



Greetings and Happy New Year from Hands & Voices and the FL3 Center.

This time of year finds many of us with mixed emotions. We may feel optimism for what the new year will bring, excitement for the opportunity to all be together to learn from one another at the upcoming [annual EHDI meeting](#), and energy around wrapping up another fiscal year of projects and objectives.



As a reminder, the FL3 Center's purpose is to provide technical assistance to national, state and territory, and local EHDI systems of care in order to increase family engagement and leadership, and to strengthen family support for families, parents, and caregivers with newborns, infants, and young children up to 3 years of age who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Our team is committed to supporting you in meeting your local family engagement, leadership, and family support program objectives. Please don't hesitate to reach out to one of our technical assistance (TA) advisors or complete an online TA request [on our website](#). From the time we launched this TA request portal in June of 2020, the FL3 Center has responded to over 992 TA encounters.

Wishing everyone much success in wrapping up Year 3 objectives and kicking off the final Year 4 in April!

"And now we welcome the new year, full of things that have never been." – Rainer Maria Rilke

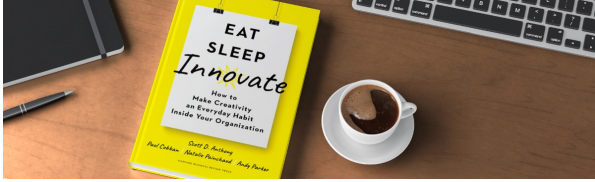
Happy 2023!

In partnership,

Lisa Kovacs
Hands & Voices FL3 Center Director



Thank you for the outpouring of generosity on Giving Tuesday. We are so grateful for your support of deaf and hard of hearing children around the world.



Hands & Voices Leadership Book Club

Friday, January 20th
3 PM ET/2 PM CT/1 PM MT/12 PM PT
(One hour)

Eat, Sleep, Innovate
**How to make creativity an everyday
habit inside your organizations.**
by William Bridges

Join a small group discussion with parents and EHDI stakeholders about groundbreaking research in behavioral science through this first-of-its-kind playbook for empowering individuals and teams to be their most curious and creative—every single day.

Facilitator: Ana Brooks (H&V-HQ)

[Register here.](#)

[Click here for upcoming book clubs.](#)

FL3 Office Hours
Thursday, January 26th, 2023
8 PM ET/7 PM CT/6 PM MT/5 PM PT
(One hour)

“Authentic Parent Leadership in Systems”

Facilitator: Deshonda Washington,
Executive Director of Georgia H&V

Bring examples of meaningful integration of parent leadership in EHDI systems and learn from your colleagues providing family support to this interactive discussion. Register [here](#).

Can't make this one? Check out future Office Hours [here](#).

2023-24 topics are coming soon!

All parent, D/HH leaders and FBOs are welcome.

**Hands & Voices D/HH Plus Events
Coming in January and March**



Fostering Joy Journal for Kids

Now available in Spanish

Kids who are deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH) can journal about their joys and accomplishments with a grown-up, ideally an adult who is D/HH themselves. Through a variety of fun activities, the child can learn about D/HH adult role models, strategies to advocate for themselves, and how being D/HH is a cause for celebration!

The ***Fostering Joy Journal for Kids*** makes a wonderful gift for children and families, and a great tool for D/HH role model programs.

[Click here to order.](#)

Learn more about the journal and the D/HH Guides who created in the video below.



Live Panel Discussion Open to ALL

Tuesday, January 31st, 2023
7 PM ET/6 CT/5 MT/4 PT
(One hour)

A discussion for Parents of Children who are Deaf/HH Plus health or learning challenges and the providers who serve them.

Tuesday, January 31st, 2023
8 PM ET/7 CT/6 MT/5 PT
(One hour)

"Nurturing Social-Emotional Development among Children who are D/HH Plus"

Led by Dr. Amy Szarkowski, PhD Psychologist

This session will introduce constructs to help families understand the importance and relevance of social-emotional development in their children who are D/HH Plus, including the ways that social-emotional development may be impacted "by the Plus". The importance of social-emotional functioning in everyday life will be discussed, and strategies to help nurture its development will be shared.

Registration information available [here](#).

Tuesday, March 28th, 2023
8 PM ET/7 CT/6 MT/5 PT

"Hot Topics in Educational Advocacy for Children who are D/HH Plus"

Led by Penni Echols, Educational Advocate from NV Hands & Voices and Guest

This session will open a discussion about strategies for successful advocacy for children who are D/HH Plus health and/or learning challenges. Ideas such as the use of storytelling to create understanding of a child's needs, how to meaningfully involve the child who is D/HH Plus in team meetings, and "hurdle talk" will be offered.

