Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Their Families

How we can ensure equal access to services that will result in long-term, secure relationships.
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Agenda

• Deaf Community and Culture
• What is the issue, really?
• What is it like for a deaf child in our system?
• How do we ensure equal access for deaf and hard of hearing children and families?
• ADA law as well as DCF polices and procedures
• Key Takeaways
Deaf Community and Culture

- It’s a small world! Or is it?
- Medical vs Holistic perspective.
- Why we have to focus on the individual and not bring our own bias to providing services.
Meeting their needs just as you would any other customer or companion.

- Deaf
- Hard of Hearing
- Late Deafened
- Deaf - Blind
Some quick info....

- **VRS** – Video Relay Service for phone calls only.
- **VRI** – Video Remote Interpreting for office visits, not treatment.
- **RID** – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Must use RID certified interpreters.
- **CDI** – Certified Deaf Interpreter. Intermediary interpreter who is deaf and a native user of ASL who can help facilitate.
- **Pocket Talker** – Device used for hard of hearing people who need amplification and do not already have hearing aids.
- **Hearing Aids** – Wide range of types and does not restore hearing.
- **Cochlear Implant** – Device that replaces the cochlea. Sends sound signals to the brain. Does not restore hearing.
How are D/HH people different from other disabilities?

Deaf culture is the set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, literary traditions, history, values and shared institutions of communities that are influenced by deafness and which use sign language as the primary means of communication.

Fastest growing disability group. Why?
- Aging population
- Illness and injury
- Noise pollution and injury
- Life expectancy
A Brief Summary of Estimates for the Size of the Deaf Population in the USA Based on Available Federal Data and Published Research:

About 2 to 4 of every 1,000 people in the United States are "functionally deaf,“. However, if people with a severe hearing loss are included with those who are deaf, then the number is 4 to 10 times higher. That is, anywhere from 9 to 22 out of every 1,000 people have a severe hearing loss or are deaf. Again, at least half of these people reported their hearing loss after 64 years of age.

Florida as of 2012:
- 211,049 with a hearing loss 18-64.
- 1.8% of the population. 11,578,613
- 8.8% of the population has a hearing loss.
- 2.3% are members of the Deaf Community
What is the issue, really?

- Deaf and hard of hearing children and their parents and caregivers interact with every component of the child protective services model in Florida.

- Often these families encounter communication barriers or obstacles to their ability to *effectively interact with and fully understand* the services being offered by professionals who help them access the same services that are available to hearing children and their parents and caregivers.
What does a deaf child experience?

- **Call to the hotline** - What do we know?
- **First response to the home or school** - Interpreter? Who explains to the child? What is a CDI?
- **Court** - Yes, they are to provide a certified interpreter!
- **Placement** - Anyone know sign language or have experience with deaf children?
  - When deaf kids break the rules and punishment.
- **Services** - Who pays for the interpreter? Excused? Timeline delays?
- **Reunification** - Who is the judge? Subject matter experts or opinions?
Results when communication is not effective for all members of the family...

- The human/people costs associated with the continued presence and operation of some or most of the barriers include the serious and unnecessary deterioration of the family unit. There are also long term, costly, case management expenditures to be managed.

- What does it mean to ensure effective communication?
Have a game plan....

- Is there a Deaf Services Center or service provider in my area?
- Make a list of a couple of resources and an interpreting agency so you are prepared.
- When you do have a deaf or hard of hearing client...ask them about local resources and options for services.
- Your program SPOC can help you. A best practice during staff meetings would be to routinely discuss how different populations are handled. Discuss some scenarios and how you would handle them.
ADA Law and DCF Polices

- Where do I find it? MyFlFamilies.com - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

- Who do I call if I have an issue? Civil Rights Office - any of us. General Counsel’s office.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services. The current text of the ADA includes changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325), which became effective on January 1, 2009. The ADA was originally enacted in public law format and later rearranged and published in the United States Code.

**Title I - Employment Discrimination based on disability. Equal access to opportunities and benefits.**

**Title II - State and Local Governments - public entities and transportation. Access to programs and services, programs and activities provided or made available by public entities. A public entity shall operate each service, program, or activity so that the service, program, or activity, when viewed in its entirety, is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.**

**Title III - Public Accommodations and commercial facilities. Building / office access.**

**Title IV - Telecommunications**

**Title V - Miscellaneous Provisions. Relationship to other laws, state immunity and special conditions.**

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act -**

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 705(20) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Service.

http://www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm
DCF Policies on Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- The highest populations are in the highest populated areas of Florida. Tampa Bay Area, Jacksonville, Orlando and Miami.

- Each region has resources for interpreter services and other auxiliary services.

- Rural areas often have people fall through the cracks. Review the plan that is in place for your office and who to go to with questions. Develop relationships with the vendors.


  - Read the glossary of terms. It really will help! Check out the info for your region. Find out who your SPOC and Civil Rights Officer is for your program/region.
Key Takeaways

- When it comes to world class customer service and excellent customer outcomes, effective communication between Deaf and hard of hearing children, their parents and caregivers as well as the Department and its professional Stakeholders, is key.

- Ensuring the safety and well-being of every child in Florida includes those who need communication access to all of the support services available to them.

- If you don’t know what to do – ask. Find out all the facts and contact the Office of Civil Rights or the General Counsel’s office for information to ensure the laws are followed.
DCF Office of Civil Rights

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