



CYSHN Condition Follow-up Community of Practice  
May 13, 2026

# Notice of recording

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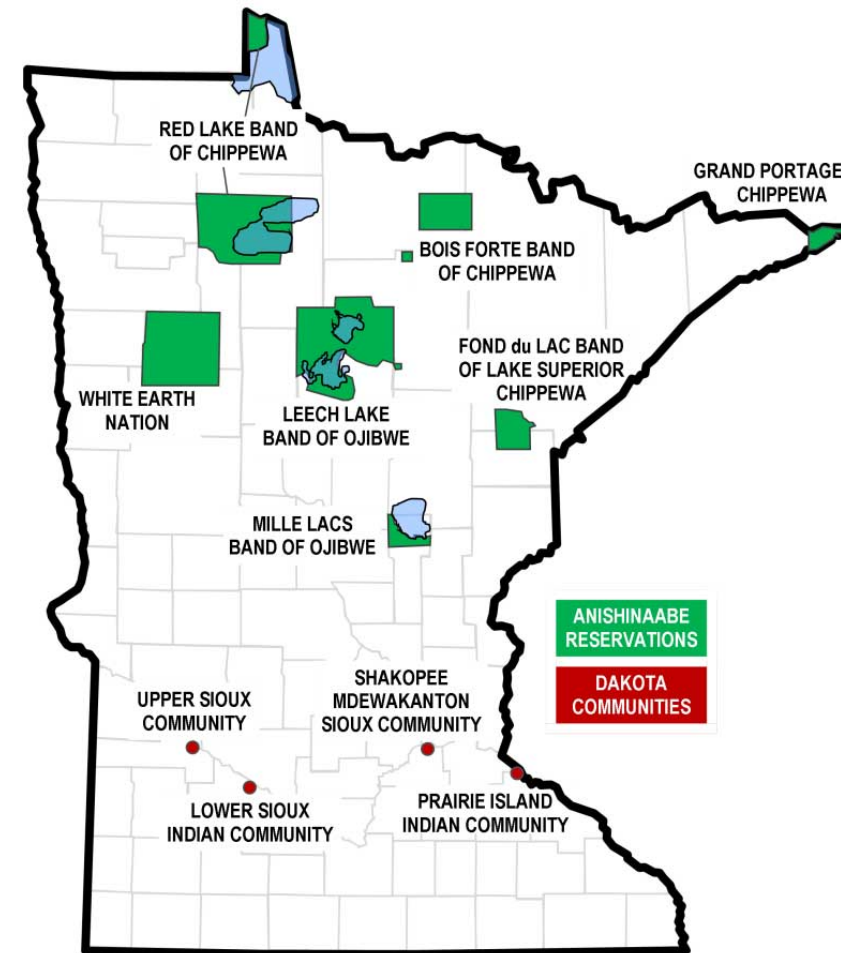
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# Tribal-State relations acknowledgement statement

The State of Minnesota is home to 11 federally recognized Indian Tribes with elected Tribal government officials. The State of Minnesota acknowledges and supports the unique political status of Tribal Nations across Minnesota and their absolute right to existence, self-governance, and self-determination. This unique relationship with federally recognized Indian Tribes is cemented by the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, case law, and agreements. The State of Minnesota and Tribal governments across Minnesota significantly benefit from working together, learning from one another, and partnering where possible.

Minnesota Department of Health recognizes, values, and celebrates the vibrant and unique relationships between the 11 Tribal Nations and the State of Minnesota. Partnerships formed through government-to-government relationships with these Tribes will effectively address health disparities and lead to better health outcomes for all of Minnesota.



# CYSHN respect for identities statement

## Short version

We strive to use language that honors individual preferences, recognizing health conditions and disabilities are a natural and valuable part of human diversity. While our program reflects statutory terms like "special," we remain open to changing our language practices based on community feedback to foster belonging, respect, and inclusivity.

## Long version



[www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/  
cyshn/about.html#respect](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/cyshn/about.html#respect)

# Agenda

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 10:30 - 10:45 a.m. | Welcome and announcements  |
| 10:45 – 11:45 a.m. | Organizations supporting children who are deaf and hard of hearing |
| 11:45 - noon.      | Wrap-up and evaluation   |

Thank you, nurses!



 **The Power  
of Nurses™**

**Celebrate  
National Nurses Week**  
May 6 – 12, 2026

 **American Nurses**  
Association | Credentialing Center | Foundation

# 2026 Workshops

- April 14<sup>th</sup> Metro
- April 27<sup>th</sup> Southeast
- **June 9<sup>th</sup> Northwest**
  - Bemidji City Police Department
- **June 10<sup>th</sup> West Central**
  - Fergus Falls Department of Natural Resources
- **October TBD Northeast**
- **October TBD Southwest**

# Information and resources webpage





Organizations supporting children who are deaf and hard of hearing

# Organizations

Deaf Mentor Family Services

**Emily Smith-Lundberg**

Minnesota Hands & Voices

**Anne Barlow**

Minnesota DeafBlind Project

**Deanna Rothbauer, Brandy Sebera**

Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf  
and Blind

**Terry Wilding**

Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing  
State Services

**Calla Kevan**

Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and  
Hard of Hearing

**Danelle Gournaris**

# Deaf Mentor Family Services

Presentation by Emily Smith-Lundberg, Director



**Lutheran  
Social Service**  
of Minnesota

# Meet a Family You Might Recognize



# The Challenge They Were Facing

- Feeling overwhelmed and uncertain where to begin
- Many questions with limited clear and unbiased guidance.
- Navigating complex systems and early decisions quickly.
- Attempting language learning without support or connection.



# Where Deaf Mentor Family Services Comes In

- DMFS pairs families with trained Deaf Mentors who are deaf or hard of hearing themselves.
- Deaf Mentors with firsthand lived experience who support early language acquisition, grounded in the belief that every child and family deserves access to meaningful communication and supportive, nonjudgemental care.
- This work aligns with Early Intervention and EHDI priorities by supporting timely language access during critical periods of early brain development.



# How Deaf Mentor Sessions Work

## Statewide Coverage

- Deaf Mentors throughout the state work with families in their region
- Typically, 2 years of biweekly sessions in the family's home

## SKI HI Deaf Mentor Curriculum

- Families learn ASL concepts, rules, and grammar
- Early visual communication strategies
- Tips for creating visually accessible environments for deaf and hard of hearing children
- Deaf culture and history



# How Deaf Mentor Sessions Work Cont.



## Learning Beyond the Home

- Sessions in public places: grocery stores, museums, zoos, and parks
- Families see how Deaf Mentors interact with hearing people in everyday settings
- Practice ASL skills in real-world situations – so much incidental learning takes place!

