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HEATHROW AB – SESSION 4

THE ROAD TO KINDERGARTEN READINESS: HOW TO DO IT

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>> MARLA HATRAK: I know we're supposed to start around 10:15. I want to make sure everybody has an opportunity to get the last things you need before we get started. We have four minutes before we'll get started.

So my background here, I am now currently working on my Ph.D. Educational Policy Leadership and Management is my degree. I'm in the middle of it, so I probably shouldn't be here. If my chair knew I was here, she might have something to say about that.

Before that, I did get my Master's Degree ‑‑ come on in. My Master's Degree is in Early Childhood Education with a Specialty in Public Policy and Advocacy. And I received that several years ago, two to four years ago. I was busy raising children, two deaf children, 25 and 27 years old and my daughter who graduated her senior year ‑‑ then I began my Master's. So it was a little late but here I am and I'm here to share.

I'm from Southern California. San Diego. It's cold there, just so you know. The people there are complaining because it's 60 degrees. But really, that's cold for San Diego. I grew up in Indiana. My husband is from Chicago. And people will say to me, “You both like Chicago?” Well, we're better equipped here. We have our hats, gloves, boots, our nice thick coats on. At home we don't wear things like that. But when it gets cold, we're like, we don't have the gear to prep for the weather.

So Laura Peterson is also here. Her name was not on the program but her and I have co‑chaired the language policy report. And we'll get an opportunity to talk about that a little later.

I know our time is limited. But I would like to give a presentation where it's interactive. If something isn't clear, if you have a question, please feel free to raise your hand. I know that our time is limited but I think what we have here is pretty easy to understand and follow without me here. But I'm here to vamp.

Ok. It's 10:15, so we'll get started.

So The Road to Kindergarten‑Readiness: How to Do It. In California, we have K‑12 academic, reading, arithmetic scores. Part of my Master's -- one of the steps in that process is to create a policy report. So this is a result of that Stepstone project that I worked on. The report here is available on our website, the California Association of the Deaf website. And I do need to apologize. I don't have citations listed for any of those slides. However, all of the citations are published in the report.

And this report includes parents, Deaf community, Deaf educators, professionals. There's a total of 15 people that were a part of this report. And the reason for the language policy development is because we had to identify the problem before we could create a solution going forward. And that was one of the reasons.

One of the concerns was K‑12 D/HH programming. We have 17,000 D/HH students in the State of California from Riverside to Fremont. So there were a rather large mainstream program, probably 500. So where's the rest of the students, the rest of the 1,500 students? We didn't know where they were. So we had this huge concern with Deaf and Hard Of Hearing services. So that program has issues as well but that was one of our major concerns.

In 2007 at the end of the year, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing score was not desegregated. So we didn't have scores until 2007, until the legislature said you have to identify those scores. So there was only 8% of deaf and 15% of hard of hearing, those students were at language grade level. And we're not saying 80%. We're saying 8%.

So students seem to be really good at that. But they didn't do well ‑‑ we thought they were going do well but it turned out they were not. So a lot of them were proficient ‑‑ were not. And some of them had a score that we expected ‑‑ I'm sorry. I had the wrong years. 2019, there are still no scores. So the state regulators have mandated an SB 210, said going from 2005 forward we will have access to scores from K‑12.

So some of you are aware that the Language Depravation Syndrome, it's a huge issue and why those students struggle. In California, for example, if we spend millions of dollars on K‑12 education, they will continue to fail. The scores will continue to lag. Because, at 0‑5 there was no language. So we had to stop the cycle, take a step back.

[Laughter]

Thank you for your concern. I'm so used to moving around. Thank you for your concern. I stepped back and I moved over, if you noticed.

People say K‑12, that's the concern. And we are aware. We get it. We understand the need to pay attention to those kids but we can't fix it because we have 0‑5 issues. We have to start earlier.

Gladdie, a professor from Harvard, had a hearing loss. And he noticed ‑‑ he was working with adolescents in mental health centers and noticed that they didn't have mental health issues but they were frustrated with communication so they were labeled as LDS. But interestingly enough, LDS, language deprivation, was identified in the books in, like, the 1800s. We were like, we have to study this deprivation because it began ‑‑ we've known about it for many, many years. So Gladdie said medically and educational professionals have only made the problem more severe. The Education Department have not kept scores. And that's basically on Special-Ed.

