
How to Find Your Way:
NH's service system for children who are deaf and hard of hearing

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The purpose of this project was to create a family resource mapping the NH service system of care for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH). This project involved collaboration between NH Special Medical Services and the New Hampshire-Maine Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (NH-ME LEND) Program. Special Medical Services (SMS) is the New Hampshire Title V Program for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHN). This program supports a variety of services for children 0-21 who either have or are at risk for chronic medical conditions, disabilities, or special health care needs in addition to identifying and addressing needs for these children and their families.

The NH-ME LEND Program is a professional training program comprised of individuals from various professional and community backgrounds that engages trainees in a variety of clinical and educational activities that promote interdisciplinary, family-centered, culturally competent systems of care for youth with developmental disabilities and their families.

This project was identified following significant changes in the system of care for children who are D/HH ages 0-3. In response to these changes, the NH Family Centered Early Supports and Services (FCESS) program identified the need to create a “map” of the service system in NH for families with children who are D/HH.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project involved exploring the roles of and partnership between programs including the NH Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program (EHDI), Family Centered Early Support and Services (FCESS) – Part C, the NH Department of Education, and *Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Inc.* (NDHHS) to create a resource for families. This work aimed to utilize knowledge of systems level collaboration between stakeholders to create a roadmap outlining the system of care for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This roadmap aims to 1) directly outline the processes of each of the above programs 2) identify specific information pertaining to the transition links between programs and 3) provide resources for additional information families can access.

PROCESS

This project required engagement through in-person meetings and ongoing communication with stakeholders including members of the aforementioned programs, family members of the D/HH community, and members of community organizations. To ensure this resource would serve its purpose of providing families with an accessible overview and means of obtaining further information about the NH service system for children who are D/HH, the drafted resource was brought to the NH Hands and Voices Conference: *Navigating Through the Education System: Considerations for Parents and Professionals of Children who are Deaf & Hard of Hearing* where families and professionals contributed invaluable feedback to the resource's finalization. Once finalized, the resource was distributed to stakeholders of the aforementioned programs. The following professionals were key stakeholders to be recognized in development of the resource from preliminary stages through finalization:

- Elizabeth Collins - *Administrator/ CYSHCN Director, Special Medical Services*
- Kerry Wiley - *Part C Coordinator - FCESS*
- Courtney Keane - *Program Coordinator EHDI*
- Ruth Littlefield - *Part B Coordinator - Preschool Special Education*
- Mary Lane - *Special Education Consultant - DOE*
- Susan Wolf-Downes - *Executive Director - NDHHS*
- Kevin Bohlin - *Project Coordinator - New Hampshire Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education Initiative*
- Dawn Zimmerman - *M.S. CCC - SLP - Director of Clinical Education UNH*
- Mary Jane Sullivan - *Au.D CCC-A NH EHDI Consulting Audiologist*
- Rae Sonnenmeier - *PhD - NH-ME LEND Program Leadership Mentor*

OUTCOMES

The final resource was completed on May 24, 2017 and distributed to the aforementioned stakeholders for distribution to families, on an individual basis and via program websites as desired. The resource was additionally distributed to the NH Hands and Voices Provisional Chapter, a parent-driven nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting families and children who are D/HH. The final resource titled **How to Find Your Way: NH's service system for children who are deaf and hard of hearing** is accessible for viewing on the NH Department of Health and Human Services Website.



Alyssa Cloutier M.S.
NH-ME LEND Trainee