

# Growing our Own: Advancing the Workforce through Collaborative Pathways

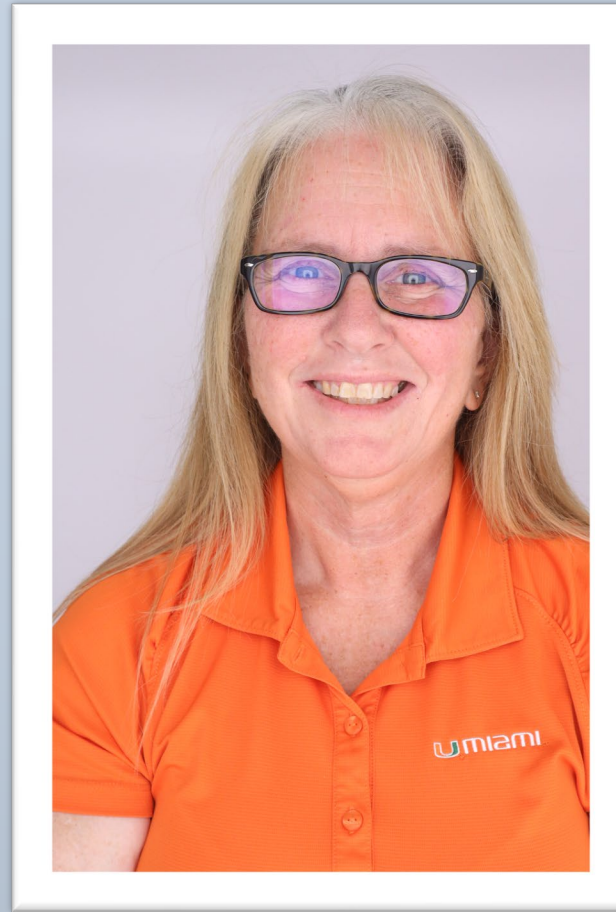
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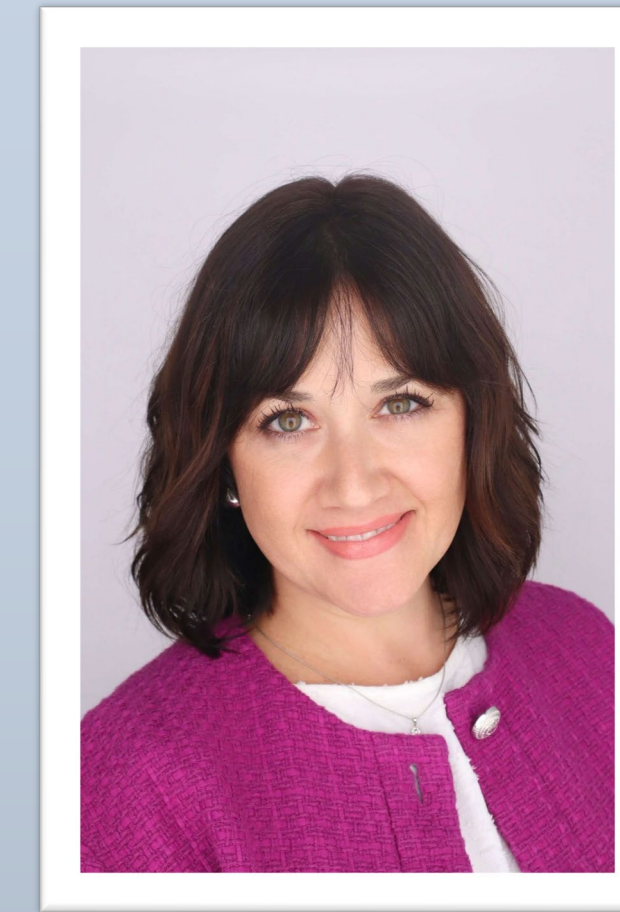


# Disclosures



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- University of Miami Educational Specialist
- DHH Specialist for various Charter Schools and 2 districts in Florida
- ACIA Scientific Committee
- AGBell Florida Board
- AGBell LEAP Lead Facilitator



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- Program Director, MA Deaf Education at Butler University
- Teacher of the Deaf and Early Intervention Provider

# Learning Objectives

## *Why we are here today...*

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify key factors contributing to the current workforce shortage in deaf education and early hearing detection and intervention fields, including gaps in preparation and specialized skill development.
2. Describe the principles and practices of successful “grow your own” initiatives that leverage collaboration among universities, schools, and community partners to expand workforce capacity.
3. Apply strategies for creating or scaling professional preparation pathways that promote advancement—from foundational skill-building to graduate-level preparation and LSLS certification—to strengthen the continuum of care for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

# Why this matters?

Children with disabilities (regardless of the disability) benefit when they have early and/or consistent educational intervention and supports on a long-term basis.

**Children with hearing loss are no different.**



# Why this matters?

- Children spend ~1,000 hours per year at school (National Study for Education Statistics, 2007-2008).
- Hearing loss is a low incident disability.
- Hearing loss is on a vast spectrum.
- Hearing loss can impact academic, social and emotional skills developed in a early childhood setting.
- Many teachers that are working with these students have little to no experience working with children that have any degree of hearing loss.