I know I'm going very fast. I'm ‑‑ I'm trying to slow down. I will try.

I really want to thank our presenters prior to this presentation. It was really a nice start. So now we're ready for a dialogue about at birth and children and babies. So without that, we know when babies are born they try speech first and it doesn't work. And so we're saying we need to try something different. California Department of Education has data. And only 9% of Deaf students in the State of California, out of 17,000, do the math -- after the workshop you can calculate the numbers. But only 9% use ASL. So 0‑5 and then from 5‑12, K‑12. So we all know about mainstreaming and those numbers.

The Executive Summary, that is something that we really need to break through that myth. Speech and hearing does not equal language. Communication does not equal language. You have to think language is different than ‑‑ communication is a goal of language but language is a very dynamic, multi‑facetted, difficult concept for many people to understand.

So we started to understand and realize the difference between language and communication. There is not enough full‑time language access for deaf and hard of hearing children. Children are implanted and have hearing aids and that's fine. But further down the road when you pass a critical period of language deprivation, they are behind. And that just continues to go on and on and on. And so we talk about all the problems that they have. We have to stop talking about the problems and take a step back, put the brakes on, and focus on 0‑5.

So intervention services from 0‑5, we have to focus on deaf children. They usually focus on that. But, you know, other than hearing, they have eyes, other means to access language. So when I see this happening, I thought, wait a minute. I – Heidi -- I'm sorry, I missed your last name. I went to her workshop yesterday and it was fabulous. We started ‑‑ we're starting to talk about eye gaze. Hearing babies are required to develop eye gaze. Right? And they're telling deaf babies, they shouldn't? They should only be doing auditory listening?

Well, the word no is powerful. My mother, she would never say no. She would always say, sure, let's see if that might work. And really, when you say no, when you say no to deaf babies for visual access, it's incredible. It's a powerful statement. I'm talking some really harsh things here but these children suffer the consequences so we have not been truthful. We have not faced the reality. It's time to do that.

Parents and families ‑‑ I mean, I feel for them, I really do. I understand families just follow the system. But they need to be told the difference between language and speech. And then parents, they have a good intuition. They know when the child is 3 or 4 and they are not talking or maybe they act differently than their other siblings and they're talking, the siblings are and your child is not. So they go to a hearing professional and they say, oh, that's normal. They're doing much better than other deaf children. And when they say that to me, I lose it. I say -- when they say that's normal, this new phenomenon called hearing age, I'm like., What? These people come up with these different reasons on why babies are not being exposed to ASL. Our brain doesn't recognize hearing age. Our brain recognizes language. And that's it.

Learning English, probably the last four or five years -- there's a really beautiful paper that was written and they said people that are proficient at English, if you go back and you look at why, they're proficient in ASL. So they work hand in hand. If you give them ASL, provide them ASL, their English is going to pick up. They have to be proficient in ASL in order to acquire good English. So if they're proficient in English and ASL, that will help, yes. But to have just one language, you have to be proficient in at least one language.

So all of that, what I've been discussing -- I know it's a little emotional. I just have to take a breath myself. But the reason for language policy, this report, provided to the CS ‑‑ California Association of the Deaf, and with parents we created this report. In 1964 up until 2016, four major policy reports ‑‑ this is the State of California. But you can apply it to other states. Some of you may be aware that in 1964 the Babbage Report, and following in `88, the Commission of the Education of the Deaf Report and the next two, California, but obviously the concern was there about Deaf Education K‑12 in California. 1989, the California Department of Education, the President's Report, Superintendent's Report ‑‑ Sherry is here. She was co‑chair of that report at that time. She was chair not co‑chair. He was chair. And Sherry has been working ever since 1989 and still working and progressing in this. In 2016 -- you can see what was written in the report. Take a look at it. It's really an interesting read. I recommend it.

In 1964, Babbage Report says ‑‑ you can read it here. This is 1964. We're saying the exact same thing ‑‑ I'm sorry. Can you read it from the back? Do you want me to read it?

“The American people have no reason to be satisfied with their limited success in educating Deaf children and preparing them for full participation in our society.” This is 1964, first quote.

The second quote is the 0‑5 ‑‑ without 0‑5. How come we didn't talk about what happened in `64? Ok, these are both from`64 and we need to really focus in on that. Why wasn't attention given to this?

