

Nurturing Connections: A Family Support Activities Guide

EHDI Conference 2026



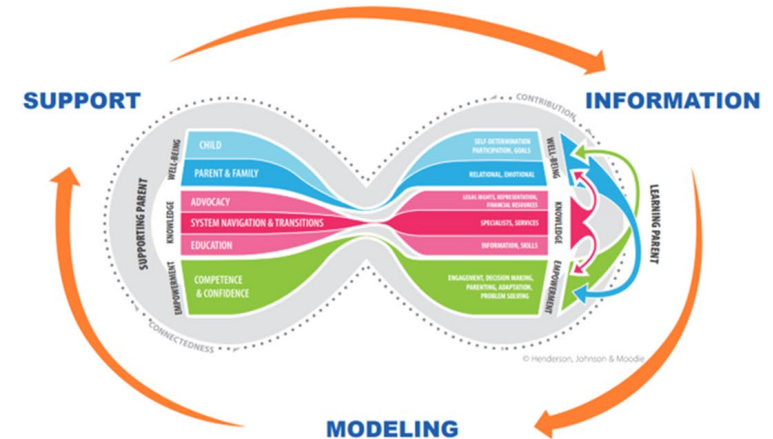
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HANDS & VOICES FAMILY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES GUIDE



A guide that includes family support activities developed from an evidence-based parent-to-parent support framework for families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

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Session Objectives:

1. Identify effective strategies to foster meaningful family engagement in Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) programs.
2. Demonstrate how family support activities can promote family well-being and increase family knowledge for families navigating the EHDI system.
3. Explore tools and resources designed to empower families and professionals.

Family Support in the EHDI System

The Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH, 2007, 2013, 2019) **identified parent-to-parent support as an important component of EHDI programs** for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

EHDI Legislation states referrals from EHDI programs should also include family support.

<https://www.infanthearing.org/legislation/federal.html>

EHDI programs are required in their HRSA funding to support and engage families with DHH children and DHH adults through the development, implementation, and evaluation of their EHDI program:

- Designate a point person to serve as a Family Engagement Liaison
- At a minimum, allocate 20% of awarded grant funds for family engagement and family support activities.

