winkfield
- Meetings reconvene to address systems change and goals were redefined/reviewed.

●

2019

- Release of SOP in February.
- Renewing efforts to recruit foster parents.
- TWIST-started discussions on how to improve data and tracking system in regards to deaf membered families and language.

DCBS STANDARDS OF PRACTICE (SOP) APPROVED 2019

1.14.1 Access to Interpreters and Effective Communication for Those Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing CHFS Online Manuals - - Google Chrome

Not secure | manuals.sp.chfs.ky.gov/chapter1/00/Pages/Access-to-Interpreters-and-Effective-Communication-for-Those-Who-are-Deaf-or-Hard-of-Hearing1205-93...

Ky.gov An Official Website of the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Department for Community Based Services
Standards of Practice Online Manual

Chapters 1 2 3 4 5 9 10 11 12 13 19 20 23 24 25 26 27 30 31 38

Home > Chapter 1-Fundamentals of Practice > Fundamentals of Practice > 1.14.1 Access to Interpreters and Effective Communication for Those Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Fundamentals of Practice ▶
Confidentiality ▶

1.14.1 Access to Interpreters and Effective Communication for Those Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Chapter: Chapter 1-Fundamentals of Practice **Effective:** 2/18/2019
Section: 1.14.1 Access to Interpreters and Effective Communication for Those Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing **Version:** 1

When a section of SOP has been revised users will see the following: Added **{This is added material}**, Deleted ~~{This is deleted material}~~. The bold and strikethroughs will appear on the site for fifteen (15) days after a modification and will then be removed.

Legal Authority/Introduction

- [*42 USC 2000d-Prohibition against exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits and discrimination under federally assisted programs on ground of race, color or national origin.*](#)
- [*45 KAR 1:080 Standards for Title VI reporting*](#)
- [*KRS 309.301 Licensing for interpreters required -- Exceptions.*](#)
- [*920 KAR 1:070 Deaf and hard of hearing services*](#)

Procedure

Individuals who are deaf and use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary language must have access to

Forms and Resources

- [Access Center Procedures for State Government Securing a Sign Language Interpreter](#)
- [American Association of the Deaf Blind Communication Factsheet](#)
- [BHDID Program Administrator for Deaf and Hard of](#)

Coffee Chats Continue: DCBS Series

<https://www.kcdhh.ky.gov/vlog/?cat=14>

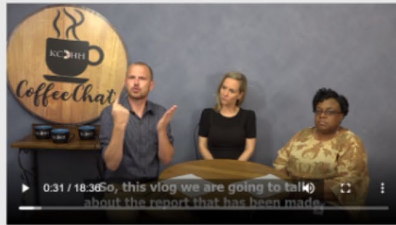
Introduction to the DCBS Series



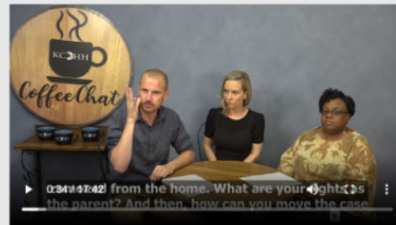
What is DCBS?



DCBS Investigations



DCBS - Rights of Parents



DCBS - Deaf Interpreter Explains



<https://www.kcdhh.ky.gov/vlog/?cat=14>

“DID YOU KNOW?” SENT TO ALL DCBS EMPLOYEES

Did You Know?

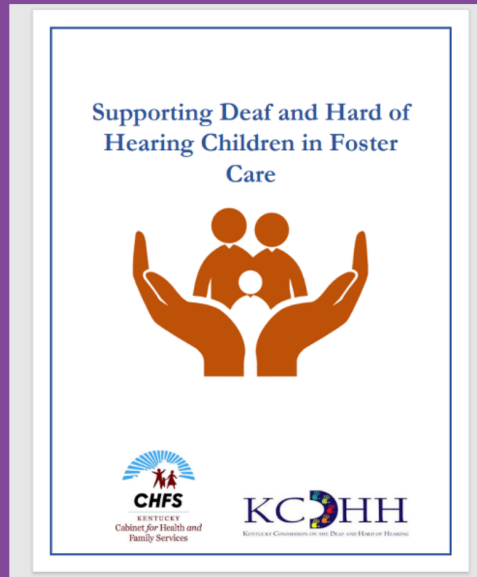
Individuals who are deaf and use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary language must have access to qualified interpreters during **all** points of contact with CHFS staff. Effective communication is mandated by both federal and state law. Services provided by the Cabinet must be equal to those provided to a person who does not have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or a disability.