In 88, the COED report, and our Deaf Chair, Patricia Johnson. “The present status of education for persons who are deaf in the United States is unsatisfactory and unacceptably so.”

The second one says, “Do we have at hand the knowledge it would take to improve the situation significantly even dramatically? The answer is a resounding yes.”

The third one, “The inclination in Deaf Education of persons who are deaf have been one of reaction rather than action of remediation and not prevention.”

The fourth one, “But in all honesty, we must point out that the actual implementation of these initiatives have been inadequate and sometimes misguided and that progress at best has been spotty and sporadic.”

So, 1989, this is California COED Report ‑‑ CED – “Communication and educational growth depend on a language-rich environment.”

You know, it's 2019 and we're still talking and discussing ASL and spoken English. We're still trying to get through all of that. Our previous presentation had the right idea. Let's use both languages. “Communication and educational growth depend on a language‑rich environment, one with ongoing, direct, and age‑appropriate language opportunities.” That makes my heart melt.

“If you know the story behind all of this, it's tragic. There's tragic stories in the community. We take for granted that hearing children will be in such an environment. Too often the deaf and hard of hearing child sits alone in a classroom unable to communicate effectively with peers and teachers.”

So at Riverside and Fremont, the Schools for the Deaf, we have larger regional programs. So that's like 500 students but what about the rest of the 1,500 students? In `89 we talked about all of this. It's already been discussed. It's unbelievable.

The last one, “The unique and historic difficulties faced by deaf and hard of hearing children have been analyzed in detail and recommendations have been made by national and state Blue Ribbon committees, task forces, commissions, study groups. Unfortunately little has changed to improve the education of deaf and hard of hearing children.”

So, in 2016, the LAO report ‑‑ despite California's long experience with relatively large expenditures in Deaf and Hard Of Hearing students, these students continue to lag far behind their hearing peers on statewide assessments and reading and math. These language delays tend to be more pronounced in deaf and hard of hearing children. Oftentimes parents are not aware. They're just unaware that this is happening.

When I first noticed or realized that deprivation was not new was in 1980. With all the research, the earliest time that language deprivation was 1807. But I'm sure it happened long before that as well. So a child psychologist and sociologist wrote this in 1980 and said, you know, focus on ‑‑ the idea is absence of language, that's where the problem stems. So we know about services, auditory, oral skills, hiring early interventionists with no skills and background of Deaf culture.

0‑5 is pivotal years that now we have this phenomenon, this theory, with this critical ‑‑ once you pass this critical window of opportunity it can be dicey to acquire the language. Once they get to kindergarten and they don't have language and they have poor skills -- and on and on and sometimes you see that and why are we talking about this? We have to have a language and policy report and all the things that are required. Full access to a language is a human right. We have three different textbooks that college professors teach about language 101 at hearing colleges. And all of those books talk about ASL. It's been discussed. So they talk about ASL. So we have this. So we have the importance, focus on the language. It's already been discussed. It's already available.

So this really comes from the report but you can take a look at it on our website in detail.

You can go on.

So ASL is a benefit for all children whether you're deaf or hearing, children with disabilities, Deaf++, regardless, all children benefit. I fantasize a world where all people learn ASL. That really is a fantasy of mine. It's a really healthy fantasy. Let us dream about the world that all people use sign language. ASL children often perform better than hearing children and their peers.

What's really important is the barriers to kindergarten readiness. Our group has identified three reasons for that. There is medicalization. That word is fairly new but it's coming up in discussions there's some great books about it. The book is called *Made to Hear*. And she talks about the choice of the word "made" because when you sign made it looks like forest. It looks ‑‑ and deaf children and implanted children, it talks a lot about that. It’s a fabulous book. I recommend you read it. It will give you a clear understanding.

Services are now becoming more medicalized through medical clinics. And they now involve in preschool, 3 to 5. And so these medical professionals are involved in preschool. So what's going on with that? And I'm like, well, no, it should be educational focused not medically focused.

And the second barrier to kindergarten readiness is the lack of Deaf adults and community and professional involvement. You should know that. We've talked about that at length.

Ableism and audism is the third barrier. They are similar but ableism is the expectation that you conform to the norms that we are all individuals; that if we don't conform to this mainstream idea ‑‑ we should, though. We should give you services and such so that you can conform. That's ableism. But audism means the ability to be able to hear and speak is primary and that's better. And it's not.