## Community Connection

- Deaf Mentors invite families to events in the deaf community
- Children connect with deaf adults and peers
- Annual DMFS Family Weekend at Camp Knutson
- DMFS ASL Storytime and community events



# How to refer families to DMFS

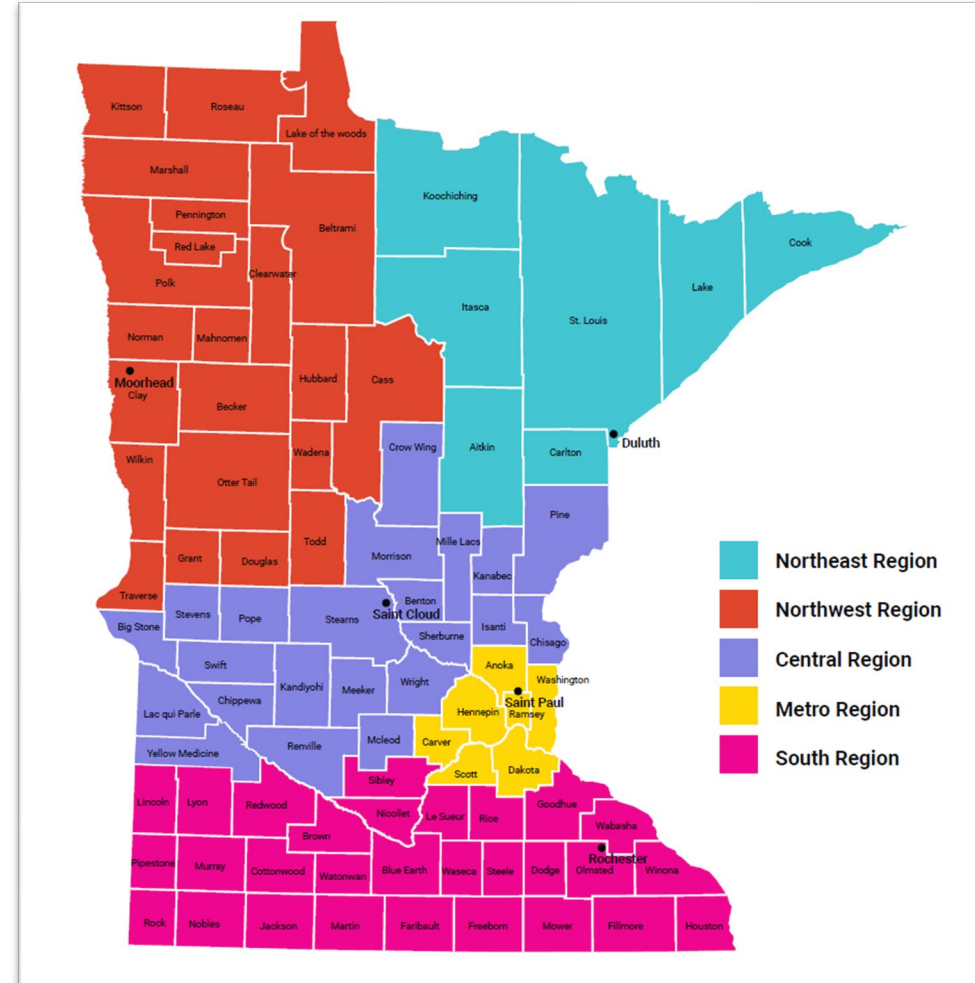
Emily Smith-Lundberg, DMFS

Director

[Emily.Smith-Lundberg@lssmn.org](mailto:Emily.Smith-Lundberg@lssmn.org)

[www.lssmn.org/dmfs](http://www.lssmn.org/dmfs)

Application available in English,  
Spanish, Hmong, and Somali





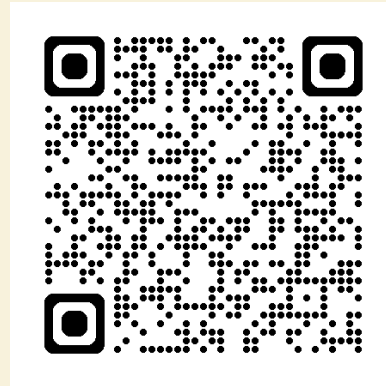
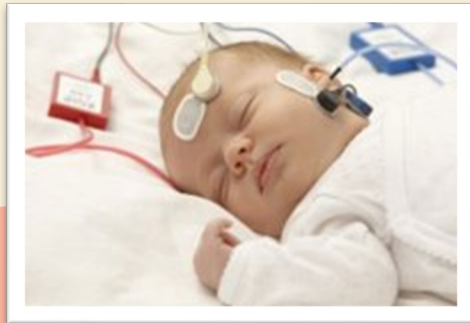
**Lutheran  
Social Service**  
of Minnesota

“What works for your child is what makes the choice right.”

Hands & Voices is a parent-driven organization that supports families with children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology.