The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf or Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) provides assistance to state agencies in providing coordination of interpreter services. Visit SOP 1.14 to access the link for requesting interpreter services and to review best practice for servicing members of the Deaf or Hard of Hearing community.

Consultation for DCBS cases involving a deaf family member can be provided by contacting the OOHC DHH liaison, Angela Winkfield. The liaison can be reached at (502)871-2442.

TIMELINE - 2014 to 2022





Supporting Deaf or Hard of Hearing Children in Foster Care (not quite a one pager!)

Topics Covered:

- **List of Contacts**
- **Communication**
- **ADA & The Law**
- **Attachment & Trauma**
- **Isolation & Re-Traumatizing**
- **Connecting to Other Families**
- **Education**
- **Creating a Deaf-Friendly
Space in Your Home**
- **References & Additional
Resources**

TIMELINE - 2014 to 2022

Aetna Better Health's SKY program launches as the Medicaid Managed Care Organization for children in OOHC. Shelly Mann reaches out after a call on a "difficult to place" child

2021

Centralized benefits for foster children, a System of Care approach, and Concerned People create "perfect storm"

Aetna SKY begins working to collect member data

DCBS implements several things:

- Updated SOP to include Communication Skills Assessments
- April edition of FosterKY Newsletter included information on DHH and tipsheet for supporting DHH kids in foster care
- Conducted a survey for deaf family members
- Special foster parent recruitment efforts
- ASK virtual support group launched

Meetings begin with Aetna SKY SOC Team (now the Care Advocate Team). Submitted Value Added Benefits proposal .

TIMELINE - 2014 to 2022





language • access • communication • empowerment • support

PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

Department for Behavioral
Health, Developmental, &
Intellectual Disabilities



Department of Community
Based Services

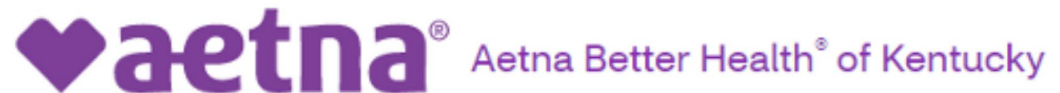


CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

Office of Children with
Special Healthcare
Needs / EHDI



www.kyhandsandvoices.org



SKILLS AND TALENTS OF STAKEHOLDERS

- **Willingness to say “YES!” or “Yes AND...” – the improv approach**
- **Flexibility**
- **Grace**
- **Knowledge of their own internal systems**
- **Connections within and outside their entity**
- **Humor**
- **Trust**
- **Deep desire to make a difference in the lives of these children and families**



THE SKY VALUE ADDED BENEFIT GOALS:

- Accurately identify children with hearing loss who are in Out of Home Care with DCBS
- Review records for gaps in language access or development, assessment or potential misdiagnosis of behavioral health issues, and consider any trends in placement disruptions, lengths of stays, or out of state placement
- Provide additional Communication Skills Assessments with recommendations to the DCBS team, foster and biological families, and behavioral health treatment teams to prevent language deprivation
- Offer DHH Guides as role models / language models for children and youth so that the foster and biological families can benefit from the lived experience of Deaf or Hard of Hearing adults
- Strengthen and expand the network of formal and informal support to children and families at risk of or involved with DCBS
- Give hope and specialized support to Deaf or Hard of Hearing young people in Out of Home Care!

AETNA SKY VALUE ADDED BENEFIT



Review of Case Files to see if/how hearing loss is factored into placement and/or needed treatment

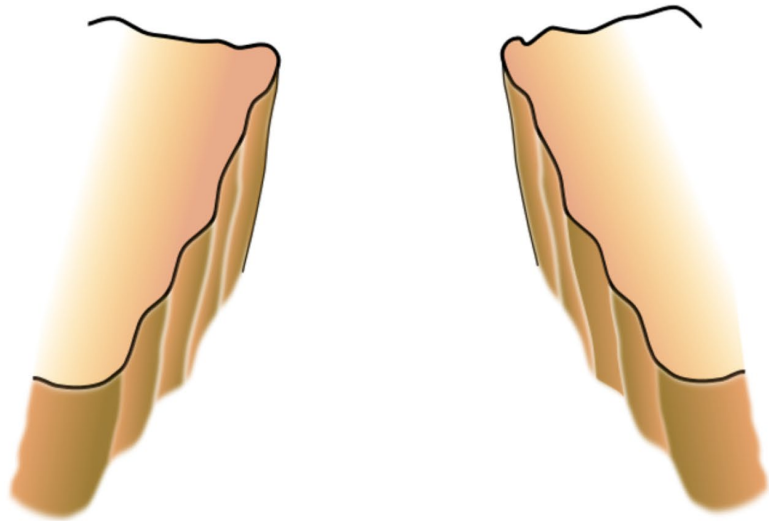


Communication Skills Assessments and Reports to Guide Language Access and Development