I grew up ‑‑ I went to a School for the Deaf. We had visitors coming into the School for the Deaf. I wasn't the smartest in school. I had three or four kids that were very smart. None of us spoke spoken language. Some of them had good speech but teachers would say, oh, look, these students over here can speech. Everybody would be like, wow. Once everybody left, everybody would go back to playing and being what they were.

So what do we convey to students when they can't use speech? That they're not equal? Anyway.

Recommendations. There are five. Include ASL services as a provision of interventional services for families that have deaf children. Some people say, well, speech is really important. I didn't say anything about speech. So what's important is language. Language has to be accessible.

Employ professional qualified Deaf specialists to provide ASL services as part of these interventional services.

Establish a statewide Deaf Mentor Program. We've already begun that and will continue to develop. It takes about a year or so. We have Deaf Coaches that have trained in the curriculum. We have a pilot programming now. It should end in December. So keep your eye on that. You can see what we're doing in California.

Restructuring California Department of Education of Health and Care services. So you can refer them to California services. They have to go through Health and Family Services before they can get to education. But having more of a core program within the state. So we have two Schools for the Deaf but they are very geographically far apart.

So I know that was a lot. How many minutes was that? Oh, thank you. Wow. I need some water. All right. We have about four minutes left. I'm open to questions. We have questions?

Ok. 24 minutes. I think I flew right through this. But I am open for questions. A question over here.

>> What do you think about cued speech?

>> MARLA HATRAK: I think cued speech is part of what we call visual communication tools. You have to be careful. It's an interesting choice of words. We are constantly playing the semantics game. We have to stop. People are impressed with communication tools. People are impressed but when you talk to families they might be but it doesn't produce impressive results because they're just tools, tools to access a non‑accessible language. Deaf children can't hear, what do you do? They come up with a development of a tool, a communication tool, so that children can so‑call hear?

Why don't we give them ASL? ASL is even better than those who communicate using tools. Let's identify them. We have remedies. We have phonetics. We have all kinds of grammar ASL rules and such. ASL seems to be more and more similar to, like, Arabic and Chinese. Why wouldn't we want to introduce ASL to those families? Tools is a dangerous area. It's not appropriate to introduce systems, tools when they should be acquiring language.

I appreciate your question.

Any other questions?

>> In California you said the numbers of 8% and 15%. That the scores were really pretty dismal? I'm wondering how that compares to other states. Do we have a sense of what's happening?

>> MARLA HATRAK: I'm really careful with that one. In the State of California it's a bellwether state. There are other states that are better than us but either their score might be 2% or they might be higher than ours. I don't think any of us have that data. It's a great question. And we need to start asking for more statistics and more data.

Data ‑‑ you know, we haven't had data. How convenient is that? It's a convenient way where, well, we can't make change to the system, can't improve our system, because we don't have any data to back it up.

So something's not working. Data does show numbers. If you saw the ‑‑ there was a poster session in the Exhibit Hall. They actually got an award today. Go, California. Yay. I'm so happy. So you got the award for the poster. It's a wonderful poster. It really shows kind of what you're talking about. California, is it worse or better than others? I don't know. You go, We're pretty busy in California. We need your help to do your own state analysis. You can talk about what your state's analysis and you can even ask California and you'll be surprised.

So you got to keep the pressure on. It can happen. It is happening. I think that through Deaf participation there is a shift occurring, as it should be. So it's a fabulous question.

Any other questions?

>> One of the questions that I have with IDEA is federal laws have been passed and yet data does not seem to be collected that really bothers me.

>> MARLA HATRAK: Like I said, semantics again. We have data but it's in the Special Education Department. So it's all lumped in with Deaf, DeafBlind, and other disabilities. So the Deaf data is there. And that's how in 2007 we were able to, you know, pull out some of that data. It was a hard job to get the data. It was not normal that they would do it. And why they have that statistic is because the legislature mandated it. Without that we would not have been able to access that data. So it would have been just universal data. So you have to continue to push your state and Department of Education to inquire about deaf and hard of hearing students and how your state is doing that. So it would be very interesting to see what they tell you.

Any other questions before we wrap up?

Ok. Thank you so much.