



**HANDS &
VOICES™
MINNESOTA**

**Supporting families with
children who are deaf &
hard of hearing**



FOCUS

Mainstreaming the Student who is DHH: Improving Communication

Many D/HH students rely on speechreading to obtain information from a speaker's facial expressions to supplement their auditory input.

Here are some ideas for a number of common-sense accommodations the teacher can do to improve both auditory and visual communication:

- Speak naturally at normal volume. Exaggeration and over emphasis of speech will hinder the student's ability to speechread and auditorily process language.
- Get the attention of the student before addressing him/her (call the child's name or tap his/her shoulder).



Lucas Stassen is using captions on his iPad while watching a video in school with his DHH Teacher.

- Make sure the speaker's face is visible to the student . . . trim large mustaches, avoid covering the mouth or chewing on pencils, etc.
- Do not talk while walking around the room or turn towards the white board while giving instructions. (An overhead projector can be effective teaching tool if the fan noise doesn't overwhelm the D/HH student).
- Since D/HH students have difficulty following conversations that move around the room, identify who is speaking and repeat peer comments during class discussions.
- Repeat any announcements given over the PA system.
- Restate rather than simply repeat information when the student is having difficulty understanding after one repetition.
- On the white board, write instructions and information such as new vocabulary words, assignments, announcements, simple outlines for the lesson, and key words or phrases as the lesson progresses.
- Check for understanding. Ask the student questions that require him/her to repeat content rather than respond with yes or no answers.
- Provide the student with a written copy of the daily bulletin.
- When homework is corrected within the classroom, give the student the answer sheet to correct his/her work.
- When doing a Read Aloud activity, have the student read first, or have them read the passage silently.
- During video tape presentations, try to use a captioned version (the itinerant teacher may have a catalog). If one is not available, give the student a script of the video or assign an alternate activity.
- Reduce visual distractions by reducing excessive artwork, limiting the number of mobiles hanging from the ceiling and removing general clutter. However, providing additional visual support such as pictures, charts, diagrams, and objects, to reinforce concepts being taught is helpful.
- Transitioning into new content is difficult for D/HH students. Using phrases such as, "Does anyone have any more questions?," "To summarize what's been discussed . . .," and "Let's move on" will help the student follow changes in activities.

Article taken in part from Hands & Voices "Mainstreaming the Student who is DHH: A Guide for Professionals, Teachers and Parents." January 2002



It's that time of year again, it's Back to School! There are a couple things I like to prepare for, before starting school again in the fall. When I was in high school, I would be sure to send my teachers an email explaining to them about my hearing difference and what accommodations I need. I would also tell them I would meet them before school or class started so I can show them how my FM system works. An FM system is like a microphone that the teacher wears and then it transmits to my hearing aid so I can hear the teacher better. I explain this to my teacher and show them how to put it on and let them know more about how it works. I also tell them that I will give it to them

directly each time I come to class or I will set the FM system on their desk. I also came up with a signal for my teacher to remind them about the FM system because sometimes they would set it down and forget to put it on. Another thing I like to do on the first day of class is to introduce myself and let everyone know I am hard of hearing. I also tell them about the FM System and that if they need to get my attention it is best if they tap me on the shoulder or wave their hand. At first this was hard for me to do-- I would get nervous, however the more I told people about my hearing difference the easier it got to explain my needs and my accommodations to others. This especially helped me when I started college and got a job as it helped me build my self-advocacy skills.



Shelby has a hearing difference and identifies as Hard of hearing. She has profound hearing loss in her right ear and moderate to severe hearing in her left ear in which she uses a hearing aid. For accommodations she prefers using an FM System, captioning, and preferred seating. Shelby is currently an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota and enjoys being outdoors, swing dancing and reading books.

Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is a temporary FCC program to help families and households struggling to afford broadband internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit provides:

- up to \$50/month discount for broadband service;
- up to \$75/month discount for households on qualifying Tribal lands; and
- a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider if the household contributes more than \$10 but less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit

is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household.

