Power of Communities: Perceptions of Words

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Snap Shot of Children in EI Today

- Younger than ever before
- More diverse
  - Cultural and language backgrounds
  - Hearing Levels
  - Abilities and Disabilities
- More Opportunities
  - Technology Resources
  - Communication and Language Opportunities

Challenge for Professionals

- How can we meet the expectations and needs of all children and families?

- EI providers are overwhelmingly
  - White, Female, Hearing
  - Limited Life Experiences with Deaf/HH People

What Do Families Have In Common?

- *Discovery of Hearing Loss Unexpected*
- *Impact of Hearing Loss Unknown*
- *Opportunities and Potential Unknown*
- *Education and Communication Unknown*
- *Resources Unknown*
- *Struggle with Communication & Technology*
- *Without Support ---Experience Stress*

First deaf person they met was …
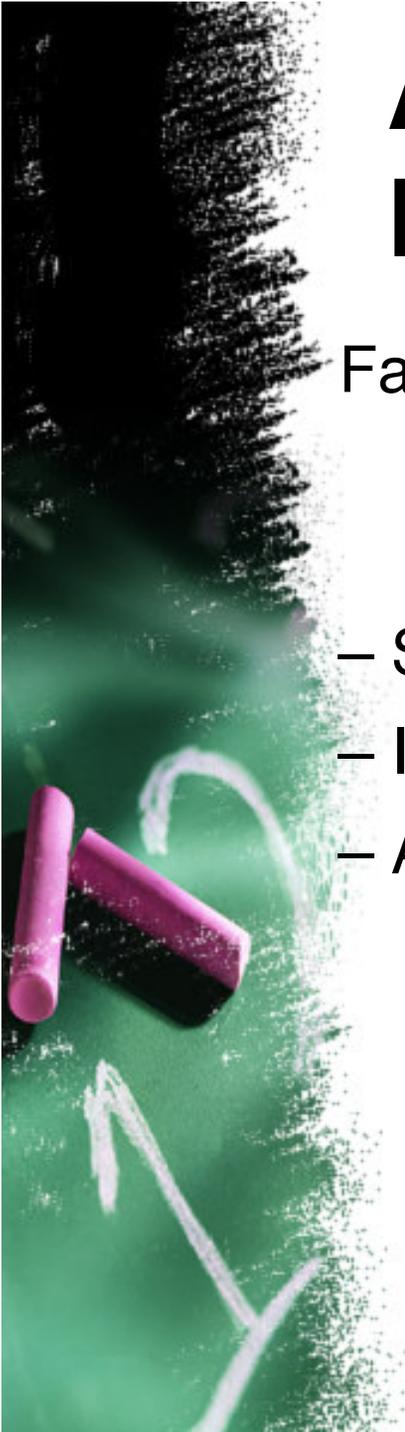
Collaborations and Partnerships

- Family to Family Connections
  - ASDC, Hands and Voices, Family Voices, Parents of Exceptional Children
  - A Guide by Your Side

- Community Connections
  - Local Community Programs/Organizations
  - Cultural, Spiritual/Religious

- National Organizations by/for Deaf

A Research Perspective: Partnership

Families who have regular contact with deaf adults obtain significant benefits including:

– Social Support

– Improved Communication

– Acceptance and Understanding

Meadow-Orlans, Mertens & Sass-Lehrer, 2003; Watkins, Pittman,& Walden, 1998; Hintermair, 2000

More Research: Partnership

- English language performance better with experiences with Deaf Mentors
  - Watkins, Pittman, Walden, 1998;
- Social-emotional development supported by opportunities for interactions with Deaf adults/children
  - See Calderon & Greenberg, 2003
- Children/families in "Shared Reading Program" more frequent book sharing
  - Delk & Weidekamp, 2001

Joint Committee on Infant Hearing 2007 Position Statement

- Adults who are deaf or hard of hearing should play an integral part in the EHDI Program

- Both adults and children in the deaf community can enrich the family's experience by serving as mentors and role models.

JCIH and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Adults

- Such mentors have experience in negotiating their way in a hearing world, raising infants or children who are deaf or hard of hearing and providing families with a full range of information about communication options, assistive technology, and resources that are available in the community.