# Why this matters?

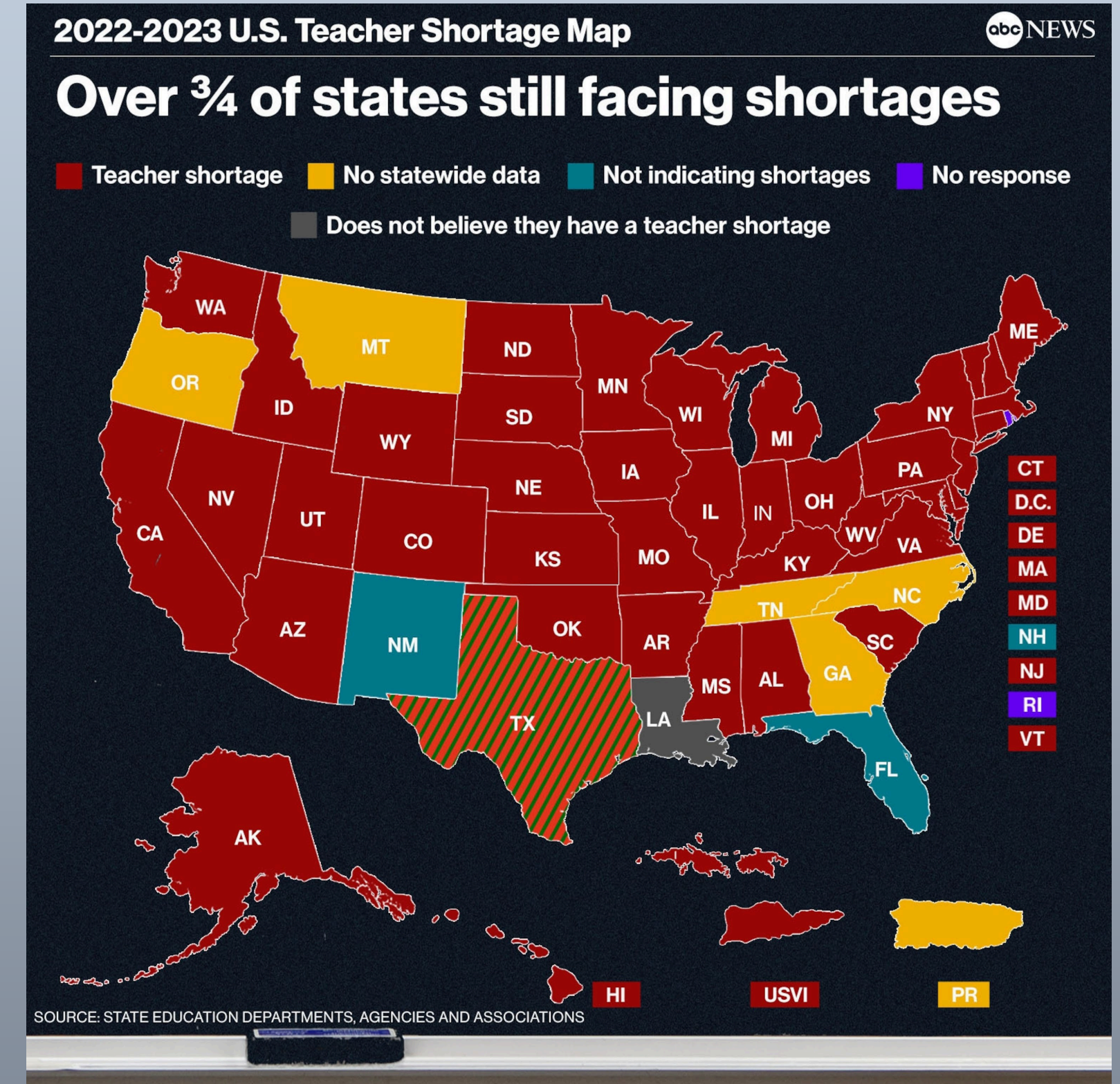
**“When children with hearing loss do not receive treatment, they might have difficulty accessing mainstream schooling and therefore obtain worse educational outcomes.”**

**“Children with any degree of hearing impairment have been shown to exhibit poor language development, leading to lower literacy rates, diminished social skills and impaired executive function capacity.”**

# The Problem: The Workforce Reality

Since 2016, researchers from the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) have reported that at least 40 states experienced a shortage of teachers for science, math, special education, and other areas, with a 30% drop in the number of students entering teacher preparation programs and alternative certification pathways. LPI's 2016 prediction that the U.S. would be short over 100,000 teachers by 2017-18 if education policies did not change has become a reality.