Who is Eligible?

A household is eligible if a member o meets one of the criteria as follows:

- has an income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, or Lifeline;
- receives benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, or did so in the 2019-2020 school year;
- received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;
- experienced a substantial loss of income due to job loss or furloughs since February 29, 2020; or

- meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program.

Three Ways to Apply

1. Contact your participating broadband provider to learn about their application process.
2. Go to GetEmergencyBroadband.org to apply online and to find participating providers near you.
3. Call 833-511-0311 for a mail-in application, and return it along with proof of eligibility to:

Emergency Broadband Support Center
 P.O. Box 7081 London, KY 40742
 Check out www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit for a Consumer FAQ and other program resources.

MNH&V EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

MNH&V Parent Guide for the Northeast African Communities

The MNH&V NE African Communities Parent Guide position offers 10 flexible hours a week, some evenings and weekends, and a family-friendly work environment.

MNH&V Parent Guides receive specific training and team support. Parent Guides are responsible for the initial and follow-up connections critical to families who have a newly identified child who is deaf or hard of hearing (dhh). They work closely with the MNH&V team and learn the best way to support our MNH&V families. They organize and lead family events, represent MNH&V in the community, and participate in family support activities. Your personal experience of the challenges and joys of parenting a child who is dhh helps support other parents who are just starting their journey. Candidate for this position must be fluent in Somali.

To find out more or to apply and send a resume, please contact
Elena Miranda
Lead Cultural Parent Guide
elena.miranda@lifetrackmn.org
651.265.2383

In Your Corner

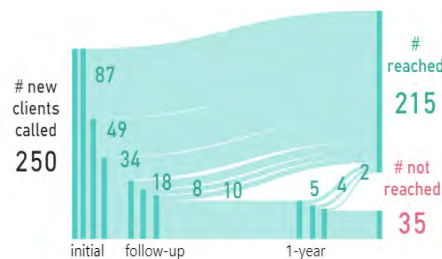
with Sonya B. P. Giridhar

Using data to visualize our outreach to families

Hi, I'm Sonya, your friendly neighborhood data specialist. My role at MNH&V is to use data to help tell our story and guide decision-making. What elements of our outreach to families are working well? What can we be doing better? I'm always excited when data patterns can drive creative solutions to meet the needs of the families we serve.

One area where we can look for these patterns is in our phone call data. When a new referral comes into MNH&V, a trained parent guide calls the family at 4 outreach timepoints: immediately after referral, 1 month after referral, 1 year after referral, and 2 years after referral. Given that parents may or may not answer these phone calls, we were curious: when do parents typically first connect with their parent guide?

The graph shown here visualizes the answer to this question. At the left of the graph you can see the number of new referrals: 250 families. At the far right side of the graph you can see that of these 250 families, we eventually connected with 220, and there were a



remaining 30 who never answered the phone. In the middle section of this graph, you can see the time points that different families were first reached:

for example, on the initial attempts to reach these families, 87 were reached on the 1st initial attempt, an additional 49 were reached on the 2nd initial attempt, and 34 were reached on the 3rd initial attempt.

This type of graph helps us examine our outreach in two ways. First, it tells us that we are pretty effective at reaching families by phone (yay!) By the end of our outreach timeline, we've connected with 220/250 (88%) of our families at least once (many have connected more than once). That's great news—we love connecting with families!

Secondly, this analysis can give us a framework to improve our outreach for the 12% of families who do not engage with our phone outreach. This graph suggests that adding additional phone calls is unlikely to be an effective strategy because first connections that happen after the 1-month time point are fairly rare (only 5.6% of families). Instead, this data encourages us to think outside of the box for outreach strategies that might better meet the needs of this subset. Perhaps they might prefer to learn about us from their audiologist, DHH teacher, a family event, or social media—all avenues that we are pursuing alongside our phone call outreach.