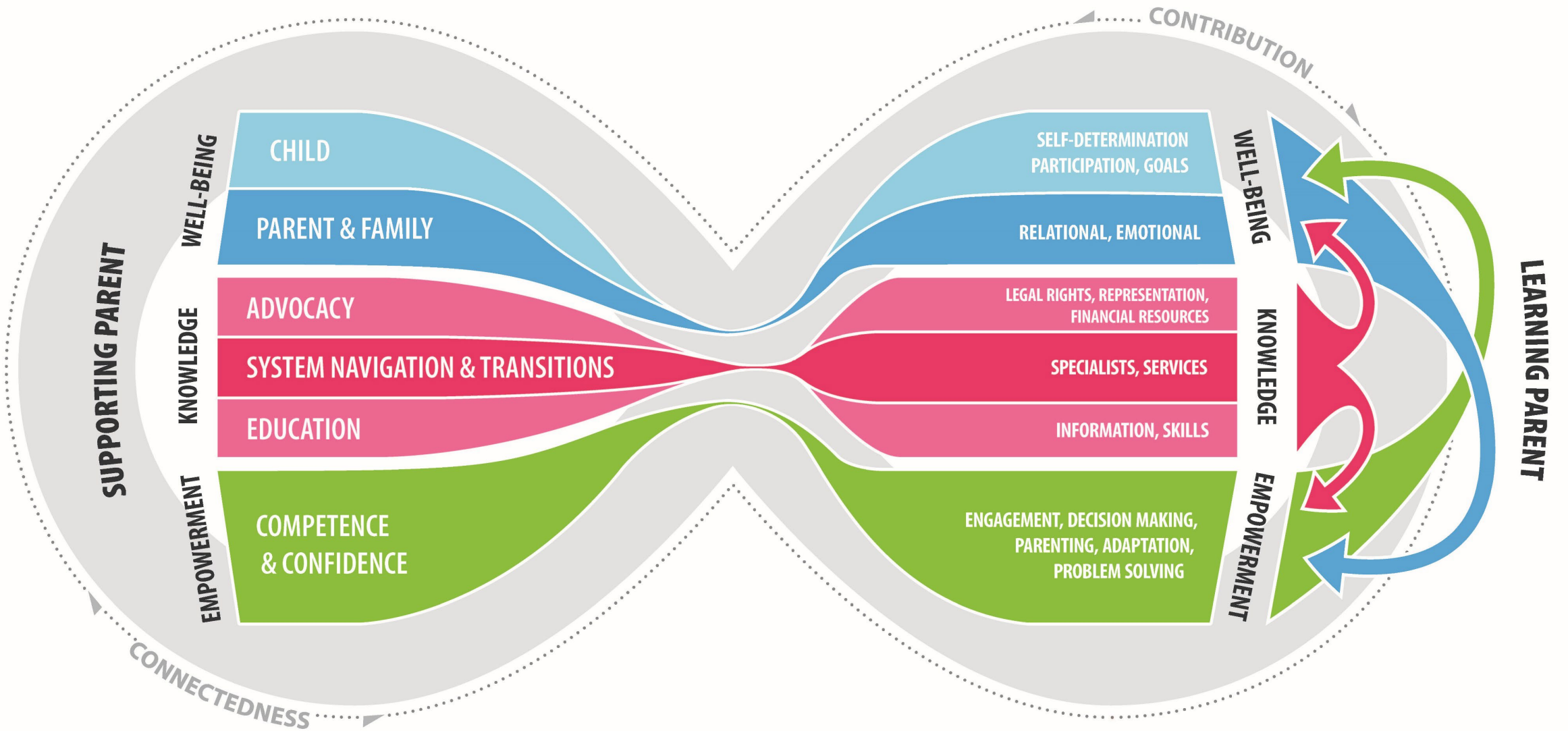


Raise your hand if...

1. You provide family support.
2. You implement a family support curriculum or lessons.
3. You have used any of the activities in the Hands & Voices Family Support Activities Guide.

Hold on tight... we are going to quickly walk you through the guide!





Three Constructs

Well-Being

The well-being concept addresses both the child and the family. Research shows that a parent's emotional well-being influences their ability to meet their own needs and support their child. For the child, well-being involves building relationships, social inclusion, and achieving goals.

Knowledge

Advocacy, system navigation & transitions, and education are the key components of the knowledge construct. Quality information that is accurate, well-balanced, comprehensive and provided in an unbiased manner leads to parental empowerment and well-being.

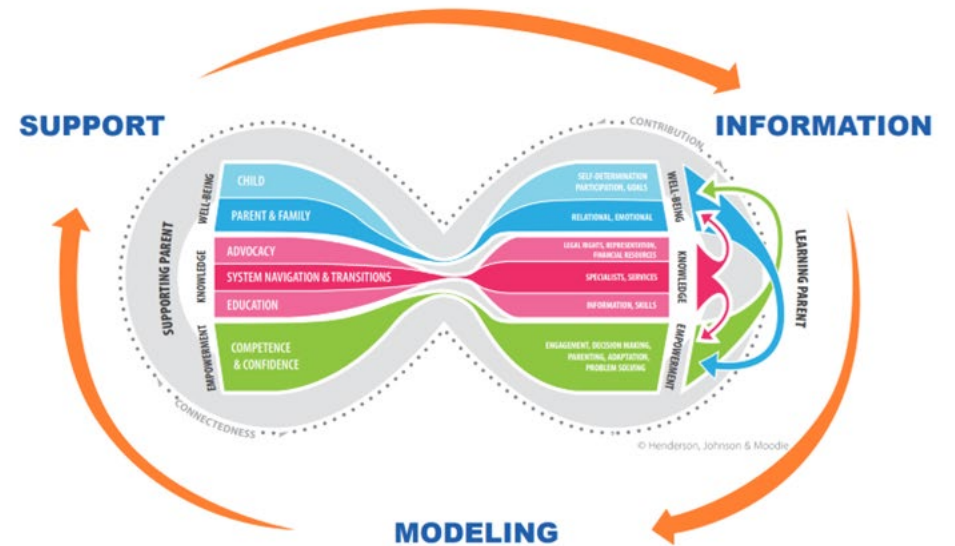
Empowerment

Competence and confidence are the main components of the empowerment construct. When families actively participate and make decisions in parenting, they feel competent in their role. As confidence grows, they perceive themselves as experts in their child's care, enabling them to adapt to situations and find solutions to problems.