**Today, more than 1/3 of teachers hired across the contiguous 47 states have temporary or emergency credentials according to the LPI, and significantly, 9 out of 10 teachers hired each year are replacing colleagues who are leaving the profession, two-thirds of these before retirement.**



# The Workforce Reality for DHH

There has been a critical shortage of deaf education teachers nationwide for many years (Johnson, 2004). With the small number of graduates, the closing or suspension of several programs in recent years (Deaf Ed Teacher Preparation Programs, 2009) and the anticipated retirement of many “baby boomer” professionals, it is likely that the critical shortage will continue (Johnson, 2004).



Both deaf schools and mainstream schools are continually looking to fill vacant teaching positions as demonstrated on various job search sites. Studies showed a significant increase in the number of deaf and hard of hearing children and adolescents in the country as the U.S. population grows; however, the number of future educators being prepared to teach deaf and hard of hearing students has remained stagnant.

Lenihan, S. (2010). Trends and challenges in teacher preparation in deaf education. *The Volta Review*, 110(2), 117.

Overcoming Shortage of Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, [DeafJobWizard.com](http://DeafJobWizard.com), January 1, 2019.

# Higher Education

## According to the Council on Education of the Deaf

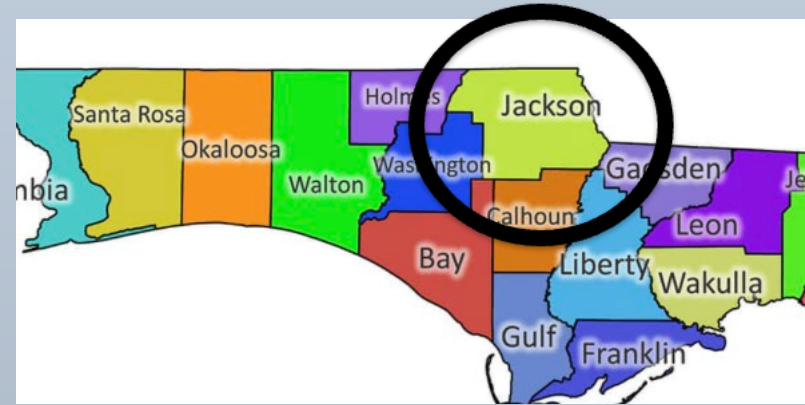
- 17 teacher prep programs
- 9 Master level programs
- 12% drop in number of programs since 2016