DHH Guides to Support Foster Families and Children as well as Bio Families and Facilities



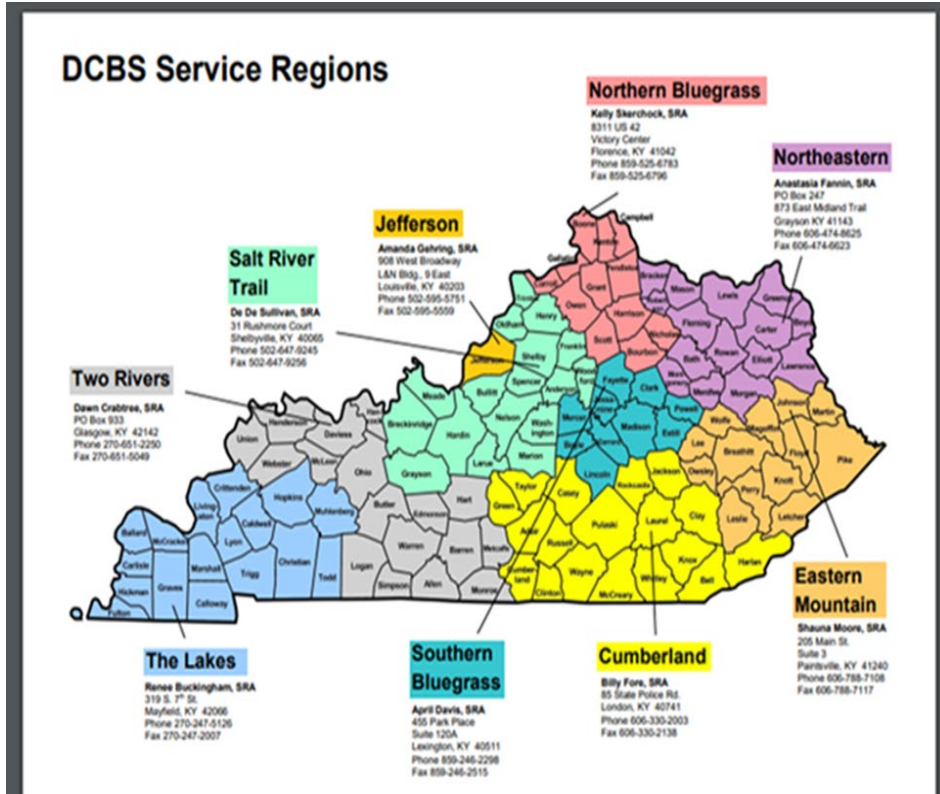


ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION:

Utilizing multiple ways of finding children:

- DCBS Database (TWIST) - voluntary fields
- Aetna Medicaid Claims Data
 - Verify with health screening
 - Checking with case workers
 - Checking with foster families

DATA SAMPLE - JANUARY 2023



A. FOSTER CARE	NORTHERN BLUEGRASS	3	4
A. FOSTER CARE	SALT RIVER TRAIL	7	6
A. FOSTER CARE	SOUTHERN BLUEGRASS	4	2
A. FOSTER CARE	THE LAKES	1	5
A. FOSTER CARE	TWO RIVERS	5	2
C. LICENSED PRIVATE CHILD CARE	CUMBERLAND	8	9
C. LICENSED PRIVATE CHILD CARE	EASTERN MOUNTAIN	3	13
C. LICENSED PRIVATE CHILD CARE	JEFFERSON	3	13
C. LICENSED PRIVATE CHILD CARE	NORTHEASTERN	4	16
C. LICENSED PRIVATE CHILD CARE	NORTHERN BLUEGRASS	5	12
C. LICENSED PRIVATE CHILD CARE	SALT RIVER TRAIL	4	11
C. LICENSED PRIVATE CHILD CARE	SOUTHERN BLUEGRASS	7	11
C. LICENSED PRIVATE CHILD CARE	TWO RIVERS	11	9
H. FOSTER CARE-MEDICALLY COMPLEX	JEFFERSON	1	11
		72	8