JCIH 2007

- Involvement of Deaf/HH adults in ALL aspects of EHDI Program
  - Advisory Boards and Councils
  - Steering Committees
  - Deaf Mentors/Advisors
  - Shared Reading Programs
  - Early Intervention Specialists
    - Audiologists, SLP, Educators
  - Resources Internet, Videos, Retreats, Social Events, etc.
  - Others?

Beyond Newborn Hearing Screening (Marge & Marge, 2005)

- The system should subscribe to a wellness model upon which the physical and psychological integrity of children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing is based

Beyond Newborn Hearing Screening (Marge & Marge, 2005)

- EI providers must be knowledgeable about the 2 different models of the deaf experience:
- Deafness as a medical condition
- Deafness as a life experience and/or cultural community

Beyond Newborn Hearing Screening (Marge & Marge, 2005)

- EI programs should recruit trained adults who are deaf or hard of hearing to serve on the coordinated service team.
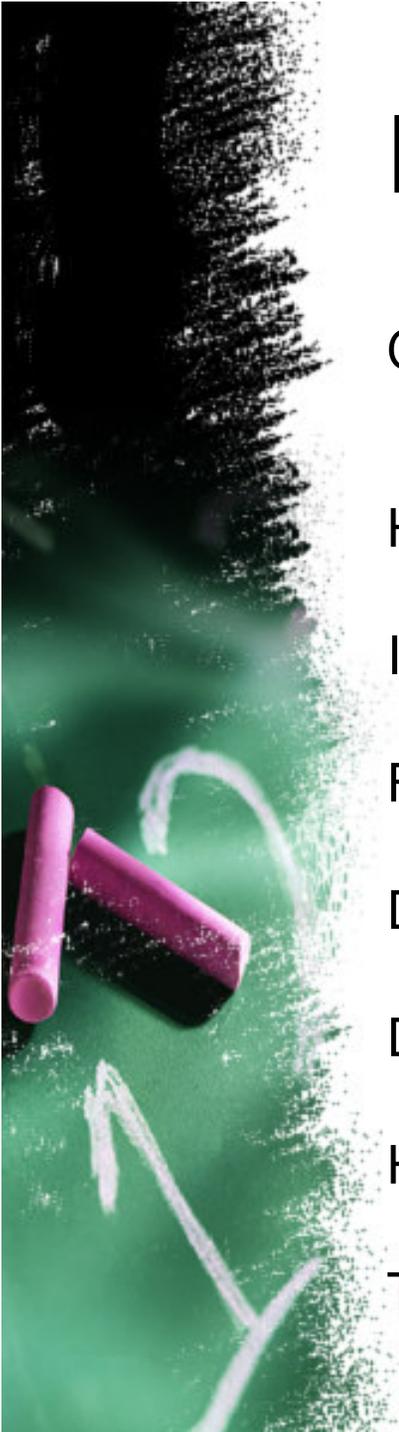
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Involvement Supported by National Organizations

- ACE-DHH
- AG Bell
- ASDC
- CAID
- CEASD
- H & V
- NAD

Power of Words

- Failed hearing test
- Diagnosis
- Hearing Impaired
- Intervention
- Deafness
- Hearing Loss
- Communication Choices
- Technology

Power of Words

Communication Choices Opportunities	Communication
Hearing Loss	Hearing level or status
Intervention	Involvement or Identification
Failed hearing test	Refer with explanation
Diagnosis	Identification
Deafness	Deaf Beings or being deaf
Hearing Impaired	Deaf or hard of hearing
Technology	Visual Technology Auditory Technology

Creating and Sharing Partnerships

Share your
   Experiences

What Benefits?

What Challenges?

Resources for Professionals

- Deaf Advisors; Deaf Mentors
  - http://www.csdb.org/chip/build_blocks.html
  - http://www.skihi.org/DeafMent.html
- Deaf Child's Bill of Rights
  - http://www.nad.org/DHCBillofRights
- Natural Environments
  - http://www.asha.org/about/legislation-advocacy/federal/idea/nat-env-child-facts.html

Resources for Professionals

- American Sign Language
- Deaf Bilingual Coalition
- Gallaudet University/Clerc Center
  - GLI, Cochlear Implant Center
- National Association of the Deaf
  - www.nad.org
- State Associations of Deaf/HH
- **YOU TOO!**