

**Hearing Workgroup  
January 23, 2006  
Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

**Attendance:** Linda Eggleston, Debra Holloway, Casey Morehouse, Pat Dewey, Ruth Frierson, Jennifer Hutson, Dana Yarbrough, Beth Tolley, Carol Wiegler, Leslie Hutcheson Prince, Pat Wiley, Debbie Pfeiffer

**Announcements and Celebrations**

Children's Hospital in Richmond closed their Audiology department January 13, 2006. Ann Kisse and Sheri Stoots will provide all of the services that they were previously providing (at Children's Hospital) at the Balance and Ear Center in Richmond beginning February 20, 2006.

Debbie Pfeiffer will begin working Wednesday as a Technical Assistant (TA) for the Department of Education (DOE) for regions 6 and 7. She will also be responsible for the topics of Deaf and Vision services and for the educational interpreter grant at the state. Debbie will continue to participate on this committee.

Virginia Network of Consultants (VNOC) will continue through the Partnership.

The Art and Science of Home Visits and Home Visits videotapes/DVDs have come in and are being delivered to local systems.

The survey to determine capacity at the local and state level to meet the needs of children who are deaf and hard of hearing has been distributed with a request for return in time for preliminary review prior to the March Early Hearing Diagnosis Advisory Committee meeting.

The Alexandria Graham Bell Association Conference is being held in Pittsburg this year.

4<sup>th</sup> annual Connections Resources Fair is being held at Children's Museum April 22.

Jennifer will represent Virginia (parent) in two weeks at the EHDI conference.

Only four hearing aids left in hearing aid bank. Most are being used by children under 5. Senator Ticer called to ask if we wanted to introduce budget amendment to finance more hearing aids. It was too late this year, but could be considered next year.

**Training Opportunities**

Online trainings are available through IHHE. Grant money is being made available to fund personnel treating infants and toddlers with hearing loss who complete selected trainings. A letter will be sent to local system managers to provide information about this opportunity.

**Minutes from December 9, 2005**

Corrections were provided to the minutes and minutes were then approved as corrected.

## **Legislative update**

Leslie Hutchison Prince is the Policy and Planning Manager for DDH and serves as their legislative liaison. She reported on bills that are currently being considered. Budget Amendments proposals will be out on Wednesday. She provided a handout detailing information about the current bills relevant to hearing.

- HB350 is now out of committee.
- HB354 – allows audiologist a provisional license; specific to audiologist. Audiologists support it.
- HB568 – attempt to consolidate tax into one tax. This bill would take SCC out of the picture for Virginia Relay. VDDHH made recommendations regarding the bill.
- HB657 – mandated insurance coverage for medically necessary habilitation for persons less than 19 years of age
- HB1169 – provides that oral, written or sign language statements made by a juvenile criminal defendant are presumed inadmissible in a court unless reliably recorded. Needs wording changes.
- HJ42 – study on foreign language interpreters. Working with VDH to also look at sign language interpreters
- SB182 – put work of Ohmstead team in Virginia code
- SB545 – Scholarship program on behalf of disabled students
- HB287 – bill prohibits use of interpreters (including sign language) in drivers test
- SB676 –require Board of Education to develop a plan for the consolidation of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind

Leslie announced that Dr. Reinhard (DMHMRSAS), Dr. Stroube (VDH), Ron Lanier (DDHH), Pat Finnerty (DMAS), Jim Bowman (DBVI), and Jim Rothrock (DRS), have been reappointed to their leadership positions.

Dana informed the group that Maureen Hollowell holds a brown bag lunch from 12 Noon – 2:30 PM at the 9<sup>th</sup> street building on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor on Thursdays during the legislative session to update interested persons on what is happening in the legislature.

## **VAInfo**

Dana reported that Parent-to-Parent, Family Voices, PEATC, PACT have been meeting to find a way to have one voice for children. This has been supported by a grant written by Fran Gallagher. This work began Oct. 1, 2005. The current “home” for the organization is Medical Home Plus. The goals include:

- Speak as one voice
- See what legislation is out there
- See how the organizations can collaborate
- Establish VAInfo Center – Family to Family Center

## **Family First Guide**

The group briefly reviewed the decisions made previously. The program will be regional with 7 regions based on distribution of families of children who are deaf or who have hearing

impairments. The family first guide program will be scripted for consistency, as will be the training program.

VNOC involvement could provide consultation, education and support to early intervention, but not as part of family first system

### **Oversight**

The oversight agency needs to have the mission and budget to manage this project.

If VDDHH were the oversight agency, would people see them as being biased to ASL? Perhaps now is a good time to correct that image.

Care Connection for Children is the other possibility for this.

**Assignment:** Carol will contact VDDHH and see if this is a possibility for them. The outreach workers serving as the family first guides and VDDHH in collaboration with EDHI of VDH serving as oversight role.

Pat Dewey will talk with Nancy Bullock, Program Manager for Care Connection for Children and see if she is ok with this as a role for the Care Connection for Children. Pat said that EDHI of VDH could serve in the oversight role

### **Who can serve as a family first guide?**

Individuals must have experience with deafness  
Schools for the Deaf and Blind  
Part C  
Care Connection for Children  
VDDHH Outreach Workers  
Parents

Ruth discussed how this program would fill in the gap from what she is able to do.

