

**Hearing Workgroup
February 12, 2008
Henrico Mental Health West (Woodman Road)
Draft**

Attendance:

Beth Tolley – Technical Assistance Consultant, Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia
Ruth Frierson – Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Follow Up Coordinator
Pat Wiley – Care Connection for Children - Richmond
Melinda Smyth – Educator of the Deaf, Hanover
Ann Hughes – Consultant, Partnership for People with Disabilities
Cory Hall, Service Coordinator, Special Instructor – Hanover County
Debbie Pfeiffer, Specialist, Department of Education
Sandra Woodward, Program Director, CCC, Virginia Hearing Aid Loan Bank
Leslie Hutchison Prince
Gayle Jones, Manager, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program, VDH
Monica Bocaner, Parent
Sarah Peters, Speech Language Pathologist, Infant & Toddler Connection of Henrico
Debra Holloway, Manager, Parent Involvement Project, Arc of Virginia

The group welcomed Gayle and Monica to the workgroup!

The minutes from the December 10 meeting were approved with correction of Susan Tlusty's name.

Upcoming Conferences

Annual Early Intervention Conference – Roanoke, Virginia April 30 and May 1

- Melinda, Ellen and Sarah submitted a proposal for a 90 minute session. It is expected that the proposal will be accepted. The session is to include hands-on type information including use of the Learning to Talk Around the Clock kit. The kit includes suggestions and talking points for facilitating communication, including listening and talking, throughout everyday routines and activities. It also includes suggested resources to put together for each activity (such as mealtime, etc.). Melinda, Sarah and Ellen will meet later this week to continue developing the presentation.
- Sandra is taking the lead with the display for the conference. The display will include information about the Hearing Aid Loan Bank, Guide By Your Side, Hands and Voices and Early Hearing Detection and Intervention. The resources purchased for use by early intervention systems for working with families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing will be included in the display. The EPSDT Hearing Aid fact sheet about and the "Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Hearing Loss and Their Families" fact sheet will be available as handouts.
- The group discussed updating pictures available for public awareness materials. Monica offered to provide pictures of her daughter. Other members are also collecting pictures. Signed permission from families is necessary in order to use the pictures.
- Debra circulated an information sheet about funding support for families to attend the EI conference.

Other conferences

- Sandra plans to manage a display table at the Birdsong (Pediatric) Conference at the Homestead. Dr. Boyle was instrumental in making a display table available at no cost.

- Lisa Powley will be providing a display table on the Hearing Aid Loan Bank at the auditory verbal training course March 14. (50 people will be attending that course).
- Sandra will pursue having a display table at the Pathways to Possibilities Conference, August 13-15 in Virginia Beach. The display would include information about GBYS, HALB, Hands and Voices and the Virginia Network of Consultants.
- Pat checked into having a display table at the PEDS at the Beach Conference which is scheduled for July 18-20. The usual rate for a table is \$800. For half a table, the cost for a non-profit organization is \$400. There is a charge of \$50-100 to simply hand out brochures. Pat will contact Dr. Pat Accardo to see if the fee can be waived since the information to be displayed is educational, not commercial. She may also talk with Dr. Colleen Kraft. Another possibility for funding may be the commercial vendors. Pat will see if she can obtain a list of the vendors who will be exhibiting at the conference.
- Sandra will be participating in a Health Fair in Orange County. She will display information there. This Health Fair will include hearing screening by a nurse who is responsible for the newborn hearing screening at one of the local hospitals. Sandra will contact Leslie to discuss involvement of the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach Providers in the Health Fairs.
- Ruth reported that she expects the Health Department will have a display at the Williamsburg conference.
- Several members discussed collaborating to have a display table at the Shining Stars conference this summer.

The group recommended the following regarding participation (displays) at conferences:

- Combine information about the various organizations, supports and resources relevant to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families including information about Virginia's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program, Guide By Your Side, the Hearing Aid Loan Bank, Hands and Voices, and where appropriate, the Virginia Network of Consultants.
- Focus on conferences and events which target the population served by GBYS and HALB
- For Physician Conference Displays, include information about role of the physician in identification of hearing loss and follow up.