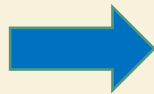


# How do families get to us?

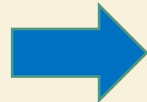


Secure Online  
Referral Form

Hearing  
Difference  
identified



**MDH**

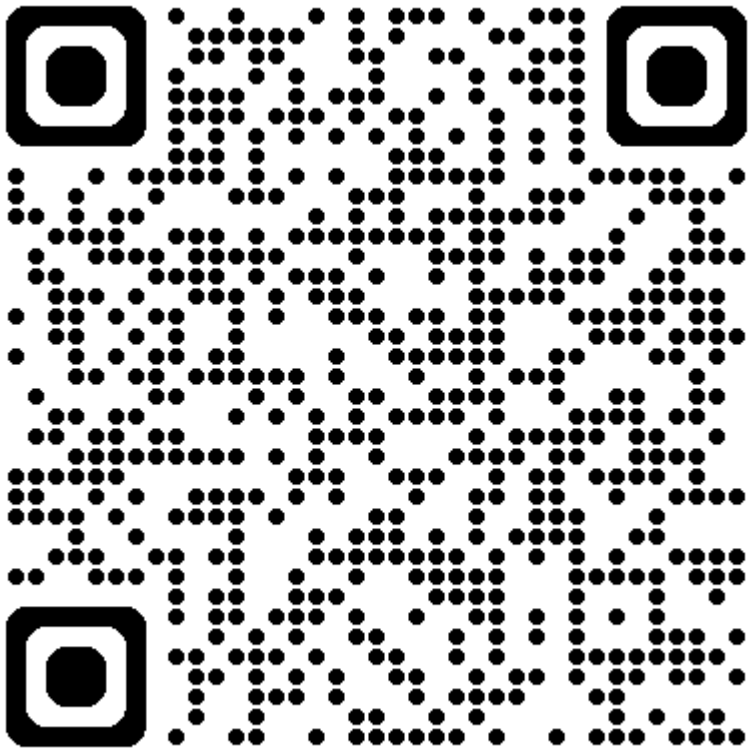


**MNH&V**

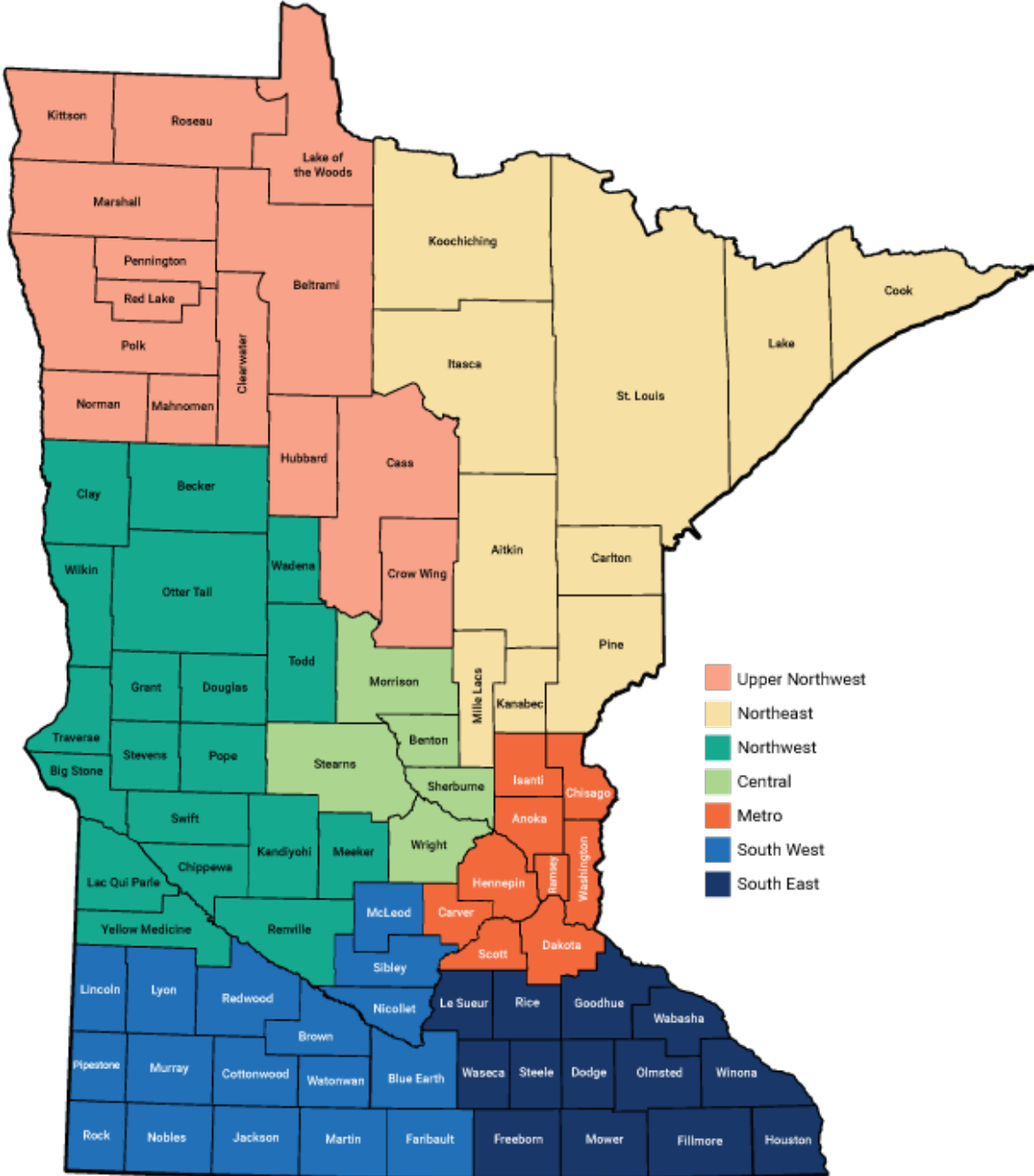
Families,  
Teachers,  
Audiologists,  
etc.



# Parent Guides

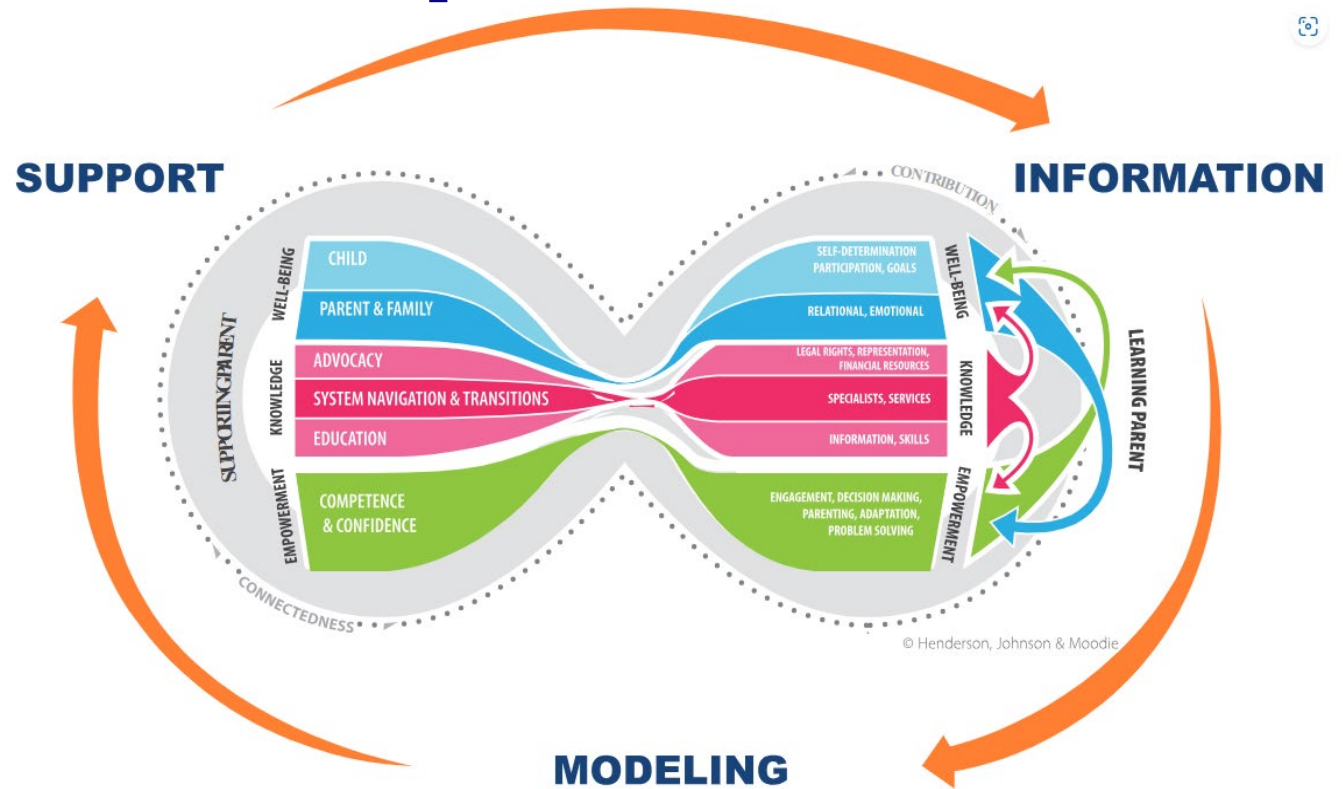


Staff Regions & Bios



# Parent Guides help families. . .

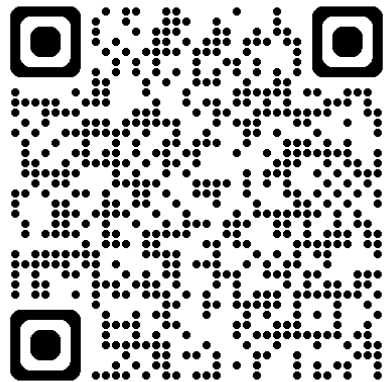
- Reduce feelings of isolation
- Increase understanding of options regarding communication, education, technology
- Build self-advocacy skills
- Learn how to engage, communicate, and work together with child's team of professionals
- Nurture a positive view of child's potential and future



