

Hearing Workgroup
12-1-06

Attendance: Pat Dewey; Ruth Frierson; Jennifer Hutson; Dana Yarbrough; Beth Tolley

The August 16, 2006 meeting minutes were reviewed and were approved as written.

Announcements

VDH has carry-through money from the EHDI grant. After the Federal Status Report (FSR) for the grant is submitted to the Health Resources and Services Administration, they will submit a request to use the carry-over money for Guide-By-Your-Side training (through the Partnership) and for additional resources including Spanish translation of materials.

Upcoming Training Opportunities

The Connections Resource Fair will be held April 21 at the Children's Museum.

Guide-By-Your-Side

- The training went well. 15 family guides were trained.
- Dana provided update information on the Guide-By-Your-Side program (copy attached)
- It is expected that the background checks will be completed in December.
- Matching is expected to start in beginning of January.
- Work is in progress to finalize the Guide-By-Your-Side Resource guide.
 - Available resource information will be used wherever possible. Discussion followed about coordination to assure that information in the VDH Resource guide and the GBYS guide are not duplicated or information missed.
 - The VDH Resource Guide has been revised. It will be posted on the web.
 - Information on communication options was from Choices in Deafness. It is or has been revised, though it is not clear if the revised book is available yet.
 - Misty Kiser from DOE did the graphics for the original VDH Parent Resource Guide. Dana will contact her.
 - Dana and Jennifer will work on the finalization of the GBYS document and will determine what and how the information from the VDH Research Guide can be integrated in this. Virginia has permission to use Wisconsin information (more in depth about hearing aids).
 - Responsibility for ensuring that what is in the documents is up to date and accurate was discussed and it was determined that VDH will be responsible for

maintaining up-to-date information about resources and GBYS will be the responsible for keeping the rest up to date.

- The GBYS Guide will be posted on the Web.
- The Hearing Workgroup has been working as the Advisory Board to GBYS. It was agreed that the Workgroup would continue in this role.
- National Hands and Voices is requiring that their logo be used.
- National Hands and Voices is making some changes in the GBYS program. They will probably be required to be evidenced-based to get federal funding. This may require standardized materials and procedures and training which may leave less room for tweaking to meet state needs. Virginia will need to monitor and evaluate the relationship and value of the National Hands and Voices collaboration and continue with it if valuable, and if not, develop a program specific to Virginia.
- The group needs to remain cognizant about the need for permanent home for the family guide program.
- Charlie Ford from VDH has written a draft press release about the Guide-By-Your-Side program. It was decided that the press release should wait until matches are in process.

EI Conference

Jennifer Hutson will submit a proposal to present at the Annual Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia Annual Conference. Goals for the presentation include informing early intervention providers about Guide-By-Your-Side (including the program, unbiased support and the Hands and Voices organization) and helping providers understand that there is more than just a hearing loss for children who are deaf or hard of hearing (and their families).

Beth has talked with Ann Hughes about submitting a proposal geared to teaching providers the basic information that all providers, including service coordinators should know about appropriate supports and services for children with hearing loss and their families.

Information for Providers

Beth stated that it would be helpful for providers to have a one page information sheet with basic information about the supports and services that should be considered for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. References could be provided about where to look for more detailed information. Pat reported that such a document probably already exists. She will contact Arlene Stredler Brown of the Marian Downs National Center to see if she has something that can be used as is or modified to meet Virginia's needs. Pat will circulate what she receives and the Workgroup will work on this via email.

Hands and Voices

Jennifer reported that the Application for the Virginia Hands and Voices Chapter has been submitted. The chapter is in start up status while establishing a board. Jennifer has received applications from persons interested in being board members. The following individuals have been identified as board members:

- John Georges (CPA, parent, and spouse of one of the GBYS guides)
- Kimberly Hassinger (parent)
- Missy Colley - parent (Regional Parent Representative for Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia)
- Charlene Evans (GBYS guide, attorney)
- Holly Morris (deaf, parent of deaf child, GBYS guide)
- Debbie Pfeiffer (Educator of the Deaf, Technical Assistance & Training Consultant)
- Casey Morehouse (audiologist and parent of deaf children)
- Ann Hughes (Educator of the Deaf)
- Beth Ann Mitchell - Teacher of Deaf, Audio-verbal

Jennifer reported that the board must be at least 51% parents. There is consideration for adding two more professionals. These two positions do not need to be filled right away. The identified Board members will meet and collaborate as a group to identify potential additional members.

Ideally, the Virginia Chapter of Hands and Voices will work out funding for the Guide-By-Your-Side program and will oversee other Hands and Voices projects in Virginia. Ann will serve as a liaison between Guide-By-Your-Side and Hands and Voices.

The Hearing Workgroup wants the GBYS program to be accountable to Virginia agencies (the ones that got it up and running), not just to the National Hands and Voices Organization.

Review of Original Goals and Plans

1. Decrease time between diagnosis and provision of parent support, resources and services
2. Appropriate intervention that is consistent across the commonwealth

The group discussed progress toward these goals, including establishing the family support system (Guide-By-Your-Side) and getting children into early intervention more quickly (per Pat according to EHDI data).

While more children are being referred to the early intervention system, the goal of appropriate intervention that is consistent across the commonwealth has not yet been met. **The group agreed that it is important to continue as a workgroup with a shift in the focus from establishing a system for family support to the provision of appropriate intervention that is consistent across the Commonwealth. The group will also monitor the implementation of the Guide-By-Your-Side program.**

Assignments:

Beth:

- Email members to let them know of the shifting focus of the workgroup to appropriate services; Request reply from all members about their interest and their ability to commit to participation in meetings.
- Email two possible meeting dates to members and request response about member availability for the meetings. (January 10 or January 16 from 11 AM to 3 PM)
- Send note to Local System Managers requesting that they contact parents of children with hearing loss (current or recent to let them know that a group of parents is being brought together to develop a consensus statement about what supports and services should look like for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families in the Part C early intervention system. Include Dana Yarbrough's contact information so interested parents can contact Dana.
- Put a reminder in the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia Update that VDDHH has the resources for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Pat: Contact Arlene Stredler Brown to request information for providers.

Agenda for January Meeting

- Revisit Goals: New goal statement - expectations of members.
- Discuss Membership - need to recruit more family members (After meeting, Beth send out message to Local System Managers to let them know that the group is looking for additional members, especially parents).