Review of Virginia Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Advisory Committee Meeting

The Advisory Committee decided that member categories cited in the Code of Virginia will have voting privileges. Committees will be discussed at next meeting. There is a place in proposed subcommittee structure for this group.

Brian Campbell, Department of Medical Assistance Services, presented information about changes in Medicaid Hearing Aid reimbursement. A list of audiologists was provided to Brian. Brian will contact audiologists to provide info about changes in Medicaid reimbursement.

Susan Tlusty provided an update on regulations. The regulations have been reviewed and no public comments have been received. The next step is the Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) that the agency is planning to change existing regulations. The areas being considered for change and the kind of changes being considered must be published. Then the proposed regulations will be published for public comment. One possible change to be considered is clarification that early intervention providers, in addition to audiologists, be

required to communicate with Virginia Department of Health about whether children have been enrolled in early intervention and are receiving services.

Hearing Aid Loan Bank

The Department of Education is providing funding through September 2008 for the HALB as well as funding for purchase of additional aids. Sandra has solicited recommendations from audiologists about what aids to purchase.

The group discussed donation of hearing aids. In some, but not all localities, Lions Clubs accept and refurbish used hearing aids.

The availability of hearing aids for hands on training (how to trouble shoot, etc.) was discussed. Debbie and/or Ann will communicate with Sandra about borrowing aids when needed and when available for trainings.

Guide By Your Side

81 families were matched in 2007. Specific information is listed in attached GBYS report. GBYS – 81 families matched in 2007. 49% were in Northern Virginia. There is a need for additional family guides especially in Northern Virginia including Spanish speaking guides. There is a waiting list for Spanish Speaking families to be matched with guides. While there is funding available for interpreter services, it is limited and there is only one company that can be used for interpreter services. The interpreter needs to be onsite with the family guide. Ruth will communicate with Dana about possible strategies to address the needs of families who are Spanish speaking. The Guide By Your Side materials have been translated into Spanish. Sandra offered assistance with translation if additional materials need to be translated.

The process for selection and training of family guides, including submission of the application, the interview process, background check and training was reviewed. Monica indicated her interest. She also offered to see if she could find individuals who are willing to serve as translators. Ann will talk with Dana about targeting recruitment in Northern Virginia and options for training.

The EHDI Advisory committee asked that this group work toward identifying a permanent home for the GBYS program. The Partnership for People with Disabilities was intended to be a temporary “home” for this program. It is expensive to operate programs through the Partnership. Leslie said the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach might be a logical “home” if there is funding outside the DDHH budget to support the program. Leslie would need to discuss this with other people in the agency. Discussion followed that whatever “home” is selected for the program, it needs to be, as well as perceived to be, unbiased in terms of communication choices and supports and services for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. A meeting has been scheduled with Joanne Boise, Phyllis Mondak, Gayle Jones, Lisa Powell, Dana and Sandra to discuss the possibility of combining the home agency for GBYS and the HALB, possibly at the Blue Ridge Care Connection of Virginia.

Based on the current economic situation, it is expected that it will be years before additional funding will be allocated for programs such as the HALB and GBYS.

One member reported on an advocacy workshop where lawyers advised the participants to file complaints as a way to force funding.

Hands and Voices

Hands and Voices is a parent driven organization for support to parents and professions. It continues to be in a “start-up” mode in Virginia. Ann is on advisory committee as state education representative. At this time, all of the people involved with Hands and Voices are volunteering their time, though the Executive Director position is intended to be a paid position. A suggestion was made to check with Judy Hudgins at the Department of Education about the possibility of DOE funding.

Tiffany Johnson agreed to be acting chair and facilitator for the February meeting. The advisory committee which included EHDI Workgroup members, Casey and Ann met to review/revise the bylaws. The revised bylaws will be sent to the whole advisory committee for vote.