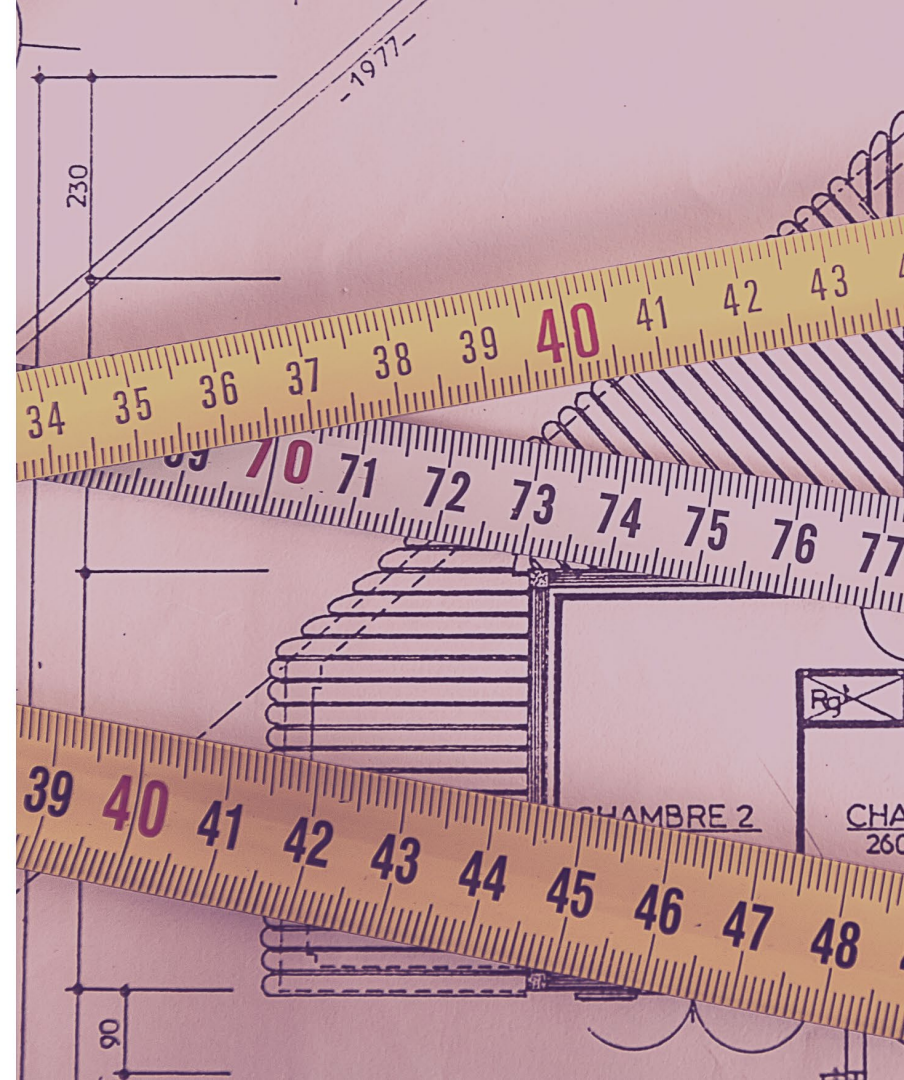
A BRIEF NOTE ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS ASSESSMENTS





BUILDING THE DHH GUIDE PROGRAM

(What You are All Really Here For!)



THE IMPORTANCE OF DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING ADULTS



The Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) has repeatedly recommended including DHH adults in the systems that serve families of children who are deaf in their position statements since 1995. Specifically, they state:

“Families should be provided with information specific to language development and access to peer and language models . . . Families should be offered access to children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing, as role models, mentors, and as appropriate and competent language models. Access to deaf or hard of hearing adults can support caregivers in fostering the child’s emerging self-esteem and identity formation. Information on spoken language, signed language, or use of both should be provided.” (p.28)

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING ADULTS

- Over 90% of children who are deaf or hard of hearing are born to hearing parents. These families often have never met a deaf individual, putting them in uncharted territory of raising their child. Further, they likely have little or no experience with deaf individuals, and their expectations of their child may be limited due to this lack of exposure. (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2004)
- Improved language acquisition and development
- Children are more likely to achieve age-appropriate language milestones
- Parents report less stress and being more involved in their child's schooling
- Positive identity development



WHY HANDS & VOICES?



"What works for your child is what makes the choice right."™

- Unbiased Approach
- Family-driven organization fits with System of Care philosophy
- Prior Collaboration
- Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Advisory Committee
- Family Support Subcommittee
- Parent Cafes
- Online Support Groups / Classes during COVID
- DHH Hero Program
- HRSA grant goals of DHH Adult/Family involvement
- AMAZING People Committed to Helping Children and Families Thrive!



RECRUITING: KENTUCKY HANDS & VOICES DHH HERO PROGRAM AS A BASE



<https://youtu.be/W6eZqLbs9Ek>

<https://kyhandsandvoices.org/dhh-heroes/>

ROLE OF DHH GUIDE

THAT DEAF GUY

BY MATT & KAY DAIGLE



- Takes responsibility of teaching Deaf culture, communication strategies, and general information off the child
- Offers the family support in person, remotely, by phone, or by text



**TRAINING:
MAY 2022**



COMPONENTS OF DHH GUIDE TRAINING

- We are Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side & Supporting Families without Bias - open to stakeholders
- Role of the DHH Guide
- Art of Telling Your Story
- Encountering Emotions
- Team Bonding
- Working with Parents
- Role Play
- Referral Process & Paperwork Overview



Monthly Zoom meeting with stakeholders

Monthly Zoom meeting with DHH Guides

Timesheets with Google Sheets

Shared Google documents

Documentation & Reports



STRUCTURE



DHH Guide Initial Interview

Name of DHH Guide: _____ Initial Contact Date: _____

Initial Contact Method (Circle One): Phone call Text Email Other _____

24 Hours Prior to Session: Send reminder

Session Notes:

Child's Name: _____

Present Caregiver Name(s): _____

Meeting Date: _____ Start Time: _____

Delivery Method (Circle One): Zoom In-Person

If in person, physical location: _____

Initial Meeting Tasks:

Introduce Yourself and the LACES / DHH Guide program.

Get to know the family and child.

Identify family's strengths and problem areas.

Identify goals for the child and/or family.

∨ Goal #1: _____

∨ Goal #2: _____

∨ Goal #3: _____

Topics / Gaps Addressed:

- Lack of caregiver support
- Accessing and benefiting from audiology services
- Self-advocacy skills
- Language and communication
- Peer relationships
- Resource dissemination
- Other: _____

Potential Language Barriers:

- Caregivers do not use same language
- Lacks connection to Deaf culture and/or deaf peers
- Language supports not available or not accessed
- Uses behavior to communicate
- Caregivers lack knowledge of rights / ADA / accessibility laws
- Caregivers lack knowledge of available accommodations
- Lack of school/educational collaboration
- Language abilities not assessed
- Multiple school transitions
- Multiple out-of-home-care placements
- Needs augmentative communication device
- Needs hearing assistive technology
- Needs assistive listening device
- Malfunctioning/non-working communication listening device
- Does not use or inconsistent use of hearing aid or cochlear implant
- Language acquisition needs
- Other: _____

Final notes:

Finish Time: _____ Next Meeting Date: _____

Next Steps:

- Email a copy of this form to melissa@kvhandsandvoices.org
- Log contact information in your Google Sheet.

Notes: _____



...and where we want to go next!

THOUGHTS ON OUR FIRST YEAR

...and where we want to go next!

CHALLENGES



Significant time was spent on completing vendor contracts and determining documentation and reporting processes.



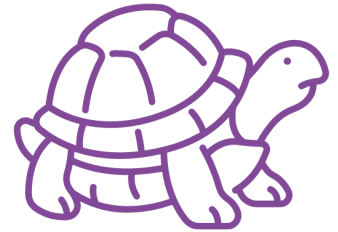
Determining what information and how to share across secure systems is an ongoing struggle:

- * Secure emails
- * Developing TEAMS access
- * Getting releases from field staff
- * Who can know what?




Passion Project for Everyone involved - leads to time constraints

Guide retention and engagement




Sometimes feels like we are moving at “the speed of slow” and always want to do more!

CHALLENGE: ENGAGING FAMILIES TWO OF OUR CURRENT ATTEMPTS



Introducing an Online Support Group for Foster and Adoptive Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

UK College of Social Work's Adoption Support for Kentucky Virtual Interaction Program (ASK-VIP) is partnering with Aetna's LACES program to launch an online support group for the foster and adoptive parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.




Meet the Facilitator:

Christina Deik has served as a teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children for more than 23 years. Christina and her husband have seven children: three biological, one adopted, and three foster children. Three of Christina's children are Deaf, with one being Deaf-blind.

The support group will meet on the third Thursday of each month.

Interested?

Register online at: ukcosw.com/dhh-support



KENTUCKY HANDS & VOICES

JANUARY 29 [AT] 4-6PM ET

parent café

for families of D/HH children
in out-of-home care
(a Zoom event)

sign up by e-mailing
info@kyhandsandvoices.org

DHH GUIDES INSIGHTS



LET'S CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION!

Michelle Niehaus, LCSW

Program Administrator, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services,
KY Dept for Behavioral Health, Developmental, &
Intellectual Disabilities

Michelle.Niehaus@ky.gov

(502) 892-9122 (Voice / Text / FaceTime)

Sarah Roof - Executive Director KY Hands & Voices

sarah@kyhandsandvoices.org