# Deaf and Hard of Hearing Guides



To learn more  
about the Deaf  
and Hard of  
Hearing Guide  
Program

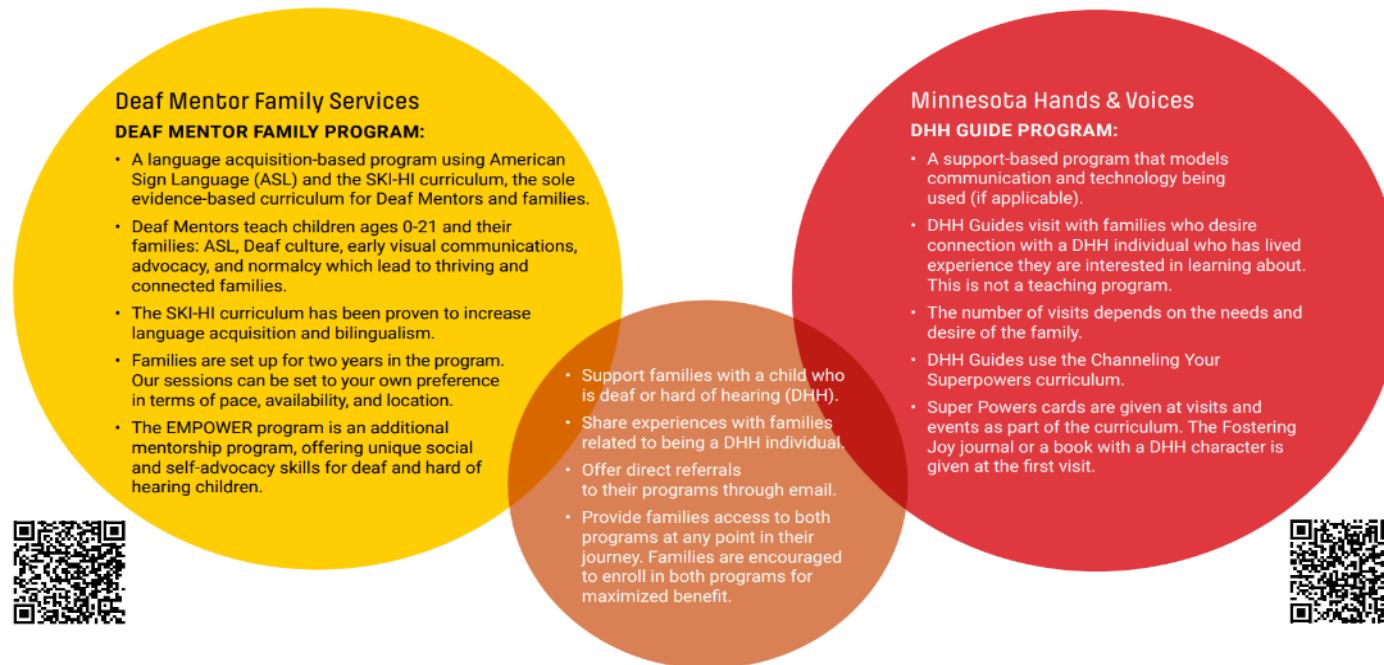


# What are the benefits of meeting a DHH Guide?

- The D/HH guide brings to families a perspective not of loss, but of optimism
- Parents who see D/HH adults as valuable members of their team, begin to understand and see the potential in their child
- To provide exposure to D/HH adults modeling a variety of communication modes and methods
- To increase awareness of and sensitivity to issues experienced by individuals who are D/HH
- To share information through personal experiences
- To create a safe place in which parents can ask questions

# MNH&V and DMFS Venn Diagram

The Similarities & Differences Between  
the LSS Deaf Mentor Family Program & the MNH&V DHH Guide Program



**Emily Smith-Lundberg**  
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◀ FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ▶



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651.529.8854

Deaf Mentor Family Services and Minnesota Hands & Voices are two separate services within Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.



# FOSTERING JOY PROGRAM

## *Fostering Joy*

A movement to celebrate the magic of raising children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Join our interactive community, tap into our resources, share your special moments with your child and celebrate joy!



## *Fostering Joy*

*Celebrate the Journey*

For families with  
Deaf and Hard of  
Hearing Children



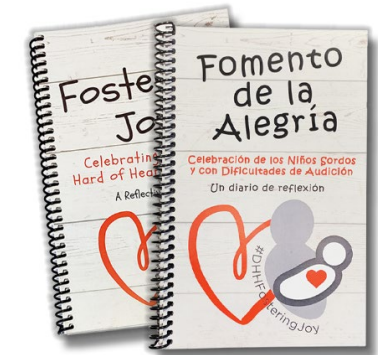
For professionals  
who work with  
Deaf and Hard of  
Hearing Children



<https://handsandvoices.org/resources/fostering-joy.htm>



## Parent's Journal



## Kid's Journal



HANDS &  
VOICES  
MINNESOTA

# ASTra Program and advocates



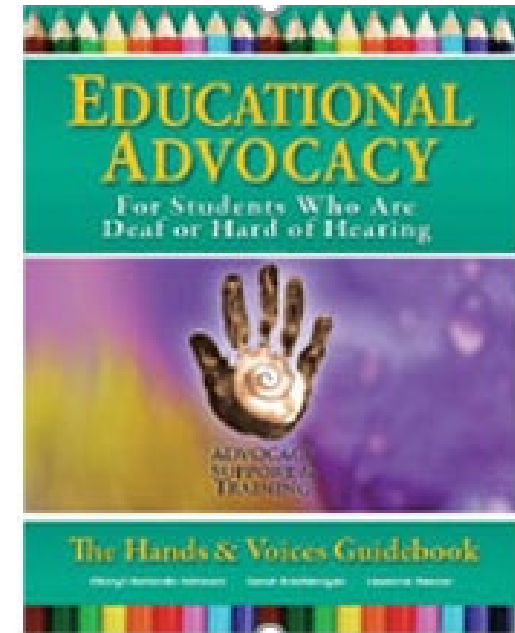
ADVOCACY



SUPPORT



TRAINING



# Educational Advocacy Program Overview

Purpose: To help parents feel empowered by educating them with the basic components of educational advocacy for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

## Activities:

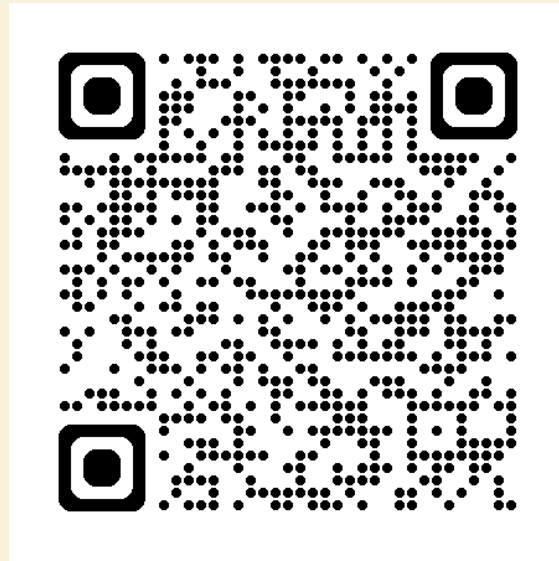
- One on one parent consultations with ASTra advocate for training and coaching.
- Parent supported at IFSP/IEP meetings with an ASTra advocate serving as a notetaker
- Virtual trainings and Q & A Sessions.

