



HANDS &
VOICES™

CHECKLIST: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OF UNBIASED SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES WITH D/HH CHILDREN

Programs offering support to the entire community of families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing must be unbiased to the many choices families may make about communication, educational placement, technology and more. Unbiased delivery of information involves careful consideration of each program component and commitment to on-going assessment. The following checklist is provided as a tool to conduct a review of a family support program in order to develop a plan to address areas of need / improvement.

1. STAKEHOLDER/BOARD/ADVISORY GROUPS

- ⇒ Diverse parent, professional, and adults who are deaf/hard of hearing representation from the full continuum of choices families make is sought for stakeholder, board and advisory groups. Members represent a variety of choices in communication, technology use, educational placement, levels of hearing loss, D/HH "Plus" other health concerns, cultural backgrounds, gender, etc.
- ⇒ Members of advisory committees, task forces, learning communities etc. display an aptitude for representing all families, not only the choices they have made.
- ⇒ New members agree to participate in person, virtually and in written communication in the spirit of collaboration, demonstrating respect for all perspectives.
- ⇒ Groups should be reviewed for diversity of perspective at least annually and as members leave.
- ⇒ Members should have the opportunity to review the program for balance and neutrality at least annually or as situations arise.
- ⇒ Members should be given the opportunity to assess community needs and to evaluate/advise the program if changes to services would achieve balance.
- ⇒ Meeting structure should allow for open, honest, respectful dialogue and sharing of events, resources, etc. to ensure balance. If program balance is questioned, vote of the group can accurately assess the program's neutrality.



2. FUNDING/SPONSORSHIP/COLLABORATION

- ⇒ Funding/sponsorship opportunities are carefully considered and balanced based on the potential for perceived or real influence by a choice (communication, educational placement, technology) or perspective.
- ⇒ In kind donations and collaborations are carefully considered and balanced based on the potential for perceived or real influence by a choice or perspective.
- ⇒ Donors and collaborators demonstrate appropriate goals for inclusion as sponsors/funders.

3. PROGRAM DESIGN AND SERVICES

- ⇒ Information, services, advocacy and activities provided are inclusive of all choices families could make and choices are carefully balanced in presentation.
- ⇒ Resources and referrals provided to families are neutral and carefully balanced in presentation.

4. HIRING PRACTICES AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- ⇒ Recruitment for positions is sought from diverse sources to attract staff who represent a variety of choices in communication, technology use, educational placement, levels of hearing loss, D/HH “Plus” other health concerns, cultural backgrounds, gender, etc.
- ⇒ Interview process will include questions, case studies and rubrics to assess candidates based on their respect for diverse informed parent choice and their ability to provide unbiased support to families.
- ⇒ Staff are trained for and will serve on a variety of councils/advisory boards and staff are assessed on their ability to represent the needs of all families and choices, not only the choices they may have made.
- ⇒ Staff are assessed for performance and delivery of unbiased support consistently and have a formal review annually.
- ⇒ Staff are trained to share their personal choices for their child, only when appropriate, and in context to programmatic considerations, and accompanied by strategies to encourage the audience to seek input from diverse perspectives, offering to make the connections when appropriate.



5. TRAINING AND ON-GOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ⇒ On-boarding process includes training for all staff on how to provide unbiased support, owning own family choices, what to share when, how not to influence, etc.
- ⇒ Staff are trained in how share one’s own choices about their own lived experiences and refer to others to balance exposure to different options.
- ⇒ Staff are trained in how to serve on advisory committees, task forces, learning communities etc. so they are representing all families, not only the choices they have made.
- ⇒ On-going professional development will include training and engagement with diverse choices, educational programming, communication etc.

6. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- ⇒ Program materials and social media reflect and respect the full continuum of family choice in the use of visual imagery, tone and language.
- ⇒ Program is marketed to the full continuum of families with children who are D/HH.

7. OVERSIGHT, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

- ⇒ Program has oversight by leadership trained to ensure the delivery of unbiased support and program leadership works with a stakeholder group, board, advisory council to ensure balance of service delivery.
- ⇒ Parent satisfaction surveys, focus groups and other evaluative tools assess staff ability to deliver unbiased information. If a breach occurs, a procedure exists for how to take corrective action.
- ⇒ Parent satisfaction with assessment of delivery of unbiased information is reported to funders/sponsors/families.