Registration will open in February.

Cozy Up with a Book



Sharing books is one of the easiest and most important activities

Audism in Audiology: Relevant Issues in Clinical Practice

[Join SIG 8](#), Public Health Audiology, for a live panel discussion on audism in the profession of audiology.

Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing audiologists will share their personal experiences and professional expertise on how we can work toward eliminating audist practices in audiology.

Panelists include D/HH audiologists Kym Phelan Meyer, Michelle Lapid, Jessica Hoffman, Carrie Spangler, Stacey Lim and Tina Childress.

[Register here.](#)

O.U.R. Children's Safety Project

Tuesday, February 14th, 2023
12 PM ET/11 AM CT/
10 AM MT/9 AM PT

A parent representative from the Global Parents of D/HH Children (GPODHH) will report on the group's Safety Efforts.

[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) for upcoming topics, second Tuesday of the month thru June 2023.



2023 ADARA Virtual Conference

Friday, February 24th, 2023
1 PM ET/12 PM CT/
11 AM MT/10 AM PT
(4 Hours)

[ADARA](#) focuses on the work of mental health professionals and vocational rehabilitation counselors working with people who are Deaf/HH of all ages.

you can do with your child. It's never too early to start! When you read to your child every day, you grow their brain for listening, language, and learning.

[Click here](#) for a list of books and suggested activities from [Hearing First](#).



2023 EARLY HEARING DETECTION & INTERVENTION CONFERENCE
MARCH 5-7, 2023 • CINCINNATI, OH
[Click here](#) for information and to register.

Full workshop information available [here](#).

[Register here](#)



Hands & Voices HQ and Michigan Hands & Voices look forward to seeing you in Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 1-3, 2023. Details will be posted soon!



I DEAF-INITELY CAN,
RHETT THE HEELER

Written by: Karlie Waldrip
Illustrated by: Lucy Rogers

Kids and adults will enjoy this book written from the point of view of Rhett, who is a deaf dog. When he was (finally) adopted from a dog shelter, he and his young new owner learn to communicate with each other. Readers can learn sign concepts along with Rhett.

Author [Karlie Waldrip](#) was born deaf, and grew up with both sign and spoken language. She now works as an itinerant Deaf Education teacher. She is an advocate for both her students and for deaf dogs, the inspiration for her book. Illustrator [Lucy Rogers](#) is an award-winning artist who is also deaf. Follow on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

[Order your copy here.](#)

Expanding EHDI for Children Up to Three Years of Age

The number of children with hearing loss doubles during early childhood--from approximately 3 in 1000 at birth to 6 in 1000 by school age. Providing hearing screening during the early language-learning years is critical for helping more children receive the benefits of early identification and intervention.

[NCHAM](#) has a [variety of resources](#) focusing on this important topic, including the Expanding EHDI for Children Up to Three Years of Age Training Module, webinars, a synthesis of key issues, an environmental scan, and more tools and discussion guides to inform your system.

[Genetics, Clinical Trials, and Gene Therapy :Family Decision Making](#) is an article recently published in the Hands & Voices *Communicator* discussing family decision making in regards to genetic services. Two useful references mentioned in the article are: [Making Informed and Shared Decisions About Genetic Testing and Clinical Trial Participation - Global Genes](#) and [Evaluating the Clinical Trial Option: Questions to Consider” by the Courageous Parents Network](#)

[The National Genetics Education & Family Support Center](#) looked at family engagement in the genetics healthcare delivery system and created this report, [Understanding Family Engagement in Genetics Services](#).



Improving the I in EHDl

By Sarah Fitzgerald, Wendy Hewitt, and Kim Reimann

Q: What is your strategy that your FBO/family leader and EHDl system has successfully used together to improve early intervention supports?

Children in Wyoming who are Deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) and their families have access to Part C (birth to three years of age) early intervention through 42 Child Development Centers throughout the state. While the centers allow for services to take place in families' home communities, many children in more rural areas of the state may not have access to providers who *specialize* in working with children who are D/HH. The [Wyoming EHDl Program](#) and [WY Families for Hands & Voices](#) have long recognized the need for quality early intervention services and have recently collaborated on a new initiative called [“WEll \(“we”\) Plus.”](#)

In January 2020, WY Families for Hands & Voices and the WY EHDl Program along with stakeholders from the WY Department of Health, Early Intervention and Education Program (EIEP) including the Part C Coordinator; the WY Department of Education, Outreach for the D/HH; the University of WY, Communication Disorders Division; and the Child Development Services of WY came together to form the *WY Early Intervention Initiative* (WEll) for families with children who are deaf/hard of hearing. This work has been facilitated by the Marion Downs Center in Colorado.