Purpose of the Guide

- Provides learning objectives and supporting activities **to build the skills and understanding** of the learning parent
- The Guide is in a **simplified format**
- Written so that **anyone** who is supporting a family including families themselves **can use the guide**

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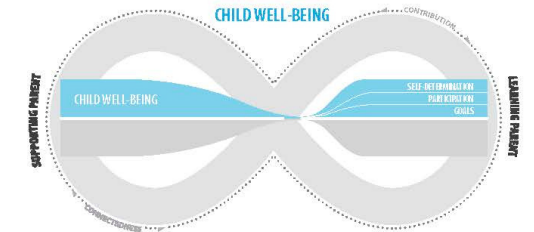
Guide Highlights

- **Topic words** highlight the goal of the activities within that section
- If a resource comes in **Additional Languages**, those are highlighted and linked
 - 68 Spanish resources
 - Over 25 other languages
- **192** website links, **160** unduplicated
- **Easy to use** the “search” feature to find activities that fit the family’s concerns/needs

Construct 1A - Child Well Being



Family Support Activities

Construct 1A: Child Well-Being



Component 1 - Self-Determination

Self-motivation, positive self-perception, and meaningful relationships.

TOPIC	FAMILY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES
Self-Perception	Positive self-perception is important for a child who is D/HH. A good understanding of who they are and what they are capable of leads to confidence, strong social skills, and meaningful relationships.
Activity:	Use the following Social Emotional Tip Sheet and Family Activity Plan to choose 1-2 tips to work on each week that will support the child’s self-perception. www.handsandvoices.org/f13/topics/lang-lit-soc-development/social-dev-resources.html Tip Sheet also in Spanish - Family Activity Plan also in Spanish
Activity:	Watch the following video of a D/HH teen sharing her journey of finding a positive self-perception. https://youtu.be/A2DfJQ2DmUE
 Activity:	Use the following tip sheet to support building a natural and loving parent/caregiver-child connection through everyday activities that lead to experiences of positive self-perception. https://handsandvoices.org/resources/fostering-joy/its-eng-FamilyTipSheet.pdf Also in: Spanish , French , Hmong , Italian , Somali , Urdu , Mandarin , Japanese , Thai , German , ASL
Meaningful Relationships	Good communication with a child who is D/HH is essential to developing meaningful relationships between the child and those that they interact with such as parents/caregivers, siblings, extended family, and those within the community.
 Activity:	Use this resource to learn and apply simple changes in the family routine and the child’s environment that promotes communication between the child and family. Be mindful to not use phrases with a child who is D/HH such as, “never mind or I’ll tell you later...” https://www.handsandvoices.org/f13/f13-docs/maximize-visual-access-tips.pdf Also in Spanish

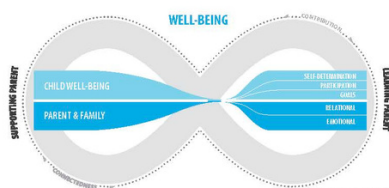


Because language & literacy are so critical

- This icon is used to highlight language and literacy activities found throughout the guide

Family Learning Outcomes

Well-Being



CONSTRUCT 1 Well-Being

Construct 1A: Child Well-Being

- Component 1 - Self-Determination:** self-motivation, positive self-perception, and meaningful relationships.
- Component 2 - Participation:** involvement in hearing and Deaf communities, leisure and extracurricular activities, daycare/school, and ventures with family and friends.
- Component 3 - Goals:** the language and communication outcomes, social and psychosocial aspirations and educational and employment objectives and achievements.

