

Empowering Families, Embracing Community: The DHH Alliance at Cincinnati Children's Hospital

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BACKGROUND

Cincinnati Children's Hospital is home to a newly formed D/deaf and hard of hearing Alliance (DHHA) focused on building meaningful connections with the local DHH community. We're working to ensure that every family's first steps into the DHH world are met with support, resources, and relationships that last.

The DHHA started with the passion of an audiologist, ASL interpreter, speech therapist, and audiology aide. Membership quickly grew within related departments (audiology, speech therapy, language services, developmental pediatrics) and has recently expanded to additional departments throughout the hospital.

The mission of the team is to advocate for and empower D/deaf and hard of hearing patients, families, and staff by strengthening community connections, expanding American Sign Language (ASL) and DHH resources, and promoting cultural sensitivity and accessibility across Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

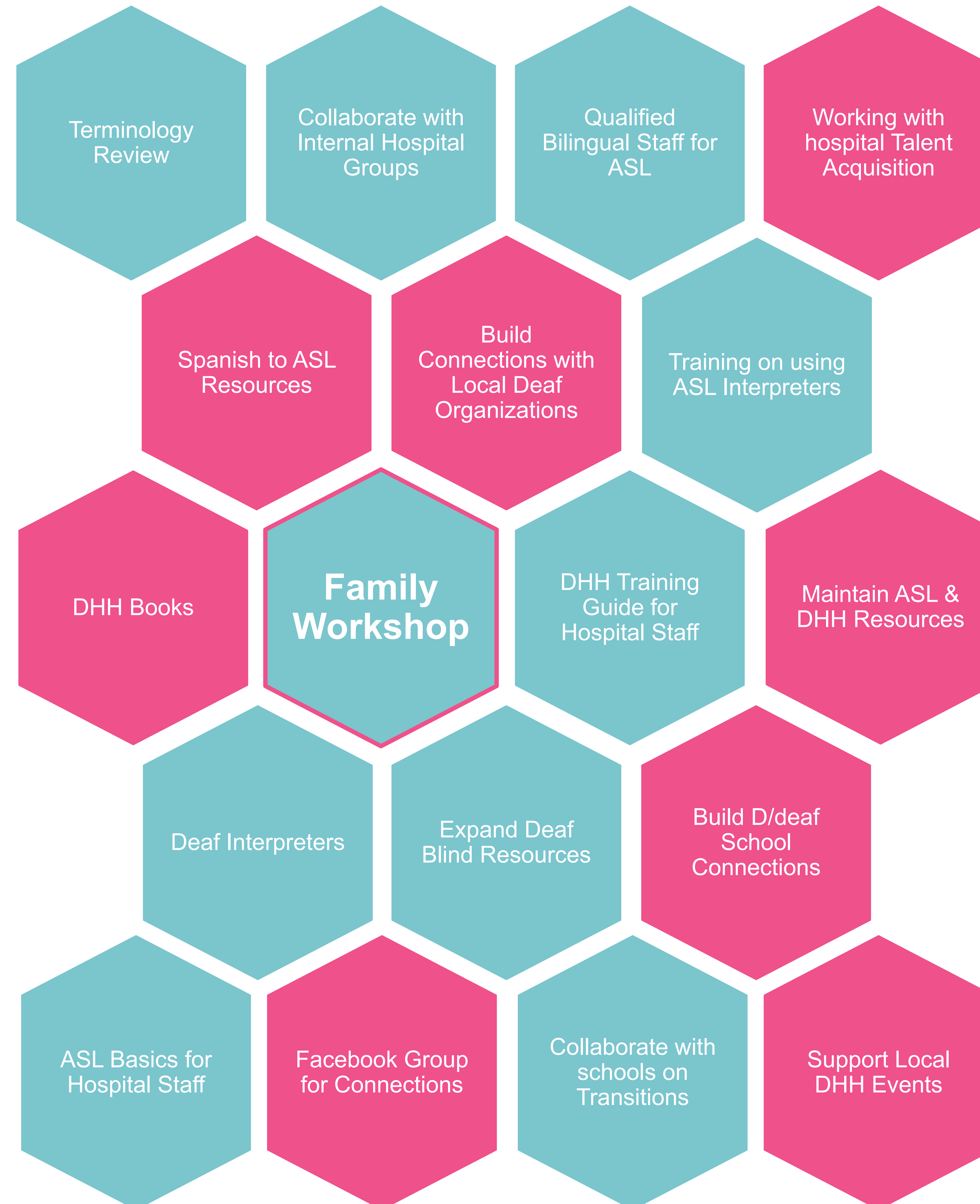
Although the team just formed in August 2025, we are actively developing several projects to improve care and community integration for families. We recognize that other institutions have established similar teams, and we hope to contribute to a growing movement toward more inclusive, culturally responsive care for DHH children and their families.

SURVEY

Please take a moment to complete our survey! We would love input from a variety of individuals to improve our DHH Alliance and the care we provide to families.



DHHA in ACTION: CURRENT and FUTURE PROJECTS



REFERENCES

1 Mitchell, RE; Karchmer, MA (2004): *Chasing the mythical ten percent: Parental hearing status of deaf and hard of hearing students in the United States.* **Sign Language Studies**, 4 (2), 138-168

FAMILY WORKSHOP

Recognizing that over 90% of deaf babies are born to hearing parents¹, we understand that the family's first exposure to the d/Deaf and hard of hearing world is often a medical diagnosis. While audiologists may offer a list of DHH or ASL resources, these can be overwhelming or overlooked during an emotionally intense time.

Understanding that there is a gap between receiving a medical diagnosis and finding social connection, the DHHA founding members began exploring ways to better support families. These conversations led to the formation of the DHHA and the planning of our first major initiative: the family workshop.

Despite the many great resources in our community, we know that many families are not connecting with them. The local organizations host informative and social events throughout the year, and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Audiology Department hosts an annual family gathering. The hospital-hosted gathering attempts to bring community resources, and community events attempt to bring medical supports, but the disconnect remains. Families continue to leave the hospital full of medical details, but without a clear pathway to ongoing social resources. The DHHA aims to build a stronger, more seamless bridge between medical and social aspects of DHH life, beginning with this family workshop.

At the family gathering, the DHHA's collaborations with local organization will be front and center as we work together to create an inclusive, welcoming environment. Families will have opportunities to connect with local schools, community organizations, hospital providers, and other families. The workshop will include one structured informational session balanced with dedicated time for social interaction. The format of the information session is still being finalized. The session may be a presentation co-led by a community organization and hospital staff, it may be a panel of DHH teens, adults, or parents, or it may be a presentation by a guest speaker.

Logistics are also being considered including interpreters (ASL & Spanish), childcare, transportation, refreshments, and optimal workshop timing. The goal is to ensure that the first family workshop is well-attended and meaningful. A successful event will pave the way for future workshops, and we believe thoughtful planning combined with parent and community input are essential.

The planning committee is still in early stages, and we welcome feedback. If you would like to share ideas or suggestions, please scan the QR code on this poster to complete our survey. Your input will help us create a workshop that best meets the needs of our families.