# We don't work alone. . .

- Deaf Mentors at LSS (Lutheran Social Services)
- MN Deafblind Project
- MN Commission for Deaf And Hard Of Hearing Minnesotans
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services division of Dept of Human Services (DHHS)
- MN Academies (State school for the Deaf and Blind)
- Metro Deaf School (public charter)
- Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI)
- Public Schools across the state with mainstream programs and DHH Programs
- Pediatric Audiologists
- Public Health Nurses
- MN Association of Deaf Citizens (MADC)
- Plus many more.....

# MN Hands & Voices Website

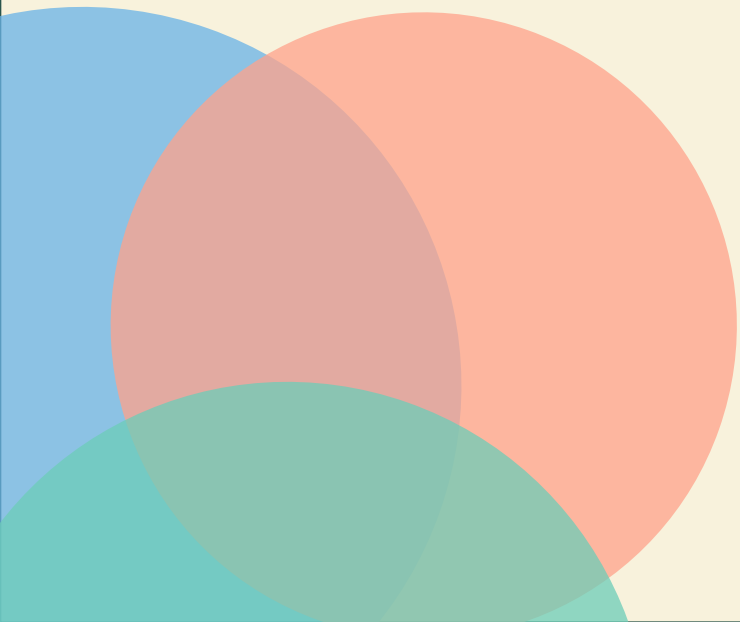
[Deaf and hard of hearing | Minnesota Hands and Voices \(lssmn.org\)](https://lssmn.org)



Thank you!

Anne Barlow – Director

[Anne.Barlow@lssmn.org](mailto:Anne.Barlow@lssmn.org)





# MINNESOTA HANDS & VOICES™

In collaboration with H&V, LSS and MDH



HANDS &  
VOICES™

Hands & Voices Headquarters  
supports H&V chapters across  
the U.S. and Canada.



Lutheran  
Social Service  
of Minnesota

Minnesota Hands & Voices is a  
program of Lutheran Social  
Service of Minnesota.



Minnesota Hands & Voices is  
primarily funded by a grant with the  
Minnesota Department of Health.

# MN DeafBlind Project



Deanna Rothbauer, Co-Director

Brandy Sebera, Family Engagement Coordinator

May 13, 2026



- Understand what combined hearing and vision loss (deafblindness) means
- Understand the services offered by the MN DeafBlind Project and how to help families connect

# What is Deafblindness?

- Combined hearing and vision loss that meets the **eligibility criteria for both deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired special education services.**
- Deafblindness is the **smallest low incidence population, but also the most diverse.** There are varying degrees of vision and hearing loss and capabilities among each student who is DeafBlind.



# An Overview of DeafBlindness Fact Sheet



## AN OVERVIEW OF DEAFBLINDNESS

### What is deafblindness?

- **Deafblindness is a unique disability.** A child who is deafblind has a combination of hearing and vision loss where those senses are reduced, distorted, or missing entirely.
- **Most children who are deafblind have some usable vision and/or hearing.** Some are profoundly deaf and totally blind.
- **Deafblindness varies from person to person** based on things like the cause, level of hearing and vision loss, and additional disabilities.
- **Although no two children who are deafblind are alike, many share similar needs.** They may need help from others to understand their world, communicate, and build social relationships.



# Some Etiologies of Deafblindness

## 1. Complications of Prematurity

## 2. Hereditary/Chromosomal Syndromes

- CHARGE
- Usher
- Down
- Stickler
- Dandy Walker
- Goldenhar
- Cornelia de Lange



# Some Etiologies of Deafblindness, cont.

## 3. Congenital Prenatal Causes

- Cytomegalovirus (cCMV)
- Hydrocephalus
- Microcephaly
- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Congenital Rubella

## 4. Postnatal Causes

- Asphyxia
- Head injury/trauma
- Meningitis



# Hearing Differences

Newborn hearing screening

If the family mentions any of these hearing concerns or behaviors:

- Does not startle at loud noises or turn towards sound
- Does not babble, has delayed or unclear speech
- Seems to hear some sounds but not others
- Recurring ear infections



[MDE Hearing Loss Referral Quick Card](#)

[MDE DeafBlind Referral Quick Card](#)

# Get Their Vision Tested, Too!

If the family mentions any of these vision concerns or visual behaviors:

- Far-away look in eyes
- Cloudy or milky appearance of eyes
- Jerky or wiggling eyes
- Squinting, excessive blinking, eye-watering, light sensitivity
- Unequal pupil size

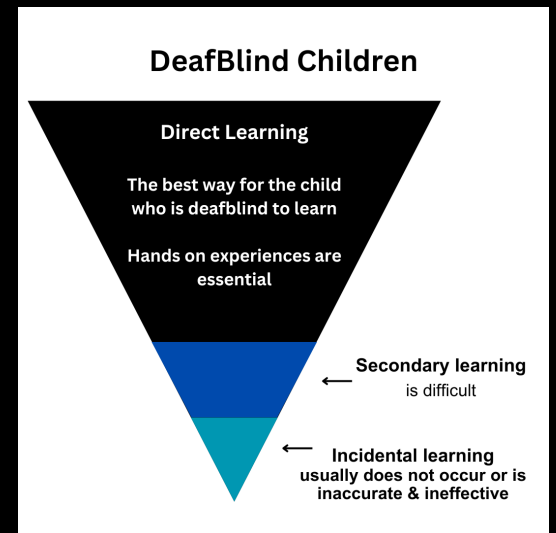
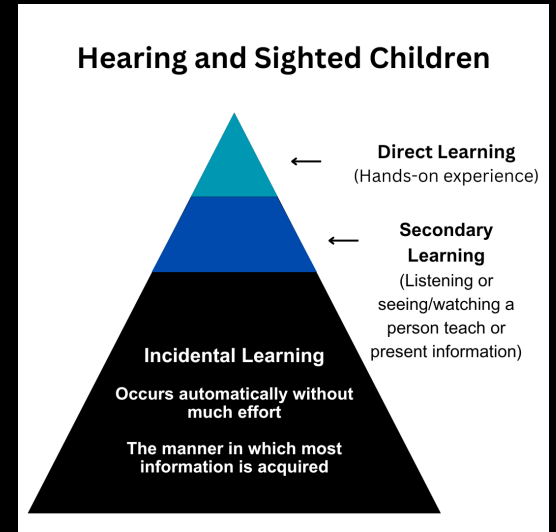


