



HANDS & VOICES

"What works for your child is what makes the choice right."™

How To Help



Quarterly News & Updates

1st Quarter January 2025

Hello from the FL3 Center team!

As we usher in the new year of 2025, we are filled with optimism and excitement for the opportunities in the EHDI system that lie ahead. This year promises to be one of growth, innovation, and success for all of us



We look forward to seeing many of you at this year's [EHDI Conference](#) on March 9-11 in Pittsburgh, PA.

Please watch our calendar for [Hands & Voices and FL3 Center Activities](#). We hope you will find these activities supportive in assisting you in meeting your family leadership, engagement, and support objectives.

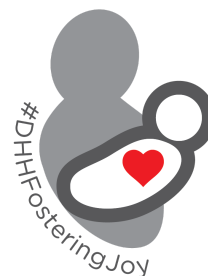
Please don't hesitate to contact [us](#) with your ideas for additional trainings, resource needs, or events.

In partnership with you,
Lisa Kovacs
FL3 Center Core Management Team

Upcoming Events and Activities to Share with Families and Agencies



O.U.R. Children's Safety Project
Tuesday, February 11th, 2025
12 PM ET/11 PM CT/10 AM MT/9 AM PT
(One hour)



The Fostering Joy Forum
Webinar

Helping Children Understand Their Emotions

Presenter: Ruby Sewell, LICSW

Audience: Open to all

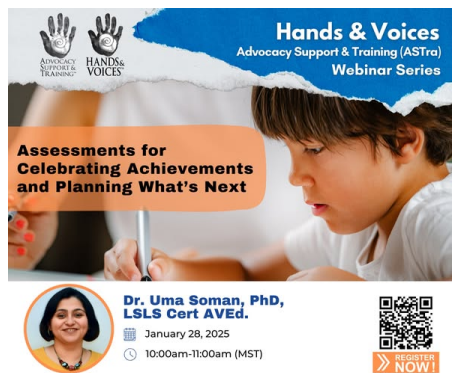
Description: Join this session for an exploration of helping children who are DHH understand their emotions with a grounding in development and the Internal Family Systems model.

[Click here](#) for suggested pre-work.

[Registration](#) opening soon.

[Click here](#) for future topics.

Registration is required 48 hours in advance. Auto-captioning will be provided. Please register one week ahead for additional access requests.



Advocacy Support & Training (ASTra) Webinar Series

Tuesday, January 28th, 2025

**12 PM ET/11 AM CT/10 AM MT/9 AM PT
(One hour)**

Assessments for Celebrating Achievements and Planning What's Next

Presenter: Dr. Uma Soman , PhD, LSLS Cert AVEEd.

Description: As families and professionals work together to help children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) develop strong communication and academic skills, periodic assessments are essential to plan effective intervention and educational programming. Often “assessments” are considered to be those that give us a standard score once every three years and determine special education eligibility. In this presentation,

Tuesday, January 21st, 2025

**3 PM ET/2 PM CT/ 1 PM MT/12 PM PT
(One hour)**

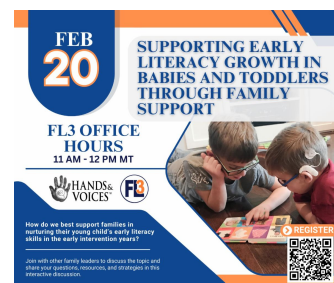
Is Joy My Job?

Presenter: Amy Szarkowski, PhD

Audience: Open to all

Description: Amy Szarkowski will facilitate a discussion on the topic, “Is joy my job?” This is a common question amongst professionals when they learn about the Fostering Joy movement. Professionals may wonder whether “being joyful” is appropriate, particularly when families may be experiencing some challenges. During this discussion, Amy will introduce the Joy Pledge and describe how the pledge was developed - with input from families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) and from DHH leaders – and how the pledge is intended to be a catalyst for professionals to foster joy amongst the families with DHH children. DHH adults and families who receive support from professionals will also benefit from this discussion (it may even provide you with ideas about making the sessions you have with professionals more joyful!).

For more information and to register [click here](#).



H&V FL3 Office Hours:

Thursday, February 20th, 2025

**1 PM ET/Noon CT/11 AM MT/10 AM PT
(One hour)**

Supporting Early Literacy Growth in Babies and Toddlers through Family Support

Presenters: from the HATCH Lab-Idaho State University: Dr. Kristina Blaiser, Director

we will consider how assessments, whether they are standardized or non-standardized, academic or functional, led by the caregiver or the professional, can become tools to reflect on the past, document the present, and plan for the future. We will also consider a variety of assessments that might be applicable to DHH learners with diverse learning profiles. Finally, we will explore the role of caregivers in assessment administration, interpretation, and application to educational programming.

[Click here](#) for a complete description and to register.

[Click here](#) for past webinars.



2025 Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Conference
March 9-11, 2025 • Pittsburgh, PA

[Registration now open.](#)

Early bird pricing ends January 31st.

For everything you need to know [click here.](#)

[Click here](#) for presentations on Monday by Parent Leaders.



Spanish Forums
Hosted by the H&V HQ Latino Council

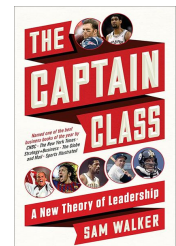
February 18th and May 20th, 2025
8 PM ET/7 PM CT/6 PM MT/5 PM PT
(One hour)

Kat Ross, BA, Parent and Family Support Ambassador, Lesa Coleman, MS, Parent and Family Support Coordinator
Facilitator: Sara Kennedy (H&V HQ)
Audience: Parent & DHH Leaders providing family support, EHDI Program staff, family engagement liaisons.
Description: How do we best support families in nurturing their young child's early literacy skills in the early intervention years? Join with other family leaders to discuss the topic and share your questions, resources, and strategies in this interactive discussion.

For more information and to register [click here.](#) (one person per program please).

Registration is required 48 hours in advance. Auto-captioning will be provided. Please register one week ahead for additional access requests.

H&V Reads:
A Leadership Book Club
Thursday, March 20th, 2024
3 PM ET/2 PM CT/ 1 PM
MT/12 PM PT
(One hour)



The Captain Class:
A New Theory of Leadership
by Sam Walker

Facilitator: Brooke Montgomery (H&V HQ)
The seventeen most dominant teams in sports history had one thing in common: Each employed the same type of captain--a singular leader with an unconventional set of skills and tendencies. Drawing on original interviews with athletes, general managers, coaches, and team-building experts, Sam Walker identifies the seven core qualities of the Captain Class.

[Click here](#) for more information and to register.

The Hands & Voices HQ Latino Council will be hosting two forums presented in Spanish. Topics will cover family engagement and family leadership skills for emerging Spanish speaking families.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the H&V HQ Latino Council.



The 21st Annual Hands & Voices Leadership Conference October 5-7, 2025

Florida Hands & Voices is excited to host the **21st annual Leadership Conference** in Panama City Beach, Florida. More information coming soon.



FL3 Resources to Support EHDI Programs in Evaluating DHH to Family Support in your EHDI System

- **NEW! [DHH Leader to Family Support Self Evaluation Tool](#)**
This self-evaluation tool is designed to help programs in planning, implementing, and evaluating the strength of DHH Leader-to-Family-Support and DHH engagement in their organization or systems.
- **[DHH Guidelines: Guidelines for Deaf And Hard of Hearing Mentor/Guide/ Role Model Programs](#)**
This guide offers suggestions for EHDI systems as to recommended practices in provision of D/HH mentor/guide/role model services to families/children.
- **Coming soon! - Family-to-Family Support Self Evaluation Tool based on [Guidelines for Establishing and Maintaining Family-to-Family Support Programs for Families who Have Children who are D/HH](#)**

Other Items of Interest to Share



**Financial Stress Survey
Survey closes Feb 15.**

[This survey](#) seeks input from families about the effect of financial stress on parents with DHH children. Please share this survey with all

**2025 Family
Leadership in
EHDI Programs
Award
Deadline:
January 24,
2025**



[Nominations are invited](#) for the Family Leadership in EHDI Programs to be presented at the 2025 National EHDI Conference in Pittsburg, PA from March 9-11th. This is the ninth year for this award

families connected to your program or supports.
Information will be shared at EHDI 2025. The survey is only in English at this time.
Questions? [Contact Sara Kennedy](#)



Call for 2025 CMV Public Health and Policy Conference Instructional Session Proposals
Deadline February 4th, 2025

[Click here for more information](#)
Questions? [Email Mandy Jay](#)



**Listen CI Family Camp 2025
Registration Opens
January 24th, 10 AM MT**

Camp Dates

- June 26-29, 2025 for CI Recipients entering 5th Grade – 2025 High School Graduates
- July 24-27, 2025 for CI Recipients Age 3 – Entering 4th Grade

[Click here to register](#)



[Gallaudet Summer Programs](#)

allow middle and high school students to experience stimulating learning and activities in an ASL/English environment minutes from the U.S. Capitol. [Click here](#) to learn about the following programs:

that honors a parent or family member of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) for providing exemplary leadership in their state EHDI system. NCHAM's Family Advisory Committee will review nominations and select the recipient. The award will be announced at the EHDI Conference.



General Accounting Office (GAO) Review of the EHDI Program, released Jan 2, 2025

Family Leaders will want to review the General Accounting Office (GAO) review of the EHDI program. This report describes the EHDI system and successes and challenges reported through a review of the 59 plans, interviews with 6 EHDI programs, the TA Centers (past and present) and parents. This report was mandated in the most recent EHDI legislation. [Click here](#) for full report. A summary is also available in English with a video in ASL.