At MNH&V we are always eager to learn, grow, and improve in our support of families. Alongside feedback from parents and professionals, data analysis is a powerful tool to help guide our path forward.

Sonya Giridhar started as a Parent Guide with MN Hands & Voices. She is currently the Data Specialist. She resides in southern MN with her family.

Transition

MNH&V Transition Talk

This timeline is intended as guide for students and their IEP teams as they develop transition goals. Its not an exhaustive list, nor will all items apply to all students.

1 years before leaving school:

- Connect with support programs and services if needed. (Supplemental Security Income, Independent Living Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, county case management, counseling, etc.)
- Identify the postsecondary school you plan to attend and arrange for accommodations.
- Practice effective communication by developing interview skills and asking for help.
- Investigate/consider guardianship, power of attorney, conservatorship, etc.
- Consider possible living situations (family, independent, supported living agencies)
- Create a file for important documents and papers.
- Take responsibility for arriving on time to school, work, appointments, and social activities.
- Lead your IEP meeting by stating your plans for the future, asking for support where needed and taking a lead in decision making.
- Explore legal status about decision making prior to the age of majority.

Adapted from the National Transition Network's Transition Checklist

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MNH&V Transition Talk with Amanda Hommerding

MNHV asked Amanda, age 19, and her mother Brenda a series of questions about Amanda's experiences transitioning to adulthood.

Amanda is currently living in central Minnesota with her fiancé and son. One of her many interests is being outdoors with activities such as fishing and hunting.

Amanda was identified with a high frequency sensorinueral hearing difference. She wears one hearing aid and has no hearing in the other ear. Her preferred mode of communication is speech. When MNHV asked Amanda how she self identifies she said, "I don't put a title to it, If I have to I just tell people I can't hear very well." While Amanda doesn't like her hearing loss she said, "you learn to just deal with it."

While in school one thing Amanda advocated for herself was to attend PSEO while still in high school.

Postsecondary Education (PSEO) also known as tertiary education is the education level that follows the successful completion of secondary education, often referred to as high school. Postsecondary education includes universities and colleges, as well as trade and vocational schools. Postsecondary education usually culminates with a diploma certification, or academic degree.



Amanda's advice to parents on raising kids with a hearing difference is to make sure they stay involved with sports and activities. To help advocate for what they need.

Her advice for those in education is to have caption on everything.

During high school Amanda worked as a CNA (Certified Nurses Assistant) and volunteered at the local hospital. Today she is working full-time as a CNA and has just completed the EMT course and is now an officially certified EMT (Emergency Technical Technician).

Amanda is most proud of her son. Brenda is proud of the responsible young mom Amanda has become; how she finished her classes, obtained her high school degree, and is furthering her education.



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\$2.50 per patch (includes shipping & tax)
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To place an order, please contact
Sophia Barr at sophia.barr@lifetrackmn.org

MNHV Online Family Events are Like Distant Learning, But Way More Fun!



“What does it mean to be a DHH Athlete?”

In April, MNH&V DHH Guide and a Gallaudet football player Kobe Schroeder, MNH&V Parent Guide and parent of a dhh athlete Shannon Hohrman held a Meet & Greet! They shared insights and information regarding how kids who are deaf or hard of hearing can be successful athletes.

“Pottery Burn Event

May's Pottery Burn Event was a success! The kids sure did enjoy painting their animal pottery. The animals that were painted were: Narwhals, Turtles, and Octopus! How cute are they?! Big thanks too Parent Guide Marie Pank, DHH Guide Sophia Barr, and Deaf Mentor Mandy Lawyer!



Desarrollando Lectores:

MNH&V Evento Familiar - en linea

"¡Sentimos mucho que no se haya registrado para éste evento! Por favor cheque nuestro sitio web mnhandsandvoices.org y nuestra página de Facebook para otros eventos que pueden ser de su interés. ¡Esperamos verlos pronto!