[MDE Vision Referral  
Quick Card](#)

[MDE DeafBlind Referral  
Quick Card](#)

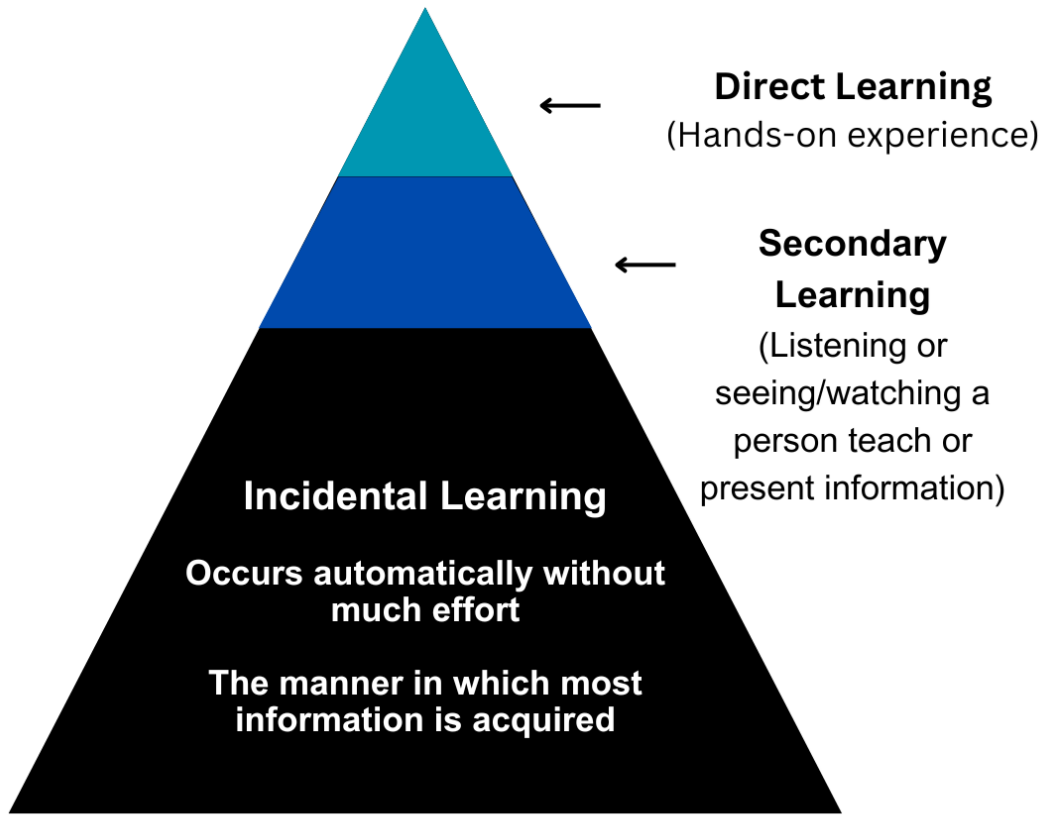
# Gathering Information and Incidental Learning

- Deaf or hard of hearing people **can use sight** to help compensate for what they do not hear.
- Blind or low vision people **can use hearing** to help compensate for what they cannot see.
- DeafBlind people, even those with a “mild hearing loss” and low vision, are **unable to completely and efficiently fill in the blanks** with residual hearing and vision which impacts their **access to communication, the environment and social relationships.**

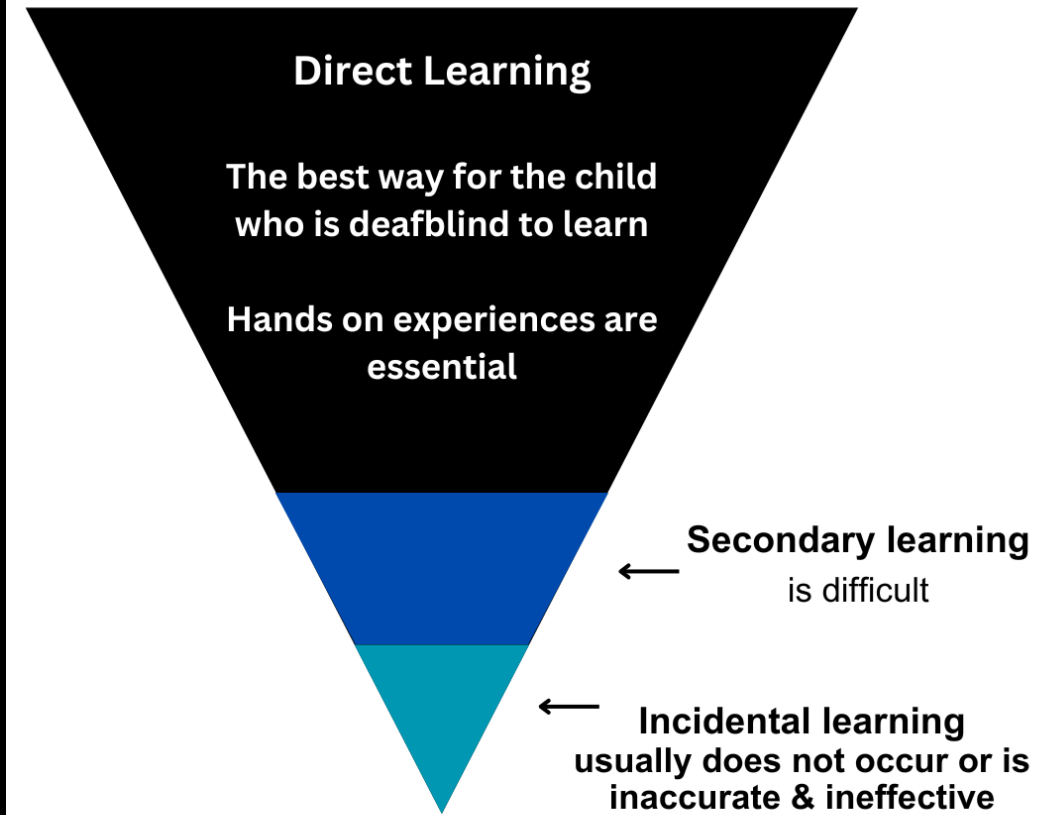


# Deafblindness is a Disability of Access

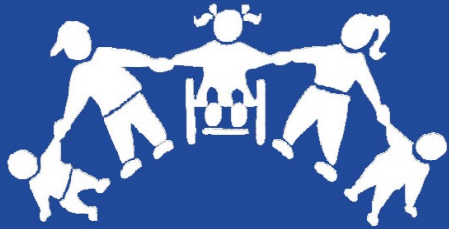
## Hearing and Sighted Children



## DeafBlind Children



# MN DeafBlind Project website



**Minnesota  
DeafBlind  
Project**

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The Minnesota DeafBlind Project is funded by a grant from the federal government to provide technical assistance (family support, resource sharing, workshops, webinars, etc.) to **both** the families and school teams of children and youth who have a combined hearing and vision loss, birth up to age 22.