**[Explore Your
Future \(EYF\)](#)** is
a six-day career
exploration
program at



[Rochester Institute of Technology](#)
for college-bound deaf and hard-of-hearing high school students in grades 10, 11, and 12 as of fall 2025. This program focuses on personal growth and career awareness for students as they begin to think about college.

- Discover College and Careers (DC²)
- DC² in STEM
- Financial Wizards
- GenCyber
- Got Skills?
- Immerse Into ASL
- Campo Listo: ¡Medramos!
- Bison Filmmakers



The Deaf Children's Literacy Project (DCLP) is a guided program to support families with children who are deaf, hard of hearing, and/or have various processing disorders and who may benefit from Cued Speech to achieve age-appropriate language and literacy acquisition.

The DCLP provides resources for developing cueing proficiency to promote language acquisition and literacy at home and in schools, collaborates with state early intervention (EI) agencies and family-based organizations (FBOs), and supports families through individualized mentorship.

Free **NCSA** Membership and DCLP Parent Kits for Families New to **Cueing**.



The American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) is committed to empowering all families with deaf* and hard-of-hearing children and youth by embracing full language and communication access in inclusive environments through mentoring, advocacy, resources,

[Click here](#) for complete details.



Learn with Hearing First

Hearing First is an approved Continuing Education credit provider for:

- American Academy of Audiology (AAA)
- Alexander Graham Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language (AG Bell)
- American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA)

The 2025 course catalog is live! Don't miss the new courses focused on contemporary practice in pediatric audiology and Listening and Spoken Language (LSL).

[Click here](#) for more information.



Gallaudet University Scholarship Opportunities Deadline March 1, 2025

The Regional Early Acquisition of Language (REAL) Project is a partnership between the Clerc Center National Deaf Education at Gallaudet University and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB), united by a shared mission to eliminate language deprivation among young deaf children by 2050.

As part of our dedication to advancing early intervention, we

and collaborative networks. (*ASDC uses the term deaf to be inclusive of various hearing levels and identities within the deaf community.)

[Click here](#) to learn about their resources, including their [ASL Stories Directory](#).

have allocated funds for scholarships to address the critical shortage of professionals specializing in early language acquisition and early childhood education for deaf children.

[Click here](#) for complete details.

***US and US territories specific



A Book Review by Sara Kennedy

She Heard Her Footsteps
By Brenda Schmidt, Author

This first-time author was identified with a moderate hearing difference at age 7 after a missed opportunity earlier with another audiologist. Brenda Schmidt remembers getting her first (then analog) hearing aid and experiencing sounds she had never before encountered. One of the first sounds she recognized was her own footsteps in the suddenly noise-filled outside world. She did not hear the ‘p’ in “ship” in her school spelling test, with predictable results. To this day, she has to remind people that her hearing aids are not “sound correctors” but just imperfect helpers —“aids”, indeed.

Did she feel different? She did. As a little girl, she found solace in reading and found a way to explore and expand her world. She later became a Teacher of the Deaf and an adjunct professor of special education, happy to come full circle, using her knowledge and lived experience to teach teens about self-advocacy in an empathetic way. Wrapping up a long career, she created a children’s picture book to raise awareness for families with newly-identified children. This beautiful picture book, illustrated by artist Jill Stark who is Deaf and uses and teaches in ASL, features Lily, a friendly, lively little girl with big red hair, just like Brenda.

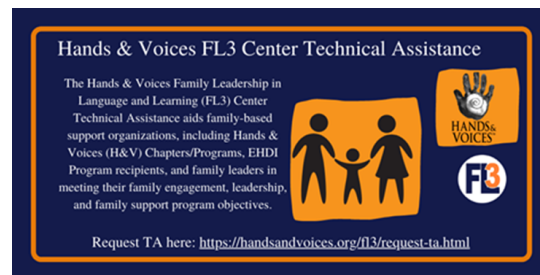
Just like the author, Lily is late-identified in the book. She experiences a cacophony of sounds as she steps outside with her brand-new pink and purple hearing aids. Her family helps her identify the sounds she is experiencing. Sometimes they have to be quiet, focusing on whatever sound caught Lily’s attention. With thought bubbles, the reader sees what each character is thinking in the story; contributing to theory of mind. Between the author’s story, the artist, and inquisitive Lily, this is a lovely book that raises awareness about what it might be like to listen with “sound correctors” and share representation with children. (Also, one just knows that Lily will eventually learn to store her hearing aids more carefully, charging them or in a dry box, to keep them safe from pets and siblings. Like all good picture books, there is more to discuss here than meets the eye.

See the author’s [Instagram page](#) for lesson plans, the book link on Amazon, and more at the QR code below or [click here](#). Brenda Schmidt plans to donate proceeds of her book to a nonprofit supporting families of children who are deaf/hard of hearing. She is writing two more books about Lily in this series.



How to Submit a Request for FL3 Technical Assistance

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



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