Construct 1B: Parent & Family Well-Being

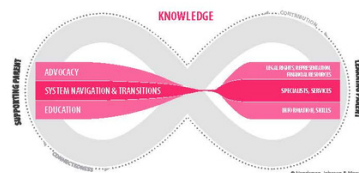
- Component 1. Relational:** provides well-being related to family functioning. Family functioning includes bonding with the child, family and parental cohesiveness, and communication between family members. Community interaction is involvement in community and cultural networks, friends, and religious institutions.
- Component 2. Emotional:** emotional support offers psychological benefits such as coping, acceptance, hopefulness, self-reliance and confidence, readiness to engage in response to potential grief, loneliness, vulnerability, and perceived stigma.

Family Learning Outcomes - In this construct parents/caregivers will:

- learn that they are not alone, there are other families they can connect with and learn from.
- feel hopeful about their child's future.
- be able to improve their focus on everyday moments that bring joy to their family.
- find encouragement in raising their own child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing after meeting another experienced parent.
- see an improvement in their overall well-being (for example, state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy) because of the support they receive.

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Knowledge



CONSTRUCT 2 Knowledge

Construct 2A: Advocacy

- Component 1: Legal Rights:** are the laws, regulations, legislation and government policies related to human rights, child's rights, and special education laws.
- Component 2: Representation:** refers to peer advocate, parental consultant, and advisor at the community, regional and national levels.
- Component 3: Financial Resources:** financial assistance, insurance, government funding, entitlements and not-for-profit or voluntary sector supplements.

Construct 2B: Systems Navigation & Transitions

- Component 1: Specialists:** refers to the learning parent's knowledge during system navigation and transitions to coordinate care with specialists, collaborate with stakeholders, provide a roadmap of care, and facilitate understanding of the role of the specialist(s).
- Component 2: Services:** refers to community resources, health care, school, legal and regional services.

Construct 2C: Education

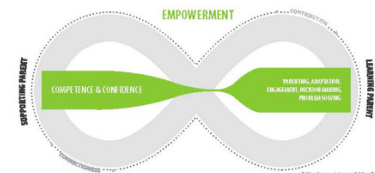
- Component 1: Information:** refers to providing accurate, well-balanced and comprehensive information regarding technological and research advancements, and educational, communication and assistive device options.
- Component 2: Skills:** refers to skill-based instruction and support, such as sign language and device-appropriate technological skills, as a supplement to specialized services and support.

Family Learning Outcomes - In this construct parents/caregivers will:

- understand the impact of hearing loss/difference on their child's development.
- have an increased understanding of the different language/communication options for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- understand their role in advocating for their child's needs.
- have more knowledge of information and resources that will support their child/family.
- be able to name information learned from their family support provider.

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Empowerment



CONSTRUCT 3 Empowerment

Construct 3A: Competence & Confidence

- Component 1: Engagement:** refers to the component of parent-to-parent support that helps with a parent's ability and readiness to optimize their parental role and engage in their child's habilitation process.
- Component 2: Decision-Making:** refers to the component of parent-to-parent support that provides access to knowledge and resources, and the opportunity to cultivate ideas for informed choice and decision-making.
- Component 3: Parenting:** refers to the component of parent-to-parent support that provides practical parenting skills (e.g. teaching their child to safely cross the street), offers parenting advice to improve parent-child interactions and encourages responsive parenting to support the child's communication development in daily life.
- Component 4: Adaptation:** describes the component of parent-to-parent support that helps with adjustment, acceptance, motivation, hopefulness, resilience, learning and optimism.
- Component 5: Problem-Solving:** refers to the component of parent-to-parent support that empowers parents to trust their coping abilities and acquire problem-solving skills specific to a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Family Learning Outcomes - In this construct parents/caregivers will:

- have less concern(s) because of connecting with a family support provider.
- feel confident in how to use the information provided to them by the family support organization.
- be more prepared to explain their child's needs to family and friends.
- be able to discuss their child's needs with professionals.
- know how to contact a family support provider.