# Family Support

- One-on-one calls, meetings, texts
- Host family events
- Connect families with other families
- Family Learning Community (virtual)
- Resource sharing



# How to Help Families Connect

Share the MN DeafBlind Project link to [register their child](#).

Brandy Sebera, Family Engagement Coordinator

[Brandy.Sebera@brightworksmn.org](mailto:Brandy.Sebera@brightworksmn.org)

612-638-1505



# Contact Us

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# Question and answer





# **Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and the Blind**

May 2026

The Minnesota State Academies empowers every student to achieve, care, and thrive in an ever-changing world.





# Who We Are

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- State Agency under the Executive Branch
- Two academies (MSAB and MSAD) serving deaf, hard-of-hearing, deafblind, blind, and visually impaired students.
- Established in 1858, we are among the oldest public schools in Minnesota.





## Who We Serve

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- We provide a broad range of educational services from infancy up to age 22
- Our students come from across the state (50-60 school districts on average)
- We provide numerous services and supports for parents, families, and school districts throughout the year.
- 40% of our students are residential students while the remaining 60% commute daily.



# MSAD Instructional Programs

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MSAD provides instruction for students from birth through 22 years of age, including our Academy Plus (A+) transition program.

Emphasis is placed on bilingual education with the goal of having all students fluent in ASL and English as well as meeting state standards in all content areas.

MSAD also collaborates with Faribault Public Schools to enhance our students' educational opportunities and improve their communication/self advocacy skills in the community.

MSAD provides PSEO options and dual credit programs for students desiring to earn college credits in high school.



# MSA Services

All of our students meet special education criteria and have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs). In addition to being deaf, hard-of-hearing, deafblind, blind or visually impaired, many of our students also have additional learning needs or other challenges.

Our teachers are licensed by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). Our staff are professionals who have additional training and skills necessary to serve our student population.



**MINNESOTA  
STATE ACADEMIES**  
FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

We provide a wealth of resources, educational tools and strategies, and trained/knowledgeable personnel that are available to support students, parents, families, and school districts statewide.

Our Residential Option provides opportunities for social/emotional development, self-advocacy, and independent living skills as well as extending learning beyond the classroom walls.



# Student Support Services

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MSA has numerous support services for students on both campuses to assist them in reaching their goals (transition, academics, language skills, social/emotional skills, etc.)

Some examples include:

- Speech Language Services
- Physical/Occupational Therapy
- Orientation and Mobility
- Counseling/Social Work
- DeafBlind Interveners/Services
- Personal Care Attendant Services
- Audiological Evaluations and Services
- Comprehensive Evaluations
- Individual/Family Therapy (VONA)



# Early Intervention Supports

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We start working with families as early as possible. When families contact us, we support the development of their IFSPs/IEPs and provide a variety of services to the student and their families. We provide home visits, speech/language support, on-site parent activities, ASL classes, and other services that the child may need.

When the child becomes older, we start providing on-site classes and activities. This includes part-time/full-time participation in classes at MSAD. We also provide literacy nights and other interactive activities for parents/families to participate alongside their child. (e.g., trips to the zoo, apple orchard, etc.)



# Early Childhood Education

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In our Early Childhood Education (ECE) department, we provide different levels of instruction and class structures.

Birth-Age 2: Home visits, ASL classes, home-based services, Parent/Child activities

Toddler class (age 2): 1/2 day class available (services listed above still available to families). Parents can opt to send their child to school for 1/2 days, Mondays-Thursdays.

Preschool (age 3): 1/2 day class, Mondays-Thursdays. Transition to IEPs happens at this age and decisions about services are refined.



# Early Childhood Education (continued)

Pre-Kindergarten (age 4): Transition to a full day/Mondays thru Friday schedule.

Kindergarten (age 5): Continue a full day/full week schedule. Additional eligibility for after school programming if desired.

Notes:

Activities for younger children are play-based and planned with the intent of maximizing the students' language development. Each class has a full-time D/HH teacher with a paraprofessional. Individual support systems are designed by the IFSP/IEP team.



# Outreach Services

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## DHH Family Learning Event

- 2 days at the start of the summer
- Free to families
- Workshops provide by DHH professionals

## Family ASL Classes

- Free Yearlong Courses
- Beginning/Home ASL
- Conversational ASL

## ASL Literacy Night

- Monthly September through April
- How to promote literacy with your Deaf child
- Practice ASL skills
- Free and open to the public

## Minnesota Resource Library

- Deaf and HOH-centric materials
- Free to borrow; return postage





# Stronger Together: The Power of Collaboration

Danelle Gournaris, Collaborative Plan Program Director

May 13, 2026



# Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing

- Overseen by a governor-appointed board
- Develop public policy solutions to barriers faced
  - Education
  - Healthcare
  - Technology
  - Access to public services
  - Employment

<https://mn.gov/deaf-commission/>



# About the Collaborative Plan

*The Collaborative Plan is a network of agencies, schools, and organizations that work together to create positive, systemic changes to achieve better education, language, and career outcomes for students who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing. (birth to Age 22)*

<https://mn.gov/deaf-commission/advocacy-issues/education/collaborative-plan/>



# Improve Education Data Collection

- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) all collect data about the resources and services for the children, youth, and young adults that they serve.
- “Better decisions require better information” – National Center for Education Statistics

# Collaborative Plan Partners and Stakeholders

Minnesota Hands and Voices  
Pacer  
Deaf Mentor Family Services

Minnesota DeafBlind Projects

Deaf Schools & Programs  
MSAD  
MDS  
Northern Voices  
Public School Districts

Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of  
Hearing (DDBHH) community  
organizations

Minn. Dept. of Education

- Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI Low Incidence)
- Part C & Part B

Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DHH)  
teachers  
Regional Low Incidence  
Facilitators

DHH teacher preparatory  
program,  
University of Minnesota

Minnesota Department of  
Employment and Economic  
Development, VR  
State Services for the Blind,  
DEED

Minn. Dept. of Health – EHDI

Minn. Dept. of Human Services  
– Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of  
Hearing State Services

- Children's mental health  
service agencies:
- Volunteers of America  
Minnesota and Wisconsin
  - Therapeutic Service Agency

# Collaborative Workgroups

- Birth-Age 5
- K-4 Grade
- 5-8 Grade
- Transition (Age 14-22)
- DeafBlind Children & Youth
- Sub-committee workgroup

<https://mn.gov/deaf-commission/advocacy-issues/education/resources/>



# Thank You!

**Danelle Gournaris, Collaborative Plan Program Director**

[Danelle.Gournaris@state.mn.us](mailto:Danelle.Gournaris@state.mn.us)

# Local Public Health and Early Hearing Detection and Intervention 2025 Learning Community

Darcia Dierking, AuD | EHDI Co-Coordinator

- MDH is the recipient of a Strengthening Early Hearing Detection and Intervention State/Territory grant from HRSA.
- LPH & EHDI Learning Community Project Goals:
  - **Quality Improvement (QI) focused on the topic of Language Acquisition.**
  - **Leverage existing public health infrastructure and explore the role of local public health (LPH) in promoting language acquisition resources after their initial nursing assessments at the time of diagnosis/identification up until age three.**
  - **Explore resources to offer families that are more relevant to children after the newborn period.**
- Target Population: LPH attempted to contact around 40 children who were DHH who were 13-30 months old during the Learning Community (January-March 2025).
- Seven LPH agencies participated.

