



# Family-to-Family Support Program Self Evaluation Tool

## PURPOSE:

Many organizations that serve families with children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) recognize the value of engaging Parent Leaders in their organizations, and in connecting caregivers with children who are D/HH to Family-to-Family support services. This self-evaluation tool is designed to help programs in planning, implementing, and evaluating the strength of Family-to-Family-Support and Parent Leader engagement in their organization or systems. This self-evaluation tool is a companion to the Hands & Voices/FL3 Family-to-Family Support: Program Guidelines for Addressing the Needs of Families Who Have Children Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH). (<https://handsandvoices.org/fl3/fl3-docs/Fam-Fam-support-guidelines-8-30-2018.pdf>).

## SUGGESTIONS FOR APPLICATION:

The tool contains nine separate domains, which are listed below. When combined, these domains address the recommended components for implementing robust Family-to-Family Support Programming and Leader Engagement in organizations and systems. Programs may choose to utilize the tool to assess specific domains, or to evaluate the program/system overall. Repeat use of this self-assessment tool can assist in monitoring program progress and quality improvement.

Each domain contains instructions for how to score that domain. If using all nine domains, total the scores of all domains to receive an overall score.

### The 9 domains are:

1. Assessment of Community / Family Needs
2. Funding for Programs
3. Program Design and Components
4. Hiring Practices and Personnel
5. Program Coordinator
6. Supporting Parents
7. Training Practices
8. On-Going Education and Training Development
9. Program Oversight, Reporting and Evaluation

Technical assistance for this self-evaluation tool is available through the Family Leadership in Language and Learning (FL3) Center. To request technical assistance, visit: <https://handsandvoices.org/fl3/request-ta.html>

## I. Assessment of Community / Family Needs (4 points)

Conduct a thorough needs assessment of your state/territory's availability of family-to-family support to identify strengths, avoid duplication and competition for funding, as well as identify gaps and create programming complementary and supportive to existing services, spanning the full continuum of family experiences. Recommendations to consider:

- A. Convening a local stakeholder group should consist of parents of children who are D/HH, adults who are D/HH with diversity of lived experiences, and professionals with diverse experiences serving families. Considerations of additional stakeholders to include, but not limited to:
  - Parents with different ages of children, various language and communication modalities and from cultural communities' representative of the demographics served
  - D/HH Adults with different lived experiences and cultures who access their family, friends, work, and community through spoken language and/or visual language
  - Early Intervention providers
  - Pediatric Audiologists
  - Health Care clinicians (Pediatricians, ENT, etc.)
  - Professionals from Schools for the Deaf, mainstream programs, and private programs
  - IDEA Part C representative(s)
  - Department of Education representative(s)
  - Representative from another established non-disability specific organization
- B. The stakeholder group may participate in the development and/or review of local and other needs assessment information to make recommendations about how to proceed.
- C. Review needs assessments done by other sources such as the Hands & Voices FL3 Needs Assessment and NCHAM SNAPSHOT.
  - [HV-FL3\\_NeedsAssessment\\_19Jul2018\\_Final-opt.pdf](#)
  - [NCHAM: Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Components](#)
- D. Initiate local needs assessments if your stakeholder group feels as if you need more information by conducting surveys, focus groups and/or interviews with diverse families and stakeholders to determine what families need and what services exist.

**Use the following rubric to rate your current availability of Family-to-Family Support for families with children who are D/HH:**

1. Families' needs are not met with current programs and additional programming is needed, and adequate funding does not exist. (1 point)
2. Families' needs are not met with current programs and additional programming is needed, and adequate funding exists. (2 points)
3. Families' needs are met with current programs, but funding is not adequate. (3 points)
4. Families' needs are met with current programs and funding is adequate. (4 points)

**Assessment of Community / Family Needs Rating (1-4points):**

**Date & Notes:**

## II. Funding for Programs (8 points)

Adequate, sustainable funding is important for specialized services to be delivered to families who have children who are D/HH. Funding should provide services to all families regardless of their geographic location, language of origin in the home, socio-economic status, child's language(s) and communication modalities, level of hearing, etc. Funding is used to hire parent-to-parent support staff, program operation and expenses, provide ongoing training, and program evaluation.

**Score one point per item that is met.**

1. Identified potential funding mechanisms for sustainable parent-to-parent support services.
2. Adequate funding to offer all families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing the opportunity to access trained parents in a formal program at no cost to families.
3. Paid staff at all positions: Parent coordinator, parent staff, etc. including staff reflecting the adequate level of diversity of families in the community also including diversity of the language and communication modality experiences of the Supporting Parents.
4. Support participation of Learning Parent whose first language is not English (funding for interpreters, translators, translated materials, etc.).
5. Paid initial training for all positions including funding for on-going training.
6. Funding to cover expenses for travel, etc.
7. Trained parent participation in systems level advisories and committees is funded.
8. Funding to provide program evaluation including family satisfaction, family outcomes, quality improvement, and reporting.