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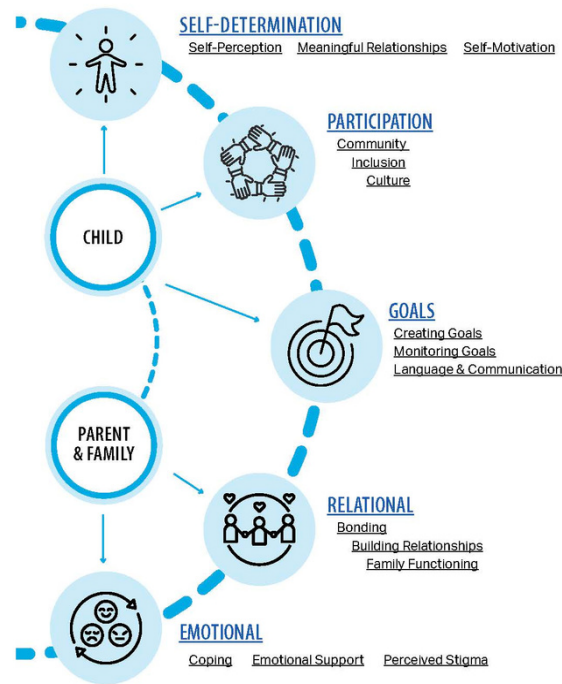
Visual Index

Well-Being

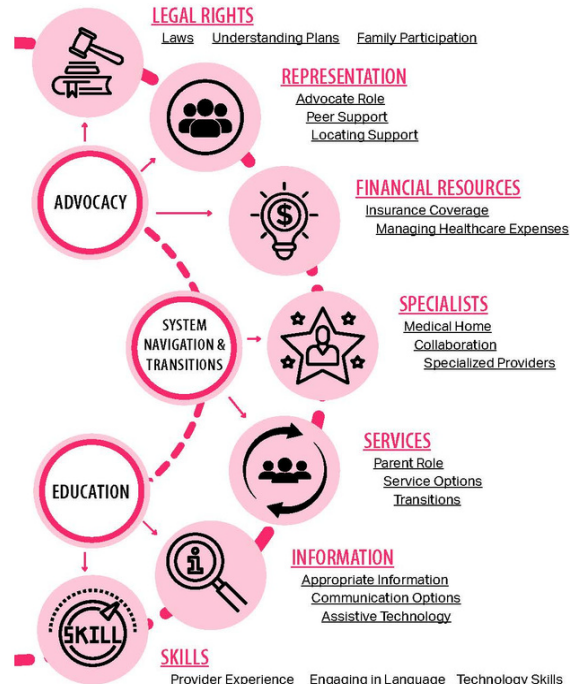
Knowledge

Empowerment

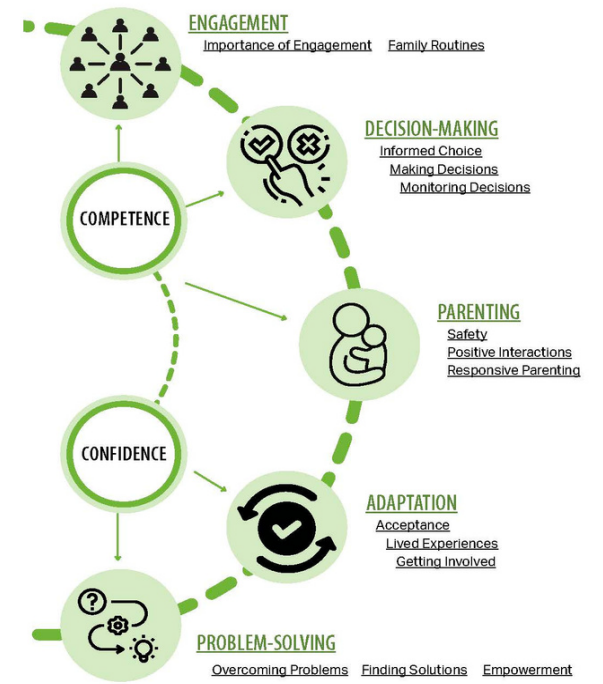
Construct 1 Index – Well-Being



Construct 2 Index – Knowledge



Construct 3 Index – Empowerment





Tips on How to Use the Guide

- **Familiarize yourself with the guide**
 - Take sections and highlight your favorite activity
 - Role-play with others
 - Print out each visual index
 - “Bookmark” the online page
- **Use the hyperlinks** in the visual index to quickly get to your topic
- **Use the search function** on keywords when viewing as a PDF (Ctrl+F)

Tipsheet

- A tipsheet is available to highlight important features of the Family Support Activities Guide.
- It also provides suggestions on how to help a team become familiar with the resources in the guide.