<https://councilondeafed.org/accredited-programs/>



# Why this matters: An Example

## Children in need of DHH support

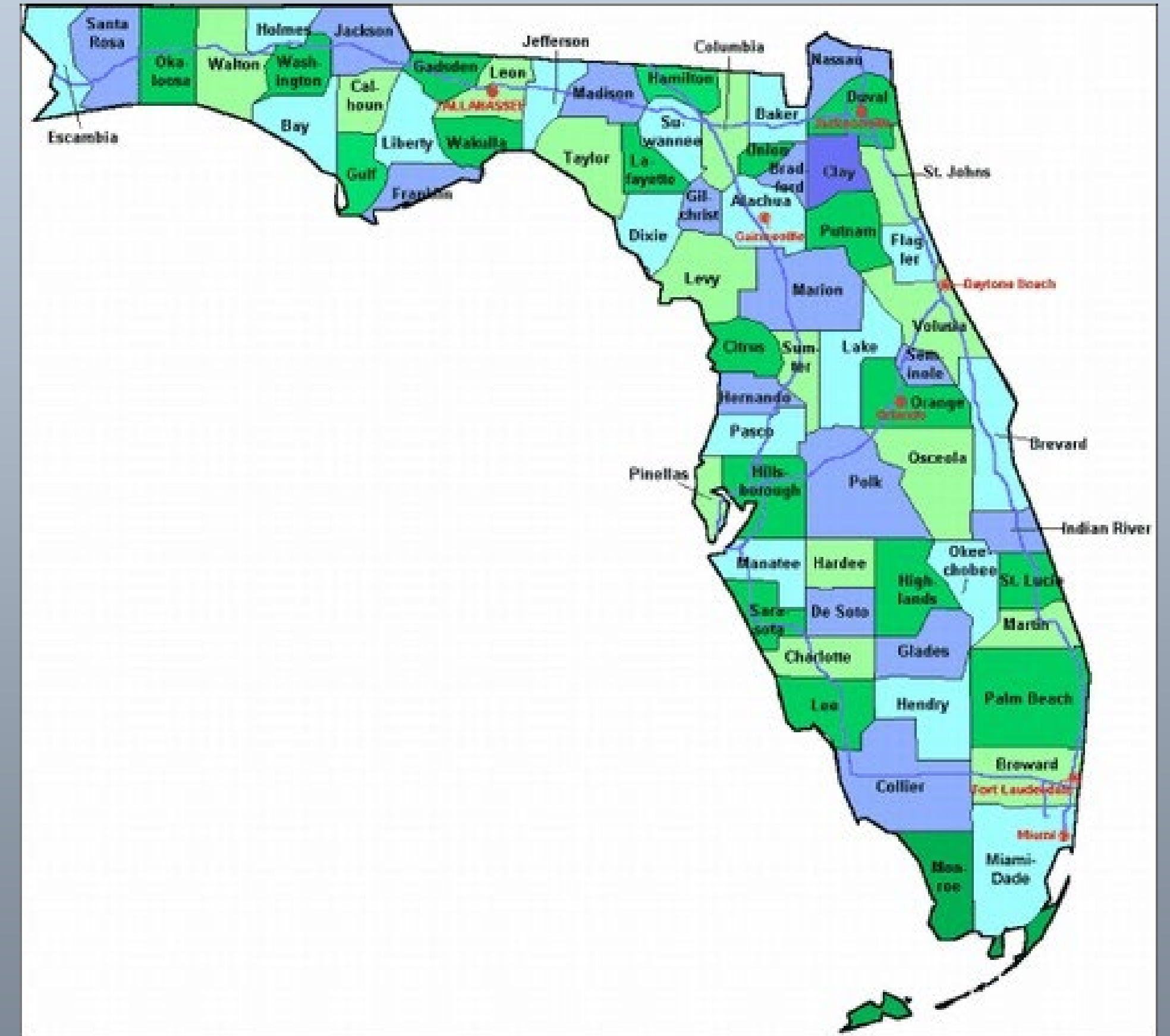


15 children with hearing loss.  
8 under the age of 7  
1 audiologist in town  
Closest center FSU: 1 hour drive  
No EI specialists

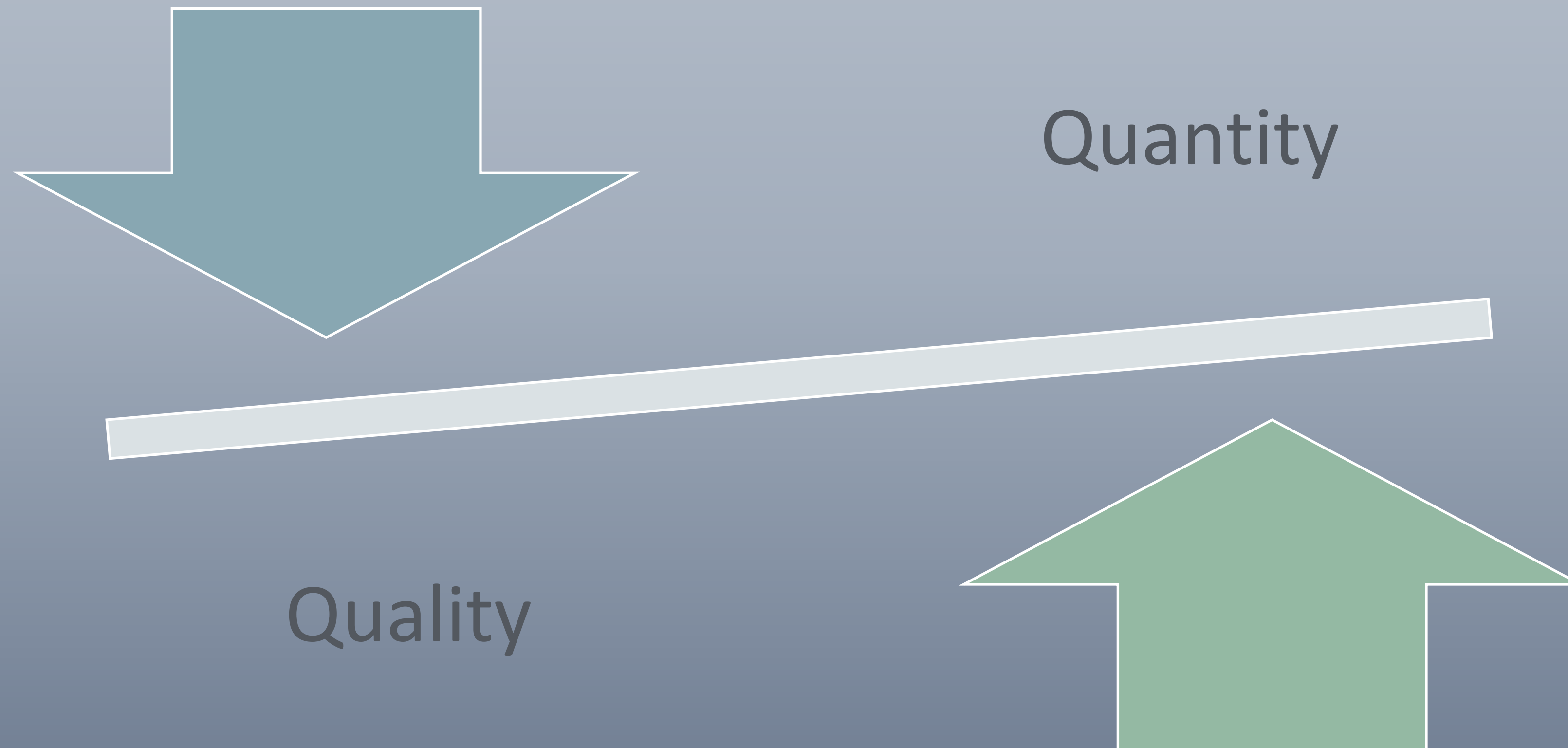
According to [indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)

- 27 openings for deaf and hard of hearing teachers and early interventionist:

18 of the openings are in large cities such as:  
Miami, Tampa, Orlando, and Palm Beach.



# The cost of the shortage



# Applying GYO to Deaf Education & EHDI

## Recruit from Within the Community

- Paraprofessionals, EI providers, interpreters
- Deaf professionals & DHH alumni
- Family members of children who are DHH
- Candidates with lived experience & cultural competence

## Remove Structural Barriers

- Online/hybrid coursework
- Paid residencies or apprenticeships
- Cohort models
- Community-embedded practica (birth–3 and K–12)

## Prioritize Mentorship

- Structured mentoring networks
- Pairing with experienced TODs & EI providers
- Inclusion of Deaf professional mentors
- Modeling family-centered & linguistically responsive practice

## Provide Financial Support

- Scholarships & loan forgiveness
- Paid clinical experiences
- Employer partnerships

## Focus on Retention & Leadership

- Professional learning communities
- Ongoing coaching beyond licensure
- Leadership development pathways

# Who are the learners?

## EI Professionals Without DHH Knowledge

- **Who they are:** SLPs, OTs, PTs, developmental therapists, service coordinators
- **Primary Needs:**
  - Knowledge: DHH development, hearing technology, language access
  - Skills: coaching families around listening/language, interdisciplinary teaming
  - Dispositions: confidence, cultural humility, willingness to collaborate

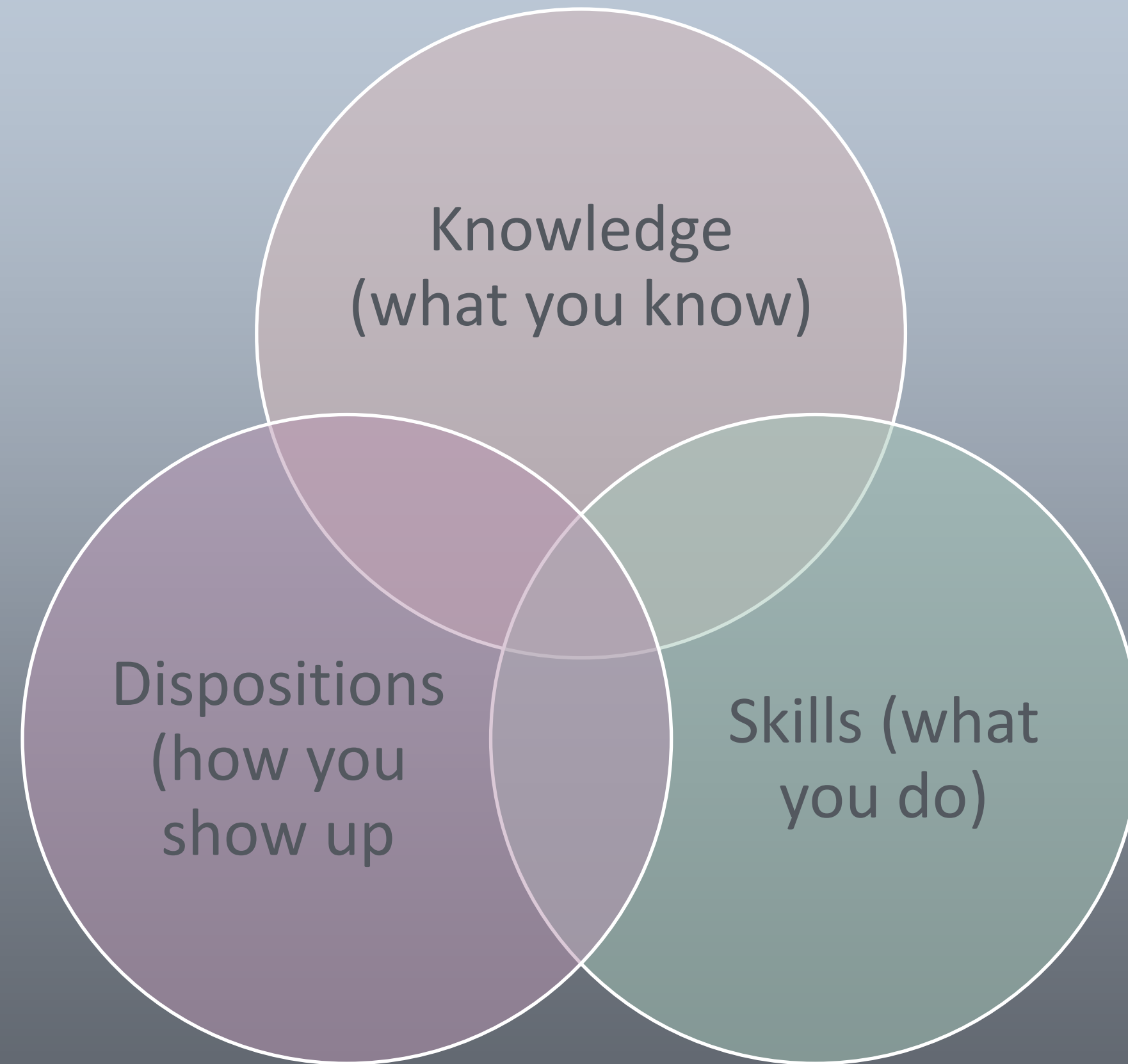
## DHH Teachers Without EI Knowledge

- **Who they are:** TODs trained primarily for K–12 settings
- **Primary Needs**
  - Knowledge: IFSPs, family-centered practices, EI law
  - Skills: coaching caregivers, embedding goals in routines
  - Dispositions: shift from “teacher” to “partner/coach”

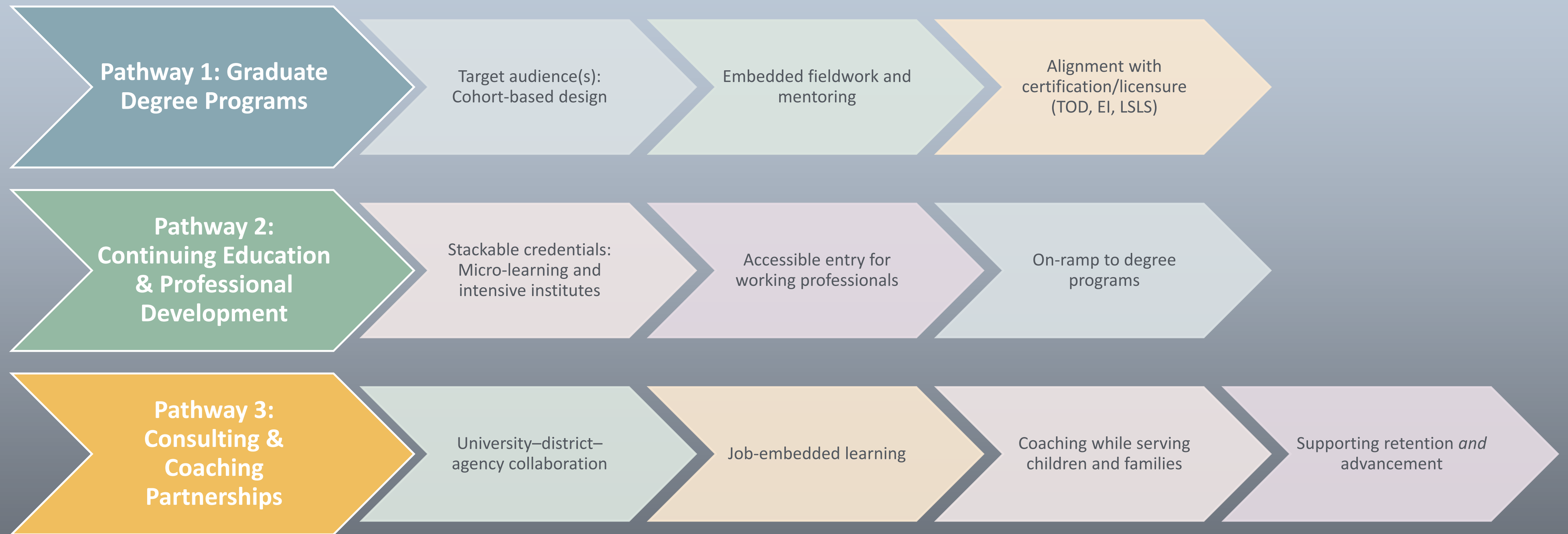
## Blank Slate Candidates

- **Who they are:** Paraprofessionals, parents, community members, career changers
- **Primary Needs**
  - Knowledge: foundations of child development, DHH basics
  - Skills: observation, reflection, responsive interaction
  - Dispositions: professional identity development, persistence, belonging

# Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions



# The Multi-Pronged Preparation Model



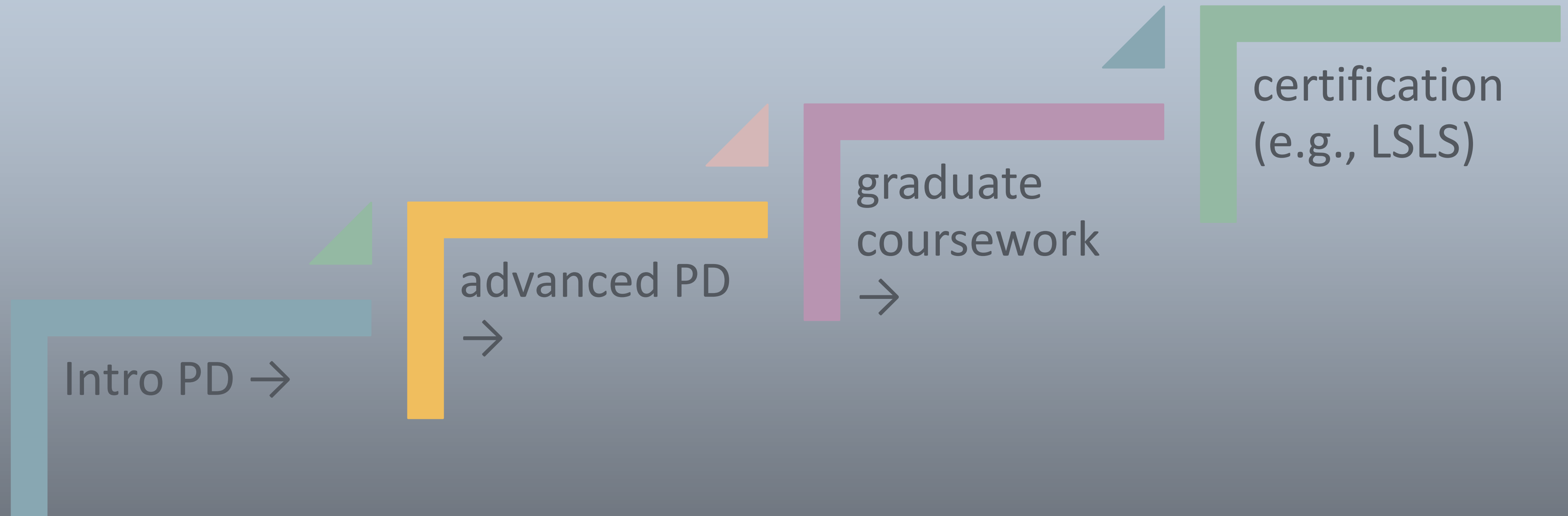
# Why cohorts?

- Reduces isolation
- Builds professional identity
- Encourages peer mentoring across roles
- Particularly critical for underrepresented or rural professionals

Trautwein, B., & Ammerman, S. (2010). From pedagogy to practice: Mentoring and reciprocal peer coaching for preservice teachers. *The Volta*, 110(2), 191–206.

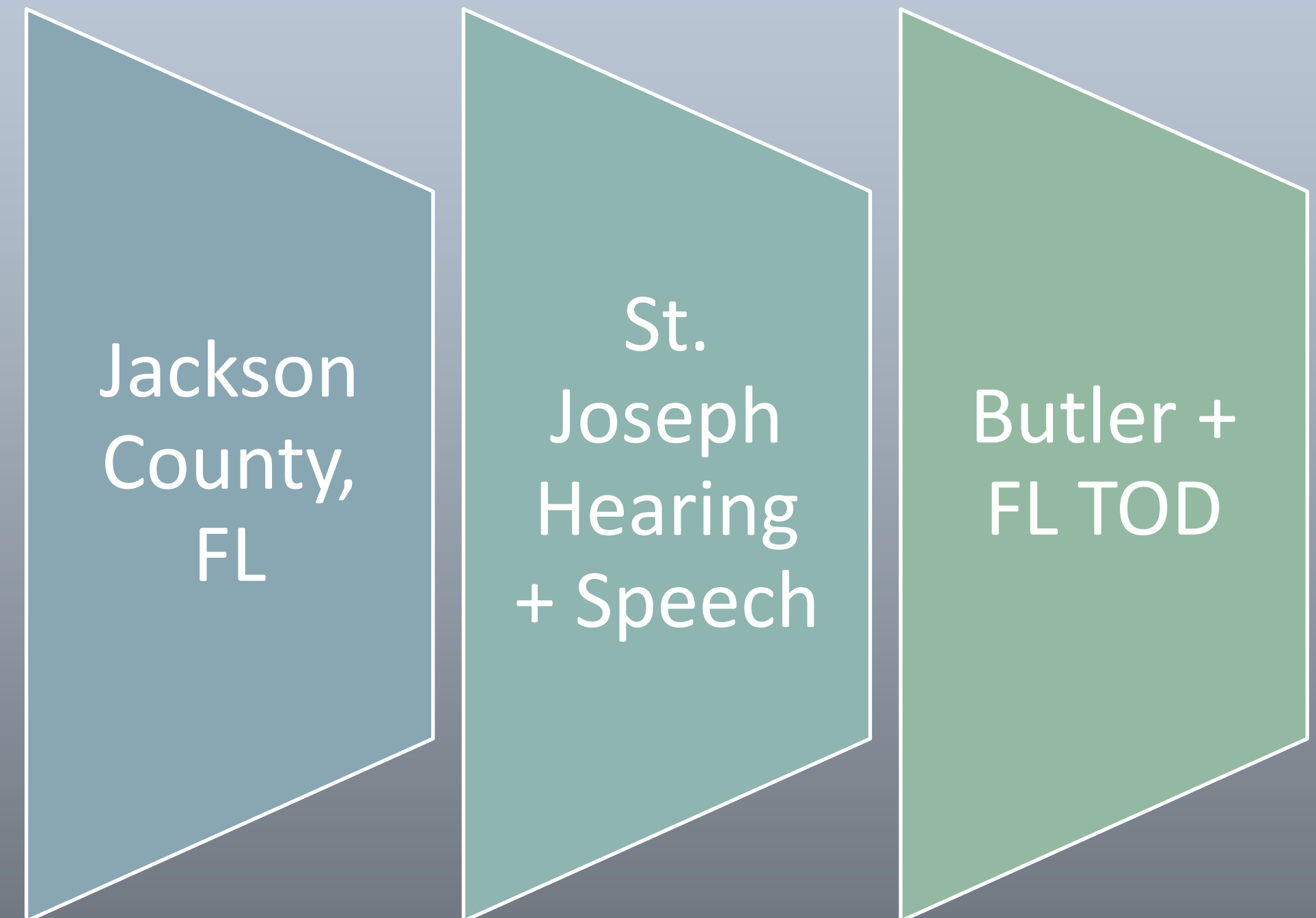
[http://listeningandspokenlanguage.org/uploadedFiles/Connect/Publications/The\\_Volta\\_Review/VOLTA110n2.pdf#page=111](http://listeningandspokenlanguage.org/uploadedFiles/Connect/Publications/The_Volta_Review/VOLTA110n2.pdf#page=111)