**Funding for Programs total (0-8):**

**Date & Notes:**

## III. Program Design and Components (11 points)

Family-to-family support programming should include opportunities for families to connect with a trained Supporting Parent with a child(ren) who are D/HH and include opportunities for families to meet other families with children who are D/HH through social or educational events. Components you will want to consider when designing family-to-family support programming should include; peer parent-to-parent emotional support, system navigation and engagement, social networking opportunities, education on a variety of topics including the impact of hearing loss on language/literacy/social-emotional development, parent leadership training, and engagement with a wide variety of adults who are D/HH. Clear communication about what kinds of supports are available is helpful for families to understand and for professionals/systems to refer in a timely and appropriate manner. **Score one point per item that is met.**

1. Deaf and Hard of Hearing specific family-to-family support programming designed with parent leadership, stakeholder input, and embedded into the local systems that serve families with children who are D/HH.
2. The family-to-family support program coordinator works in partnership with local system leaders to co-create the program's contract, scope of work, goals, budget, and evaluation.
3. Program includes a referral system that ensures all families regardless of residence, culture, language of the home, etc. will have an opportunity to receive parent-to-parent support.
4. All positions are paid and filled by parents of children who are D/HH.
5. Program is designed based on an understanding of the diverse needs of adult learners.
6. Program is created to support families' participation through a variety of platforms including, passively, anonymously, through one-on-one connections and through group interaction.

7. Program provides resources, including training and mentorship, for families to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in systems and policy development.
8. Program is founded on respect for all language and communication opportunities for families including, parent choice and delivery of unbiased support specific to D/HH.
9. Program implements strategies to reach low-resourced and challenging to engage families.
10. Family-to-family support program coordinator and staff are integrated into local systems by serving on advisory boards, serving in leadership positions, participating in quality improvement efforts/learning communities etc.
11. There are established family-to-family support program policies and procedures. See [Guidelines](#) for suggested policies and procedures.

**Program Design and Components total (0-11):**

**Date & Notes:**

## **IV. Hiring Practices and Personnel (7 points)**

The strength of a program lies in its strong people with positive attitudes and their ability to respect the needs, values and perspectives of families. Your careful attention to hiring staff who can model effective strategies to acquire knowledge, work collaboratively with professionals and who can see beyond the needs of their own child delivering unbiased support to other families is crucial. **Score one point per item that is met.**

1. Supporting Parents' experience represents the diversity of the D/HH population (e.g., children who are deaf, hard of hearing, cochlear implant and hearing aid users, unilateral, cultural diversity, deaf/hard of hearing plus other health concerns).
2. Recruitment efforts are made to ensure staff diversity including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, sex, disability, education, socioeconomic background, and geographic location.
3. Written job description for staff detailing job requirements, candidate qualifications and scope of work.
4. Hiring practices are in accordance with the organization where the family-to-family support programming is housed.
5. Interview questions assess the applicant's ability to provide support according to expectations, including the ability to support families without bias, experience and knowledge of D/HH specific supports and resources.
6. The program staff accepts, without judgment, a family's decisions for language and communication, educational placement, technology use, etc.
7. Utilization of a diverse interview team and scoring rubric.

**Hiring Practices and Personnel Total Score (0-7):**

**Date & Notes:**

## **V. Program Coordinator (6 points)**

Developing a successful family-to-family support program starts with your ability to hire a committed, skilled and strategic parent leader to coordinate the program and advocate for the diverse needs of parents of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. The program coordinator plays a critical role in establishing parent-to-parent support that meets the needs of families, is responsive to family feedback and community needs using information obtained from the assessment recommendations, collaborates well with other stakeholders, oversees comprehensive and on-going staff support, provides financial oversight, program evaluation and reporting. **Score one point per item met.**

1. Coordinator is a parent of a child who is D/HH with experience navigating the systems that support families.
2. Position has a written job description.
3. Coordinator reports to a larger stakeholder group or committee of the organization where the program is housed, who can provide feedback about the effectiveness of the program related to deaf/hard of hearing-specific work.
4. Coordinator works collaboratively with other professionals, agencies, and organizations.
5. Coordinator is innovative with new ideas and utilizes quality improvement practices.
6. Coordinator has an annual performance review and plan for on-going professional development.

**Program Coordinator Total Score (0-6):**

**Date & Notes:**

## **VI. Supporting Parents (3 points)**

Supporting Parents are parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing who have received specialized training that prepares them to function in this important capacity. The training you provide should offer them a solid foundation in supporting families without bias towards language or communication modality as well as a functional understanding of formal systems and services available to families and their children. Supporting Parents bring their direct experience, specialized knowledge, and personal compassion to their role while making the family's needs their prime focus.

**Score one point per item met.**

1. Supporting Parents are experienced parents of a child who is D/HH.
2. Position has a written job description.
3. Supporting Parents have an annual performance review and plan for on-going professional development.