# Language Acquisition Information

- MDH EHDI partnered with MN Low Incidence Projects to provide a webinar for participating LPH agencies about the importance of Language Acquisition in EHDI.

- Key messages:

*“ACCESS to language is key. Young children’s brains can’t learn to understand and use any language without access to it!”*

*“Children identified early and enrolled in Early Intervention have demonstrated higher language scores.”*

- Resources: Language-related questions and website resources were provided for LPH to ask/share with families during calls.

# Project outcomes

## LPH EHDI community of learning met 3 times

### Individual LPH share-outs:

- Information that parents really wanted during calls.
- Questions/prompts that worked well with families.
- Ideas/best practices when working and building relationships with school districts.
- Customizable call sheet to use with families.

### Next steps/actions

- Call sheet was helpful for family interviews, can be customized further and used for all EHDI families.
- If capacity and funding allows, additional calls to families to talk about language acquisition after the newborn period can be helpful, especially for families who are not already enrolled in early intervention.

# Additional resources: call sheet, website, and videos

Pre-call case review (ex. previous call notes)

Early intervention

Language Acquisition

Summary of discussion

Key Questions for a parent

Key Questions for an intervention

Customizable Call Sheet  
(Word document)

Email MDH EHD  
[ehdi@state.mn.us](mailto:ehdi@state.mn.us)

5/14/2026

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

SEARCH

TOPIC MENU

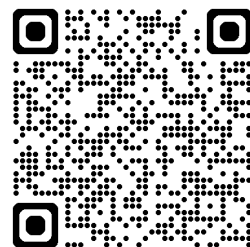
CONTACT INFO

EARLY HEARING DETECTION AND INTERVENTION  
Resources for Families

Navigating the EHD system

The resources included on this page are intended for Minnesota parents, families, and caregivers as they navigate newborn hearing screening, the follow-up process, and planning to support a child who is identified as deaf or hard of hearing (DHH).

MDH ImproveEHD website  
[Health.mn.gov/ImproveEHD](https://health.mn.gov/ImproveEHD)



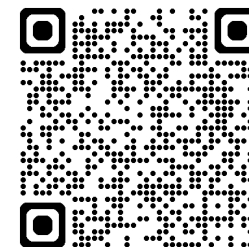
health.state.mn.us

Newborn Hearing Screening and Follow-up: Under 1:36

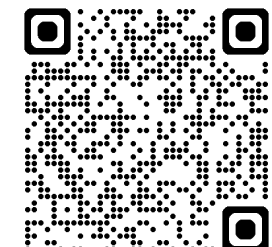
From a US state public health authority

Watch on YouTube

[EHD 1-3-6 Goals](#)  
(YouTube)

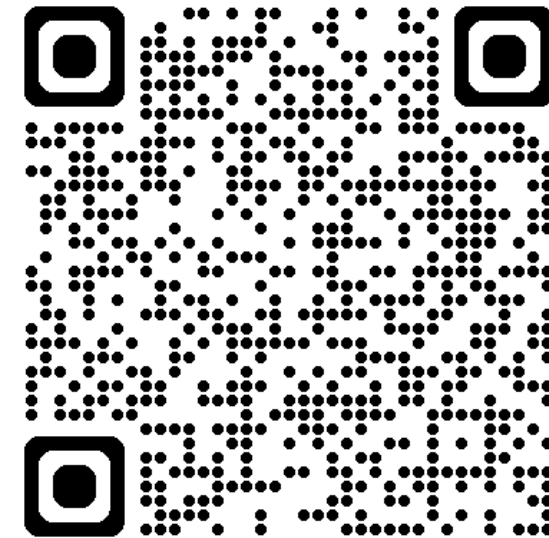


[Supporting Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children Early](#)  
(YouTube)



70

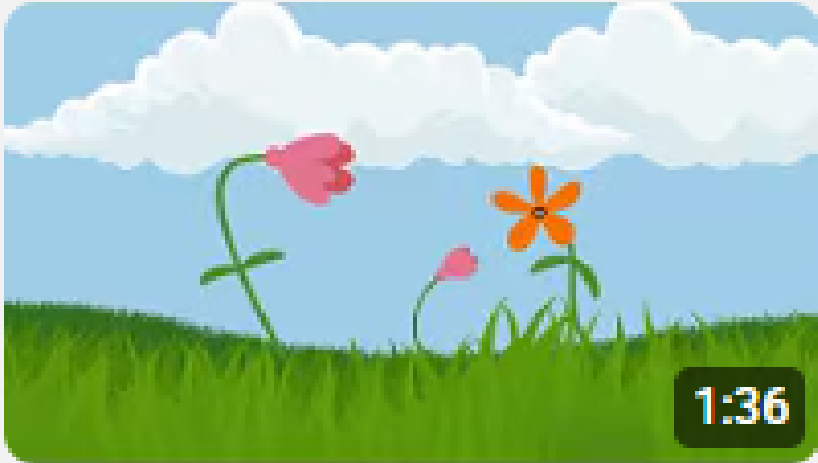
# Newborn Hearing Screening and Follow-up: Understanding the 1-3-6 Goals (YouTube)



[EHDl 1-3-6 Goals](#)

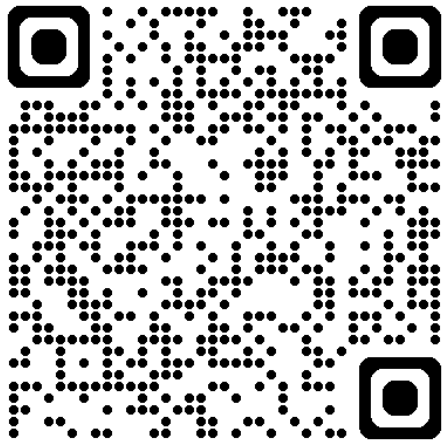
Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDl) guides providers on how to support infants who are deaf and hard of hearing. In this video, learn about the EHDl system of care and the importance of the EHDl 1-3-6 goals for infants who are deaf and hard of hearing.

# Supporting Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children Early (YouTube)



## Supporting Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children Early

mnhealth • 123 views • 5 months ago



### [Supporting Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children Early](#)

Early intervention can make a big difference for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. In this video, learn how Help Me Grow supports young children and their families—and why getting support early matters.



# Highlights, accomplishments, and kudos!

In the chat, please add a key takeaway  
from today or a celebration you  
would like to share.

# Evaluation

# Thank You!

*The next community of practice will be Wednesday July 22<sup>nd</sup>*

*9-10:30 am*

*health.cyshn@state.mn.us*