

# **Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect Through the Provision of Effective Early Intervention Services**

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# Goal

- The goal of this presentation is to enhance the EHDI early intervention protocol through the inclusion of knowledge and resources concerning child abuse and neglect
- The presentation will demonstrate how simple, sustainable, and readily available Web based technologies can be used to facilitate knowledge acquisition and promote collaboration between EHDI early intervention professionals .

# Outcomes

- As a result of this presentation attendees will leave with knowledge regarding:
  - How, with a slight adjustment, their early intervention services can help prevent, or at least reduce the duration of abuse and neglect experienced by young children who are deaf/hard of hearing (d/hh);
  - What to do when a child is a suspected victim of abuse or neglect; and
  - An array of resources and technologies that can be used to both gain information and collegial support concerning the topic of child abuse and neglect as experienced by children who are d/hh.

# Last Year

- My presentation addressed three questions:
  - What are we talking about?
  - Why do **WE** have to deal with this?
  - What is stopping us?
- During that presentation, I shared information concerning:
  - What does child abuse and neglect look like, i.e., the “11<sup>th</sup> Commandment” video
  - Our legal responsibilities as “mandatory reporters” of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.
  - The barriers we face in recognizing and reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

- I summarized those barriers as follows: We...
  - ...think that it is not a significant problem
  - ...are uncertain how to recognize and report
  - ...are afraid of possible consequences
  - ...do not think anything positive will occur
  - ...think someone else is dealing with it
- I also suggested that we do not deal with the realities of child abuse and neglect because it is such a unpleasant topic and difficult topic to discuss.
- Your presence here today indicates that **YOU** are willing to address this reality for the safety and well being of our children....Thank You

# Reality Check

- How has the topic of child abuse and neglect “come up” during the course of **your** professional work within EHDI?
- What knowledge would enhance your ability to prevent, or at least recognize and report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect?



# Knowledge...

- Why are children with disabilities at such greater risk for abuse?
  - Child Based Factors:
    - Impaired communication skills that limit their ability to disclose , be understood, and believed, thus they are “safer” targets for abusers.
    - Lack of privacy (e.g., at residential schools) and social isolation
    - Lack of education concerning sexuality and self-protection
    - Used to being touched by adults for physical assistance, teaching, and interacting + a lack of understanding re. appropriate, vs. inappropriate touching + a lack of knowledge when they can refuse to cooperate with an adult
    - Relative social immaturity of some students may lead them to demonstrate behavior that are misunderstood by others as inviting an abusive situation. ([Project Ability](#))
- How does your EHDI work serve to addresses these risk factors?



- Why are children with disabilities at such greater risk for abuse? (cont.)

- System Based Factors:

- Reduced ability to understand children's disclosure statements.
    - Lack of awareness that children with disabilities are at higher risk for neglect and abuse + “risky” situations + knowledge of how to recognize and respond to behavioral indicators that suggest a child may have experienced abuse
    - Lack of expectation that children with disabilities need information re. sexuality.
    - Desire to reduce their child's relative social isolation, combined with the previous identified factors, may serve to lower parent's “guard” re. interactions between their child and other individuals. ([Project Ability](#))

- How does the EHDI “system” address these risk factors?



- What are the patterns of linguistic behaviors commonly demonstrated by children who have experienced abuse and neglect?
  - **Pragmatics:**
    - Poor conversational skills.
    - Inability to discuss feelings.
    - Shorter conversations.
    - Fewer descriptive utterances.
    - Language used to get things done with little social exchange or affect.
  - **Semantics:**
    - Limited expressive vocabulary.
    - Fewer decontextualized utterances, more talk about the here and now.
  - **Syntax/Morphology:**
    - Shorter, less complex utterances.
  - **Phonology:**
    - (no difference)
- Owens, R. (2010). *Language disorders: A functional approach to assessment and intervention, 5th Edition*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- How does your existing EHDI work serve to address these language problems?

- What do the patterns of parent/child interactions “look like” when a child has/is experiencing abuse or neglect?

- Child Behaviors:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior, or school performance
- Has not received help for physical, or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home

- What do the patterns of parent/child interactions “look like” ...(cont.)

- Parent Behaviors:
  - Shows little concern for the child
  - Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school, or at home
  - Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
  - Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
  - Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
  - Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs

- What do the patterns of parent/child interactions “look like” ...(cont.)