She stated that she couldn't provide follow up to parents who aren't ready to deal with their child's diagnosis "now". She doesn't know what resources are available in localities. While she has a list of parents who can provide support to other parents, funds are not available to support mileage reimbursements and child care. Ruth provides support over the phone. What we have now are parents in the system that are willing to provide support to other parents.

Discussion followed about a parent-professional team versus an individual as well as how the service coordinator interfaces with the family first guide. Concerns were raised about the number of people being involved with the family if a parent-professional team were used.

Strong feelings were expressed that it should be a parent that does the follow up in the family's home.

Jennifer (parent) reported that she has met very few parents who are not biased and who are open to presenting unbiased information. She said unbiased information was the most important information.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Go through the parent guide book page by page or video version of resource guide or show
- Show videotape – choices in communication from Beginnings– instead of just talking about it
- Do hands on instead of just talking
- Answer questions
- Tell family about specific resources in their community
- Reinforcing the referral to Part C
- Know the Part C coordinator and service coordinator
- Provide emotional support to parent
- Foundation for learning is language, communication and cognition – choice in specific communication modality does not need to be made right away

### **Visits**

Minimum of one visit with possibility of two with availability through phone and email communication for questions and follow up.

### **Qualifications and Expectations:**

- Background or experience with deafness
- Ability to relate to people of diverse cultures, economic backgrounds
- Ability to relate to parents
- Ability to present options without biases
- Ability to listen objectively
- Ability to commit to attend to 2 day training initially and ongoing training
- Ability to commit to spend several hours/month
- Initial contact with family within 48 hours
- Have met individuals who use different communication options (will be provided in training)
- Keep records and report to oversight body
- Comply with confidentiality rules and regulations

## **Application and Selection Process**

The group discussed the application and selection process. It was suggested that we modify existing forms to meet our needs rather than start from scratch. The application needs to include information about the requirement for a background check and information about using the individual's car.

***Wisconsin's application will be emailed to workgroup members so members can provide suggestions to Carol. Carol will edit the application based on member's input to serve as a draft for us to work on at the next meeting.***

A decision made to select individuals to apply to start this program. Names of individuals in all 7 regions were suggested today. Additional suggestions are needed for individuals in Northern Neck and along the North Carolina border. Workgroup members are to obtain contact information so that these individuals can be contacted to determine if they are interested and able to serve in this role.

Additional potential candidates may be found among attendees of the SKI-HI trainings and parent groups.

It was suggested that it might be a good idea to consider a pool of people who are available to serve as mentors and resource people to the family first guides. Some of the professionals identified as potential family first guides may prefer to serve in this role.

## **Training**

The group agreed that the training program needed to be scripted and consistent.

If possible, Joni Alberg, as a part of her technical assistance can provide training materials and/or assist with training. She could help with role-playing during training, for example.

Training content would include the following:

- It would be geared around the parent resource guide and would use the PREP materials with the exception of the materials on how to trouble shoot hearing aids.
- Communication Choices videotape from Beginnings
- A panel of individuals who are deaf and who are different ages and who use different means of communication
- Parent Panel
- Enjoying your Baby
- Emotional Support
- Confidentiality
- Keeping Data

The training will be a two-day program. Pat and Debbie will develop the program with consultation from Joni and Beth. Funding is available through grant to VDH with the training managed through the Partnership for people with Disabilities.

A quality assurance piece must be built into this through VDH/EHDI as a way to keep on top of competence and quality.

## **Timelines**

***Training program ready to conduct by end of May***

***Training: June, July, or August***

***Begin Program in September 2006***

## **Funding**

Concerns were raised about agencies being willing to release employees to provide this service. In addition, funds will be needed to compensate parents, at least for mileage if parents serve as family first guides.

Grant funding or perhaps funding through legislative action might be possible later.

***Debbie will contact Sertoma and Pat will contact the Quota Club to see if these organizations would be willing to provide funds to support mileage costs and child care for the family first guides. Some grant money could be used.***

***Carol will contact Joni about other resources.***

Consider background checks. ***Ruth will ask how this is handled in Wisconsin. Pat will ask the VDH legal representative if background checks must be required.***

### **Parent Group Information**

The Parent group in northern Virginia is very active; they continue to increase their membership. The Tidewater Parent Group used to be very strong, but is not very active now. Hear and Now provides parent-to-parent support; they don't want to meet.

### **Plans/Assignments**

- **Casey will check on availability of SDB in Staunton for Training.**
- **Debbie will update us next meeting on status of new employee at the Partnership (taking her place).**
- **Beth with Pat and Ruth will look at diagnosis/referral to Part C and interface with Part C and family first guide. Beth will also look at the two family groups with Debra– similarities and differences.**
- **Follow up with Ski-Hi – Debbie**
- **Carol will contact Susan and Freda**
- **Everyone – come up with contact information – address, phone number and email address of people identified today and additional people we consider for Family First Guide for our next meeting**

### **Future Meetings:**

Feb 27, 2006 - DDHH

March 29, 2006 -DDHH

May 3, 2006

VEHDI – March 10, June 9

### **March Agenda**

- Report on funding findings
- Develop protocol for the program
- Develop plan to contact potential Family First Guides to ascertain their interest
- Develop/finalize application form, written expectations document and written qualifications documents
- Update on training plans
- Report on parent groups