



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **April 10, 2024**

Contact: Janet DesGeorges
FL3@handsandvoices.org

HRSA awards Family Support Cooperative Agreement to Hands & Voices

Hands & Voices has been granted a third cycle of funding by the Health Resources and Services Administration ([HRSA](#)). The funding covers a five-year cooperative agreement with [Hands & Voices](#) to continue to develop new family leaders and promote the inclusion of families with infants and young children identified through statewide Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) systems in hearing screening, evaluation, diagnosis, and early intervention programs.



Now in its eighth year, this support will continue funding with \$450,00 per year for the next five years for the Hands & Voices *Family Leadership in Language and Learning Center* (FL3). FL3 focuses on increasing family engagement and leadership; strengthening family support in EHDI systems; and guiding families in optimizing the language, literacy, cognitive, social, and emotional development of their infants and young children who are D/deaf and hard of hearing.

Hands & Voices Executive Director Janet DesGeorges is thrilled. "It's an honor to continue our work with all EHDI system stakeholders for the next five years as a part of this project. The FL3 Center is committed to ensuring that these children are served according to their individual needs, and that their families receive the best possible resources and support to help them achieve their goals." Resource development and dissemination, education and training, quality improvement methodology, evidence-based best practices, policy initiatives, and program partnerships are all part of FL3. In collaboration with national experts in language and literacy, state/territory-based family organizations and EHDI programs, federal agencies, Deaf-based organizations, and professional organizations, Hands & Voices (FL3 Center) will coordinate activities with other HRSA-funded organizations including Gallaudet University (Implementation and Change Center) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (Provider Education Center). Hands & Voices Board President, Dr. Karen Hopkins shared her optimism for the future of this collaboration. "I am thrilled to see that this leadership framework will weave lived experiences of families and deaf and hard of hearing adults throughout the development of a family-centered EHDI system with the goal of successful language acquisition for deaf and hard of hearing children."

About Hands & Voices

Hands & Voices began in 1996 in an effort to join families and professionals in the discovery of "*What works for your child is what makes the choice right.*" The parent-led, non-profit organization is dedicated to supporting families with children who are D/deaf or hard of hearing without bias around communication modes or methodology. Their model has been replicated nationwide and globally in 47 chapters. Programs include Guide By Your Side (parent-to-parent support); O.U.R. Project (children's safety); ASTra (educational advocacy); Deafed.net; leadership conferences, workshops, chapter support, and a clearinghouse of information and resources.

"This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number U52MC529918-01-00 for the Family Leadership in Language and Learning Center. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government."