# The Power of Intentional Partnerships



# What This Looks Like in Practice

- Stronger preparation
- Increased retention
- Expanded access to qualified providers
- Improved continuity across EI–preschool–school-age services



# Creating a DHH teacher from a teacher...



Corrine Emrath MSEd

- BA in Secondary English and Science
- MS in Education
- General Education teacher in South Carolina and moved to Florida
- Daughter with bi-lateral cochlear implants

- Interested in DHH
- Study resources
- Met regularly with mentor
- Observed session with students
- Sat in on IEPs

DHH Certified teacher  
in state of Florida

45 student case load

Serves as a mentor

Now using the same model in Jackson County Florida

# Creating a DHH teacher from a student...



Gabriella Garrido BA

- BA in Psychology with certificate in communication disorders
- Some educational experience
- Potential interest in speech pathology or education
- Interested in DHH population

- Resources on understanding the population
- Teaching resources on pedagogy
- Study materials
- Observed session with students (live and video)
- Had mentor on sessions with student for beginning of the school year
- IEP reviews

DHH Certified teacher  
in state of Florida

15 student case load

Starting DHH program  
at Butler

# Creating a DHH EI from a professional

## A work in progress...



- AS in Early Childhood
- 20 years experience in early intervention
- Wanted a career change
- Interested in DHH population

- Works as an interventionist for younger students
- Develops resources for DHH team
- Participates in IEPs with supervision
- Participates in professional development for DHH population especially early childhood
- Recommended to parents for tutoring of DHH students

In Progress

Looking for a pathway to certification

Giselle Garrido AS

# Resources used to support development...

## Partnerships

- University programs
- School programs
- Clinics with Pediatric focus
- Speech Clinics
- Other institutions
- Option School

## Resources

- Success for Kids with Hearing Loss
- Hearing First
- State Resources
- Online Forums: Online Itinerant
- Industry Partners

# Implications for EHDI Systems

- Stabilizing the workforce
- Supporting early language outcomes
- Building local, sustainable capacity
- Reducing reliance on emergency hiring

Ultimately, better  
outcomes for children and  
families!

# Call to Action

- Identify untapped talent in your system
- Build or strengthen partnerships
- Create multiple on-ramps—not just one
- Prioritize growth, belonging, and support

# Questions & Discussion



Where do your future professionals  
already work?

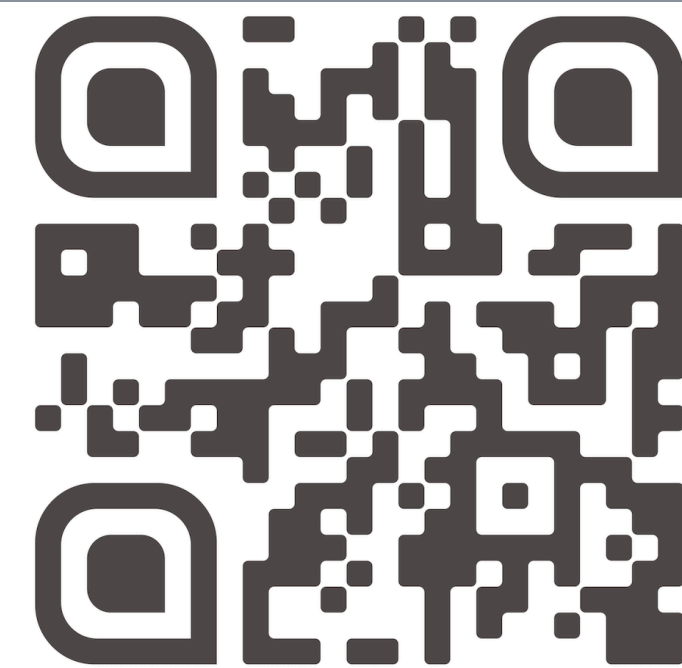
Which pathway is missing in your  
system?

Thank  
you

We would love to continue the conversation!

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Presentation