- Parent/Child Interactions:
  - Rarely touch or look at each other
  - Consider their relationship entirely negative
  - State that they do not like each other

[Child Welfare Information Gateway: Recognizing Child Abuse & Neglect](#)

- What are the troubling patterns of child, parent, parent/child behaviors that you have observed within your EHDI work?
- What do you now do when you see these patterns?

# Awareness to Action

- Last year I ended my presentation with the following statements:
  - ...we can protect our children from the horrific realities of child abuse and neglect, or at the very least reduce the duration of such maltreatment, by:
    - acknowledging our children's increased risks for maltreatment;
    - collaborating with colleagues to learn and share more information ([deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/](http://deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/)); and
    - urging EHDI to provided CA/N training and support
  - To my knowledge, the extent of EHDI's response was limited to Webinar sponsored by the New Jersey EHDI group.
  - Do you know of any additional EHDI work on this topic?

- Last year I shared with you two key resources:
  - A “Community of Learners” has been established to address the issue of CA/N as experienced by children who are d/hh.



The screenshot shows a Wiki page interface. At the top, there is a banner for the College of Education at Michigan State University with a background of autumn leaves. Below the banner, there are navigation tabs: 'home', 'page', 'discussion (6)', 'history', and 'notify me'. A message box on the right says 'Edit This Page'. The main content area has the title 'Recognizing the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect' and a list item with a PDF icon: 'CWI Gateway - Recognizing CA N.pdf'. A sidebar on the left contains a search box and a list of links: Home, Resources, Literature, ...References, ...Magazine Articles, ...News Articles, ...Multimedia, Participants, Presentations, and Projects & Reports.

<http://deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/>



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## Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline

The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-4-A-CHILD is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. Serving the United States, its territories, and Canada, the Hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with professional crisis counselors who, through interpreters, can provide assistance in 170 languages. The Hotline offers crisis intervention, information, literature, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources. All calls are anonymous and confidential.

The Hotline has received more than 2 million calls since it began in 1982. These calls come from children at risk for abuse, distressed parents seeking crisis intervention and concerned individuals who suspect that child abuse may be occurring. The Hotline is also a valuable resource for those who are mandated by law to report suspected abuse, as school personnel, medical and mental health professionals and police and fire investigators.



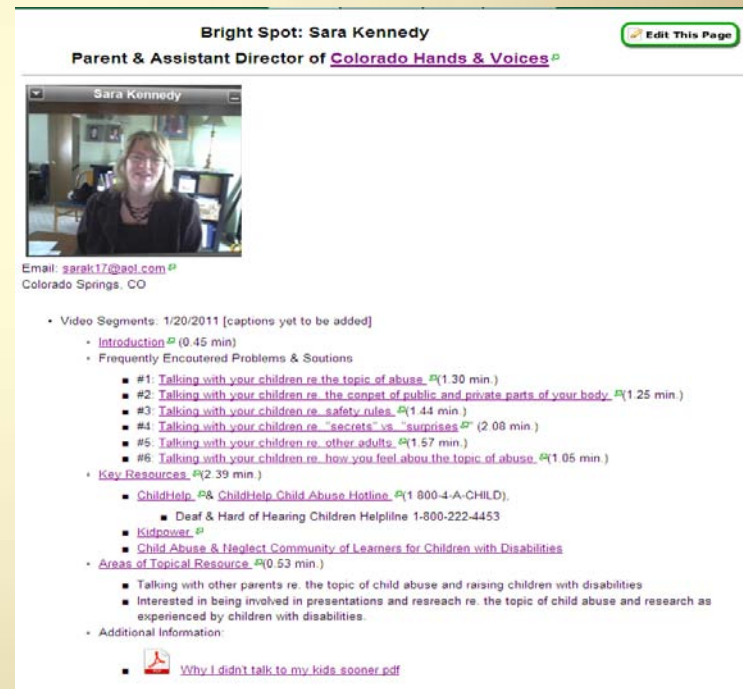
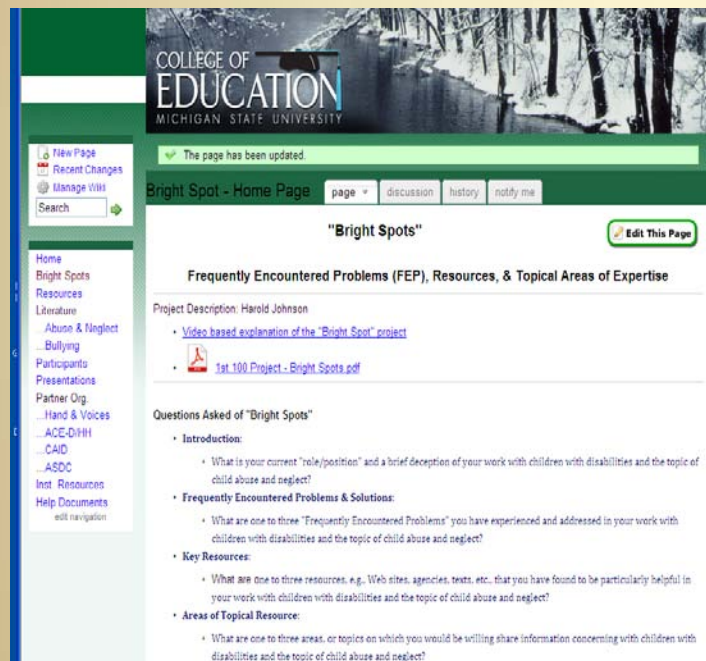
<http://www.childhelp.org/hotline>