**Supporting Parents Total Score (0-3):**

**Date & Notes:**

## VII. Training Practices (18 points)

Quality family-to-family support programs have a specific D/HH training curriculum in place to provide consistent and superior support, tailored to the needs of families with children who are D/HH. The thoughtful design of your training will ensure families receive guidance by Supporting Parents who understand and honor the complexity of a family's journey, adhere to a consistent level of professionalism, and have the experience and training about the systems and community resources available to families. Training customized for families with children who are D/HH is key, as the needs of this population can vary greatly from other families with children with other conditions due to the dramatic impact hearing loss may have on a child's language, literacy, academic and social-emotional development. **Score one point per item met.**

### Training Elements for Supporting Parents include but are not limited to:

1. Unbiased delivery of support and respect for informed parent decision-making, including honoring a family's decision around technology use or not, language and communication modalities or educational placement of the child.
2. How to minimize focus on the Supporting Parent's decisions, while helping families understand the complexity of the circumstances surrounding decision-making for their children about language acquisition and communication, educational placement, technology choices, etc.
3. Sharing positive experiences from their family's journey to explain their story, refrain from sharing negative experiences or specifying people/programs/names related to negative experiences.
4. Empowering families to love, nurture, and bond with the child just as they planned to do prior to the identification of the child being D/HH.
5. How to encounter the different emotions families may be experiencing, including siblings and extended family members.
6. Role playing how to answer common questions of families.
7. Confidentiality and safety rules for Supporting Parent, Learning Parents and their children.
8. Appropriate expectations/professionalism by staff (appointments kept, professional boundaries established and maintained, staying within the scope of the Supporting Parent job description despite professional background in another area).
9. Knowledge of and referral process to community resources based on understanding the needs of parents with children who are D/HH. Initial and on-going training for staff in how to make referrals ensuring continuity of care, following the required confidentiality laws/practices while noting the potential exceptions for suicide intervention and mandatory reporting.
10. Understanding of the local Early Hearing Detection & Intervention system, follow-up health services, Early Intervention, Deaf Mentor, Role Model, or Guide Programs, and special education systems and laws.
11. How to participate in systems work, representing the continuum of families beyond one's own personal or family decisions and experience.
12. Necessary documentation and reporting of activities to meet program and funding requirements.
13. Knowledge of resources and supports for families regarding language, literacy, and social development for their children and how to train families in the importance of on-going progress monitoring.
14. How to determine limitations of one's own experience, knowledge base, or training and when to refer families to someone else with more expertise or experience.
15. Respect for and referral to diverse adults who are D/HH.
16. Training and resources for responding with culturally appropriate support and services.
17. Training and resources for responding with support and services for families with children who are D/HH plus who have other medical concerns.
18. Guidance in how to assist families in advocating for their own child and building leadership skill development potentially for the system.

### Training Practices Total (0-18 points):

### Date & Notes:

## **VIII. On-Going Education and Training Development (4 points)**

Family-to-family support programs need established practices and processes for on-going support for staff education and training development, staff performance reviews, and personal goal setting. Your support of this practice will ensure staff continuously evolve just as the needs of the families they serve may change over time. The Program Coordinator should oversee this process with consultation from an advisory group or committee of the organization. **Score one point per item met.**

1. Ongoing professional training for program leadership and staff.
2. Annual formal evaluation of leadership and staff through assessment of strengths and needs for professional development.
3. Participation in national network of family-to-family support coordinators and trained staff. (This may include Hands & Voices, Family Voices, FL3 Center, etc.)
4. Access to leadership training opportunities including resources specific to D/HH.

**On-Going Education and Training Total Score:(0-4)**

**Date & Notes:**

## **IX. Program Oversight, Reporting and Evaluation (8 points)**

Assessment of family satisfaction with the support they receive, and family outcomes is integral to ensuring programs respond to family's needs and continually improve services. Your program also will need to report your activities, family satisfaction, and outcomes to your funding sources and can assist your funding agency in meeting their grant requirements by reporting data. **Score one point per item met.**

1. Ongoing program oversight by program leadership continuously trained in management of human and financial resources.
2. Data collection on all program activities (number of families served, number of presentations given, number of events provided, materials shared, etc.).
3. Formal process to collect family satisfaction data including questions about the professionalism of staff, respect for parent choice, delivery of unbiased information, etc.
4. If a satisfaction survey identifies dissatisfaction with services or breach of unbiased delivery of services, process for addressing issues and an appropriate resolution for the family.
5. Formal process for collecting family outcomes as they relate to receiving parent-to-parent support.
6. Annual program evaluation and annual program goal development based on evaluation.
7. Utilization of Quality Improvement methodologies used to make improvements to family-to-family support programming.
8. Assistance in reporting to the system families' access to parent-to-parent support.

**Program Oversight, Reporting and Evaluation total (0-8):**

**Date & Notes:**

# Total Score

Total Score from sections I-IX: (0-69 points)

Date & Notes: