

The Deaf Connections Program: Supporting Hearing Families of Deaf Children



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Origins of the Program

- Expressed need for DHH family mentoring in MA before COVID
- Continuing need prompted MA EHDI office to ask for pilot
- Grant funding supplied to WRSD by MA EHDI office
- Starting data from 2019 MA state report by Peggy Lee and Kym Myer

Guiding concepts and goals

- Pilot novel program with 3 families
- Prioritize DHH mentor involvement
- Support and involve families throughout

Initial EI Families Survey

What topics are you interested in learning more about or getting more support with?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understanding your child's needs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How to read with your child |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning ASL | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How to play with your child |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How to communicate in your home | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting your child's relationship with extended family |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your child's hearing technology | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting deaf and hard of hearing adults |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How to support your child's identity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Imagining a happy and successful future for your child |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How to support your child's emotional development | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preparing for the transition from EI to school |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sharing important family knowledge and experience with your child | <input type="checkbox"/> Something else: _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Navigating barriers your family and your child face | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connecting to supportive community | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting your child's relationship with siblings | |

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us about your interest in a deaf mentor program?

Learning more about deaf culture learning more signs how to communicate with my kids.

Initial Vision

Priority values: Collaboration and equity

Research and literature review

- Crossdisciplinary
- Current research
- Current programs
- Enduring needs

Program rooted in bi-cultural competency

1. Train mentors
2. Support families
3. Connect families



DCP Mission and Guiding Principles

Mission

The Deaf Connections Program enables caretakers of deaf children to nurture strong relationships within and beyond the family, confidently access resources, and envision a rich, full future for their child.

Guiding principles

Collective power

Community cultural wealth

Relationships as the foundation of health

Language equity

Moving from the known to the new

DCP Program Family Goals

- Unlimit community conceptions of deaf future
- Increase caretaker comprehension of deaf needs and experience
- Strengthen relationships between deaf children and their families
- Increase caretaker cross-cultural confidence
- Maintain community involvement after transition to school

DCP Pilot Structure



DCP Team:

Training Lead - conducts mentor training

Team Coordinator - liaises between DCP and EI

DCP mentors - provide direct family services

EI providers - collaborate with mentors to support family involvement and impact



Regular team contact through group chat, monthly full-team synchronous meetings

Service delivery

9 mentoring visits per family (~3 visits / month)

Varied mentoring settings (6 in home, 3 in community)

Mentor and family socials

DCP Team Philosophy

Within the DCP, the deaf adult lived experience is recognized as equally valuable and worthy of respect as professional EI and TOD training.

This is in response and resistance to the historic, systemic underrepresentation and devaluation of deaf adult voices in the vision, design, and implementation of deaf services and education.

Through enacting a model of equity, systemic patterns of audism are disrupted, team members can experience a strong sense of agency, and deaf children and their families receive the best possible services.

Program Curriculum and Mentor Training

Cultural Community Wealth: TJ Yosso

2 days, 2 mentors, 2 EI providers

Pre/post tests throughout

Mentor goal: become flexible, confident cultural mediators



Day 1

- Program guiding principles
- 6 training videos
- Corresponding worksheets
- Self-reflection assignment

Day 2

- Review & discussion
- Personal guiding questions
- Teambuilding with EI providers
- Family scenarios

Pilot Launch and Hurdles

- Initial Interest
- Family enrollment and attrition
- Timing and Holidays
- Initial Data Collection
 - Families
 - Mentors
- Initial Visits



Initial Pilot Data

Family perspective

Results of pre tests

Impact so far

Mentor perspective

Pre / post training data

Observed impact for families

Personal impact so far



Initial Pilot Data cont.

EI provider perspective

Pre / post training data

Observed impact for families

Personal impact so far

EI Agency providers



Pilot Impact: Provider Collaboration



DCP Pilot Growing Pains and Responsive Design

- Team roles and communication
- Mentor Documentation
- Scheduling
- Family attrition / participation
- Cancellations rates: DCP and EI

Meeting Notes (activities, highlights, questions, etc):

Meeting Notes (what did we do):

Recommendations:

Course of Action:

Meeting key points (what does the family take away):

Action items (what needs to happen after this meeting):



Initial Conclusions and Next Steps

- Strong positive response overall
- Forthcoming pilot data
- Vision for expansion
 - Increased pilot enrollment
 - Training handbook
 - Train the trainers
- Get involved!



Contact Us!

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Thank you!

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