Through the collaboration of the WEll, the [WEll Plus Program](#) was developed and launched in July 2022. WEll Plus is a family-centered, statewide service delivery model provided through the 42 WY Child Development Centers that offer Part C EI services. The program uses training, coaching, and mentoring to guide and support families and professionals as they access critical information and services needed for children who are D/HH to develop to their fullest potential. The purpose of WEll Plus is to empower EI providers and families through strategies and resources specific to early childhood hearing loss.

Some of the ways families are supported by WEll Plus include a focus on families' communication choices and literacy, family participation in [ODDACE](#) assessments, and family to family support and advocacy, including connections to Parent Guides and D/HH Role Models through [Guide By Your Side](#) (GBYS) and [educational advocacy](#).

Q: What was the goal you were trying to achieve?

The goal of the WEll is to promote collaborative efforts to increase Wyoming's capacity to provide quality early intervention services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing from

birth to kindergarten and their families. These efforts focus on the [Joint Committee on Infant Hearing's 12 principles for appropriate early intervention](#).

Q: How do you know you are making an impact on families? What measures or tests of chance did you use?

Prior to the development of WEII Plus, some direct support was provided to approximately 20-25% of families annually through a speech language pathologist (SLP) Early Intervention Consultant from WY Families for Hands & Voices as part of the Reading Early Accelerates Development (R.E.A.D. Plus) Program. WEII Plus has expanded this support to Part C EI providers so that additional families throughout the state are supported in making informed decisions to give children the opportunity to achieve their highest potential. (WEII Plus is modeled on the [Colorado Home Intervention Program](#) (CHIP).

The WEII Plus program is facilitated by the WEII Plus Coordinator, an SLP with a background in working with young children who are D/HH. The WEII Plus Coordinator works directly with Part C EI providers as they provide services to families. The WEII Plus Coordinator is supported by a Core Team that includes Parent Guides, an audiologist, Teachers of the Deaf, and administrators. When a child, birth to age three, is identified as D/HH, a referral is made to Part C EI and the WEII Plus Coordinator. The WEII Plus Coordinator connects with the Part C EI providers and the family as they begin their EI journey.

Beginning in September 2020, three of 14 Child Development Center regions along with R.E.A.D. Plus families (at that time) started to participate in uniform developmental assessment every six months through the Outcomes and Developmental Data Assistance Center for EHDI Programs (ODDACE). This is currently being expanded statewide to monitor developmental progress for all enrolled children over time.

Feedback is gathered from providers quarterly. Anecdotal feedback is provided consistently from families and a survey is being developed for families to share more formal feedback.

Q: How can other states/territories replicate this strategy?

This strategy may be replicated by pulling together stakeholders to create and maintain a cohesive working group. Personnel time for stakeholders has been covered by collaborating agencies and organizations so that no large fiscal note is attached to these efforts. It may also be helpful to utilize developed resources and processes from other jurisdictions. This could be replicated on a smaller scale such as a region within a state. Interested? See us at EHDI and the Western Regional Early Intervention Conference in June 2023.

About the authors: Sarah Fitzgerald is the Wyoming EHDI Co-Coordinator (Newborn System). Wendy Hewitt is the Executive Director of Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices, and Kim Reimann is the Wyoming H&V Assistant Director and Guide By Your Side (GBYS) Coordinator.



How to Submit a Request for FL3 Technical Assistance

Requesting technical assistance from the FL3 team is easy! [Click here](#) for the online form.

The Hands & Voices Family Leadership in Language and Learning (FL3) Center Technical Assistance aids family-based support organizations, including Hands & Voices (H&V) Chapters/Programs, EHDI Program recipients, and family leaders in meeting their family engagement, leadership, and family support program objectives.

Request TA here: <https://handsandvoices.org/fl3/request-ta.html>

The graphic features a dark blue background with white text. On the right, there are three icons: a family silhouette (man, woman, child), a hand with fingers spread, and a circular logo with 'FL3' inside. The text describes the technical assistance provided by the FL3 Center.

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