Find a current list of MNHV Online Family Events online, for more information and registration visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/minnesota-hands-and-voices-at-lifetrack-9882223703>

Latino Cultures

with Elena Miranda

Creencias de padres hispanos acerca de la educación para sordos

Las creencias culturales acerca de la discapacidad juegan un rol importante en las decisiones de los padres acerca de la educación especial. Estas creencias están atadas a las percepciones y están derivadas en la cultura y cada cultura tiene sus propias creencias. Las familias hispanas que tienen niños que usan ASL como un medio de comunicación, que hablan español en casa y hablan inglés en la escuela y en lugares públicos están considerados como miembros de una familia multi lingüística y cultural. Este es mi caso.

Individuos con un fondo cultural diferente enfrentan reglas de cómo funcionar en la sociedad, como los padres identifican a sus hijos con discapacidad y cómo se identifican a sí mismos como una familia multicultural. Para los padres que tienen niños sordos representa un estrés adicional la ausencia del lenguaje hablado como padres deben tomar las decisiones acerca de la mejor manera de comunicarse con sus hijos e integrar un lenguaje visual enfrentando sus propios miedos acerca de si es la mejor decisión para los hijos.

El simple término discapacidad no es una palabra adoptada por los latinos porque esta tiene una connotación negativa y le deja saber a otros que su hijo es diferente a otros. En la cultura Latina usualmente se cree que las decisiones sobre la educación son para los maestros y las escuelas porque ellos son vistos como unas personas con mayor conocimiento que los propios padres, ésta es una gran diferencia entre la Cultura Anglosajona y la Cultura Latina.

Muchas de las familias latinas educando y criando hijos en USA son

tomadas o mal entendidas acerca de este de este tema, pues se suele pensar que ellos no están realmente interesados en la educación de sus hijos, que su hijo realmente no es importante, que son flojos, etc; pero en realidad enfrentan culturalmente hablando una pared que necesitan romper, escalar o rodear.

Hablando sobre el IFSP (Plan de Servicios Familiares Individualizado) o IEP (Plan de Educación Individualizado) estos temas pueden ser realmente intimidantes para algunas de las familias latinas, las razones son variadas y amplias, las familias no hablan el lenguaje, las familias no conocen los derechos educacionales de los niños, las familias tienen miedo sobre su estatus migratorio, las familias tienen creencias culturales diferentes, el estatus económico, el sistema educativo es diferente al de Latinoamérica entre muchos otros.

¿Cómo hacer que los padres latinos estén más involucrados en la educación de sus hijos y en la toma de decisiones?

- Hacer los recursos disponibles accesibles en el lenguaje nativo de las familias
- Proporcionar y promover más recursos educativos gratis en su lenguaje nativo
- Ofrecer total acceso a la comunicación
- Competencia Cultural estar alertas de las diferencias culturales
- Si es posible incluir a alguien en el equipo del IEP que pueda ser identificado por la familia como un miembro de su comunidad

¿Como los padres latinos se pueden involucrar y en la educación de sus hijos?

- Hacer más preguntas
- No tener miedo a decir no entiendo
- Compartir sus miedos y preocupaciones con el IFSP o IEP
- Ser responsables por su propia educación y Abogacía

Hispanic Parents' Beliefs About Deaf Education

Beliefs about disability play a big role in parents' decisions. Beliefs are tied to perceptions of disability that derive from cultural norms and every culture has their own.

In Hispanic families where the child uses ASL as a communication mode, spoken Spanish at home, and spoken English at school and public places, they are considered a member of multiple linguistic and cultural families. This is my family's case.

Individuals of different cultures face rules for how to function in society and how parents of children with disabilities identify themselves under families within this multiplicity of cultures.

For parents of children who are deaf they stress about the absence of a spoken language. The simple term "Disability" is not a word Latino parents adopted, since this has a negative connotation and lets others know our child is different.

In Latin culture we usually believe that educational decisions are for teachers and school.