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Helpline: 1-800-222-4453**



- This year I would like to share two additional resources with you:

1. “Bright Spots” = trusted and valued individuals with knowledge and expertise concerning both children who are d/hh and the topic of child abuse & neglect.



<http://deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/Bright+Spot+-+Home+Page>

- Resources...(cont.)
  2. ooVoo video conferencing technology



<http://www.ooVoo.com/>

- ...enables synchronous audio/video connections between 2, to 6 individuals/sites

# Imagine what would happen if...

- Each of us...
  - ...used information from this presentation to establish the topic of child abuse and neglect our colleagues.
    - See [Janet DesGeorges's "Bright Spot"](#) (1.41 min.) video re.
      - ["How to raise the topic of child abuse and neglect at a meeting"](#)
  - ...alerted, but not scared, the families of children who are d/hh about the increased risk of abuse.
    - See [Sara Kennedy's "Bright Spot"](#) 1.30 min. video re.
      - ["Talking with your children re. the topic of abuse"](#)
  - ...asked our local EHDI group to provide at least one professional development opportunity re. how to prevent, or at least observe, understand, and respond to possible incidences of abuse and neglect
    - See the array of [existing presentations](#) on this topic
      - We could use the [ooVoo](#) technology to plan and carryout this work.

# Imagine what would happen if...

- Each of us...
  - Identified trusted and valued members of the EHDI community that could serve as “Bright Spots” for us all.
    - See [Harold Johnson’s video explanation](#) of the “Bright Spot” concept
    - Share a copy of the [one page “Bright Spot” project description](#).
  - Used accepted our responsibility to protect, or at least observe, understand, and respond when the children we work with may be experiencing abuse or neglect.

# Thank You

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# Resources

- Instructional resources for teacher preparation programs
  - <http://deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/Instructional+Resources>
- Definitions of child abuse and neglect
  - [http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/define.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/define.cfm)
- 11<sup>th</sup> Commandment video from Described and Captioned Media Program
  - <http://www.dcmp.org/FlashLanding/SecureFlash.aspx?G=31653&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>



- State-by-state explanation of state statutes concerning child abuse and neglect:
  - [http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/)
- Child Abuse & Neglect Community of Learners for Children with Disabilities wiki
  - <http://deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/>
- Recognizing Child Abuse & Neglect: Signs & Symptoms
  - <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm>
- Research concerning the incidence, impact, and prevention of child abuse and neglect as experienced by children with disabilities
  - <http://deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/Lit+-+Full+Reference+List>



- Presentations concerning the incidence, causes, response, impact, and prevention of child abuse and neglect as experienced by children with disabilities
  - <http://deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/Presentations>
- “Bright Spots” video presentation concerning: 1) frequently encountered problems & solutions; 2) key resources; and 3) areas of topical resource
  - <http://deafed-childabuse-neglect-col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/Bright+Spot+--+Pilot>