<https://www.handsandvoices.org/fl3/fl3-docs/FSAGtipsheet.pdf>



HANDS & VOICES™

TIP SHEET

FAMILY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES GUIDE

SUGGESTIONS:



FIND

Review a construct and find your favorite new activity and share it with another team member.



REFLECT

Consider questions you have had or that other families have shared with you. Review topics in the guide that relate to those questions and find related activities.



ROLE PLAY

Role play possible family questions/concerns as a team with one person acting as the parent and the other as the guide who finds the resources.



PLAY BINGO

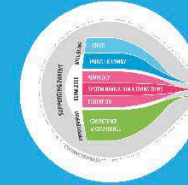
Print bingo boards from this website which has key-words from the well-being construct. When a word is drawn find it in the guide and read an activity. <https://mfbc.us/s/f67bymf>



PRINT OUT

Print out each visual index to keep on hand to quickly reference topics and where they are located in the guide.

HIGHLIGHTS:



CONSTRUCTS

There are 3 constructs which are the “theme” of each section.

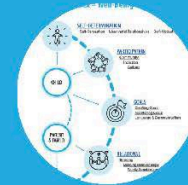
The constructs are:

- Well-Being (turquoise section)
- Knowledge (pink section)
- Empowerment (green section)



FAMILY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Use the 5 learning outcomes at the start of each construct section to determine if this construct could be useful for the family.



VISUAL INDEX

The visual index shows the relation of the components to the supporting topics. Each component is hyperlinked for quick access to the location in the guide.



LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Activities to support family engagement in language and literacy development for their child are highlighted by an icon.



AVAILABLE ALSO IN PDF

Download and use the “search” feature (Ctrl+F) when using it as a PDF to quickly find activities that fit the family’s needs/concerns.



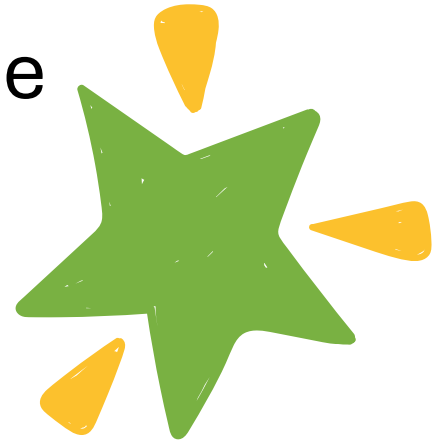
LANGUAGES

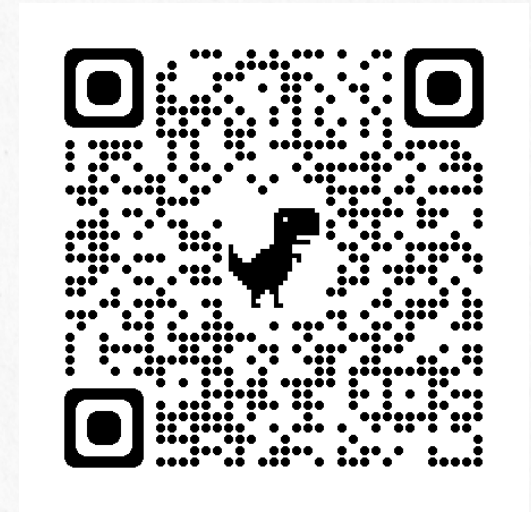
Access to resources that are also in additional languages are now noted and direct links are provided.



Accessing the Guide

- Downloadable as a full PDF
- Download each of the 3 constructs as separate PDFs
- Fully available online and easy to navigate through the visual index





[OTAGS Link](#)

The Family Support Activities Guide is a part of an interactive webpage on the Hands & Voices website called “Off to a Great Start.”

Look for the 3 balloons whose colors coincide with each construct.

The tag that reads “Family Support Activities Guide” links to the complete guide.



Call to ACTION!

Linkable Badges & Promotional Resources:

<https://handsandvoices.org/great-start/badges/>



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FL3 Center

<https://www.handsandvoices.org/fl3/index.html>