This is a significant cultural difference between Anglo and Latino culture.

Many Latino families raising and educating kids in the USA misunderstand this, and schools might think we are not really engaged, our child is not important to us, that we are lazy, etc. But we face this cultural wall

that we need to break, climb or round about it.

Discussing the IFSP (Individualized Family Services Plan) and IEP (Individualized Education Plan) may be intimidating for some of the Latino families and the reasons are varied; they may not speak the language, families don't know the child's educational rights, families are afraid about their immigration status, families' cultural beliefs, economic status, and the educational system is different than Latino America.

How to make Latino parents more involved in our kids' education and making decisions?

- Make as many resources as possible accessible in our own language.
- Provide and promote more educational free resources in our language.
- Offer them total access to communication.
- Cultural Competence. Be more aware of the cultural background.
- If it is possible, include someone in the IEP whom they may identify as a member of their community.

How Latino parents can be more involved in our kids' education?

- We need to ask questions, don't be afraid to say "I don't understand."
- We need to share our concerns with the IFSP or IEP team.
- We need to be responsible for our children's education and advocacy.

- SPOTLIGHT -



How I Accidentally Became a Children's

Author: Sonya B. P. Giridhar

I am the mother of a delightful child who loves giant birds, books about monsters, and anything with chocolate. If you're looking for an A+ hiking buddy, joke teller, or purveyor of obscure animal facts, she's your gal.

My daughter used a hearing aid as a baby and toddler. Later, she experienced a sudden progressive hearing loss that rendered the hearing aid ineffective. It was a period of transitions with her experience of sound access as well as the technology she was using.

I found myself struggling with how to frame these changes, especially for a child who was very young at the time. Our educational audiologist recommended children's books about deafness or amplification devices as a nice way to broach the subject and create a positive narrative for children. "Unfortunately, there's not really anything out there that fits your situation." She told me. "You should probably just write your own."

She was probably kidding... but that's what I did. I wanted to discuss access and technology in a way that emphasized my child's bright spirit, adaptability, and problem-solving skills rather than the hearing loss itself. I wanted it to focus on the goal of maintaining and building upon her existing communication tools rather than "fixing" a perceived deficit. I wanted a book that was cute and vibrant, just like my kiddo. So that's what I set out to make.

Simone tells one child's story of using an FM system to improve access to sound in a classroom setting. This tool was a good fit for my child given her particular situation. Other tools/approaches/technologies/language supports might be a better fit for your child and their unique needs. The point of this book is not "go out and get an FM system"; the takeaway should be this: find the supports that work best for your child and tell your story proudly! And if the right book to tell your story doesn't exist yet—don't be shy to get out there and write it yourself. You can do it!





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709 University Ave. W.
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NEWSLETTER

Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS Newsletter

July-August-September 2021

No Summer like a Gnome Summer!

Are you going to travel this summer? The gnome is a traveling guy. It doesn't matter if you go to the library, a zoo, a park, or fly to a different state.

Just bring him along and do a selfie to show where you have been.



His first adventure will be to pick up his luggage and passport from MNHV.

- Print out your gnome, color, and cut him out. For a copy of the Gnomes Email leslie.carnegie-hilde@lifetrackmn.org
- Leslie will laminate for durability and add a popsicle stick for a handle
- Mail your Gnome to MN Hands & Voices (Attention: Leslie Hilde) PO Box 24 Borup MN 56519
- No registration needed
- Check out <https://www.exploreminnesota.com/order-travel-guides> for things to do in MN

- Share pictures of your travels on MNHV facebook page by sending them to sophia.barr@lifetrackmn.org
- When summer comes to an end lets meet up and share where you've been!
- Gnome Adventures will be held online Saturday September 11, 2021 from 10:00 AM - 11:30 PM. Watch for registration and event details on facebook and through MNHV mass emails.

If you have question contact Leslie Carnegie-Hilde at leslie.carnegie-hilde@lifetrackmn.org or 218.902.0148.