Meetings are set for the 2nd Saturday of each month. Agenda for the March meeting includes approval of the bylaws, voting on leadership (chair and executive director) and beginning to plan and event. There was discussion that Hands and Voices might have increased membership and participation if the organization expanded to regional meetings and perhaps regional chapters. Fredia has indicated that she would be willing to assist with a group in her area.

The group discussed if/how Hands and Voices links with local Parent Groups. The group also commented on the fluctuations in viability and vitality of local groups, related to the interest and involvement of parent members.

Resources at the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) Lending Library

The group discussed the idea of putting 5 sets of the resources purchased several years ago on permanent loan to the DDHH outreach providers. The group agreed to do this with the expectation that the Outreach Providers will receive “training” about the resources and that they will collaborate with the local early intervention and education agencies in their region. Two sets will remain at the Richmond DDHH office. Leslie indicated that if necessary, the resources can be brought back to the DDHH. The group also discussed making the resources available for general circulation (instead of restricting loan to early intervention and the schools). It was decided that one of the sets at DDHH would be made available for general circulation and the other will continue to be restricted to early intervention and the schools. Leslie will inform the Outreach Providers and the DDHH library manager about these plans.

Melinda showed the group the Listen Around the Clock resource (one component) and explained what all is included in this resource and how this resource can be used for facilitating language development for any child, regardless of the chosen communication mode, as well as for children who do not have a hearing loss. This is one of the resources in the 7 sets currently at DDHH. Melinda told the group about her success in having volunteers (girl scouts) put together the various kits. Kits include toys, books, and other materials focused on a particular activity, such a mealtime, or going on an outing. Donations from families, girl scouts, Craigslist and Freecycle were suggested as possible sources for materials to use to compile resource kits.

Framework for Increasing Competency for Working with Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Debbie reviewed with the group the differences between the 2000 and 2007 Joint Commission on Infant Hearing Position Statements. See AAP document. Members have been unable to locate an updated version of the competencies for professionals working with infants who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families (including on the ASHA or JCIH websites). It is expected that there is minimal if any change in the competency statements from those that were published several years ago by ASHA and the JCIH. Therefore those competencies will be used in developing a framework for training. The group identified audiologists, speech language pathologists, teachers of the deaf and service coordinators as key groups to target.

The group decided to use the format of the "Fact Sheet" for the framework. Competencies will be listed and for each competency, there will be a list of resources and mechanisms to increase provider knowledge, skills and abilities for that competency. Beth and Debbie and Sarah will look at the competencies included on the 2006 Early Intervention Hearing Survey and at the Fact Sheet and begin to lay out the document. They will present a beginning draft at the next meeting.

Announcements

Sarah is involved in a United Way project (Success by Six) focusing on early intervention with 5-6 minute webcasts that are changed every 6 weeks. Sarah suggested the possibility of including information about early intervention for infants and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sarah will obtain more information and see how we might be able to provide such information for inclusion in the project. A question arose about the possibility of obtaining some funding through Success by Six. The Success by Six funding is foundation money is geared to projects with co-participation in community organizations. Richmond Read is an example of a project funded by Success by Six. http://www.grcc.com/page/name/sb6_home

Next Meeting: April 2, 2008 from 10:00 – 2:00; Henrico Mental Retardation and Health Services

Agenda for Next Meeting:

- Permanent Home for GBYS and HALB – report from meeting (Sandra, Gayle, Dana)
- Funding
- Report on Success by Six Project (Sarah)
- GBYS Update (Dana)
- HALB Update (Sandra)
- Hands and Voices Update (Ann)
- Framework for Increasing Competency Update (Beth, Sarah, Debbie)

Plans:

- Beth will submit information about the Resource Materials at VDDH, GBYS and Hands and Voices for publication in the next Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia Technical Assistance Update
- Leslie will send information to Beth about DDHH's Outreach Providers for inclusion in the ITCVA Technical Assistance Update
- Sarah will find out more information about the Success by Six project