



State of Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Public Health

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INFANTS

Friday, January 26, 2024
12:00-2:30 p.m.

Bienville Building, Room 118 628 North 4th Street Baton Rouge, LA

Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

- I. Meeting Called to Order at 12:10: *Jill Hudson, Chair*
Reviewed communication standards and established break time.

- II. Roll Call: *Theresa Nicholls, Recording Secretary*
 - a. Council members present: Theresa Nicholls, Dr. Ashley Argrave-Smith, Susannah Boudreaux, Jana Broussard, Jill Hudson, Dr. Debbie Cowan, Caitlyn Robinson, Dr. Natalie Delgado, Meleah Miller via designee Vanessa Magnon
 - i. Quorum with 8/14 members
 - ii. 2 vacancies – hospital administrator, parent of child utilizing spoken language
 - b. Council Members Absent: Dr. John Carter, Dr. Cynthia Voelker, Dr. Paul Remedios
 - c. EHDI Program Present: Danielle Mercer, Dana Hubbard, Terri Ibieta, Margaret Berry
 - d. Stakeholders Present: Nicole Deleon & Jill Guidry (Hands and Voices), Anna Ewing (Parent-Pupil Education Program), Nicky Gillies (Deaf Blind Project)
 - e. Interpreters present: Sylvie Sullivan, Lissa Gill, Jennifer Guerrieri

- III. Review and Acceptance of Agenda/Minutes – *Jill Hudson, Chair*
 - a. 01/26/2024 Agenda
 - i. Nicky Gillies asked to be added under agenda item 4, Community Partners. 1st motion to accept addition by Susannah Boudreaux, and 2nd by Dr. Ashley Argrave-Smith. Approved by unanimous vote.
 - b. 10/27/23 Minutes
 - i. 1st motion to approve by Jana Broussard, 2nd by Susannah Boudreaux. Approved by unanimous vote.

- IV. Community Partners
 - a. EarlySteps (ES) – Caroline Nailor-Oglesby, Director, was unable to attend; provided written update shared by EHDI Coordinator, Terri Ibieta.

- i. ES will start to provide Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) screenings to every child that is evaluated for entry into the ES program. Each intake coordinator will be trained on conducting screening at initial intake and using the LA EHDI-IS (Information System).
- b. Parent-Pupil Education Program (PPEP) – Ivette Perez, Outreach Director, was not in attendance; Dr. Natalie Delgado, Director, provided update.
 - i. 125 families enrolled in PPEP at present
 - ii. Several outreach events planned over the next couple of months
 - iii. There is a GoFundMe for a PPEP child that lost their hearing aids in a fire.
 - iv. PPEP name changing to GOLD (Guidance, Outreach, Language, Development) in coming months.
- c. Louisiana Hands & Voices/Guide by Your Side – Jill Guidry, H&V Director and Nicole Deleon, GBYS Coordinator
 - i. 2023 Annual report shared in written form to Council; include links to H&V and GBYS.
- d. Louisiana Deaf Blind Project (DBP) -Nicky Gillies, Director
 - i. Housed at LSU Health Sciences Center in N.O. and receives federal funding from the Office of Special Education Programs.
 - ii. Just started a new 5-year grant cycle with goals that include identifying children earlier who are deaf/blind, working with families, training and professional development.
 - iii. 135 children in LA are currently registered with the program.
 - iv. Future partnering with Hands and Voices for a parent chat.
 1. Dana Hubbard asked questions about criteria to be part of the DBP, and what does the program see as their biggest challenge at this time. In LA, criteria include a child with any amount of vision loss paired with any degree of hearing loss, as well as suspected or anticipated losses. Their biggest challenge is making sure they can “find” children that meet criteria.
 2. Jill Hudson asked about a standard process for referring children who may meet criteria to be included in this program. LA EHDI and DBP are working on a data sharing agreement with hopes that this will improve access for families.

12:40 10-minute break taken.

- v. Hearing Aid Fitting – Dr. Debbie Cowan
 - a. Reviewed some possible reasons for delays from identification to hearing aid fittings.
 - i. Medical clearance must come from an Otolaryngologist if the child has Medicaid. Private insurances will take a clearance from their pediatrician.
 - ii. There needs to be a referral to primary care then referral to an ENT.
 - iii. Unnecessary PE tubes
 - iv. Insurance with high deductibles
 - v. No ENTs that take Medicaid in Region 8, (Monroe, West Monroe)
 - b. Presented a case study of a child that took 1 year, 4 months to get fitted.

VI. Language Deprivation

- a. Language Assessments – Margaret Berry (EHDI program)
 - i. With funding from a grant, they are testing children’s language development in conjunction with the University of Colorado-Boulder.
 - 1. They have completed 76 evaluations and have sent the results to Boulder to be analyzed. Reports from the data are coming back in 2 to 3 weeks. Sixty-five are in process and are being scheduled to be completed and there are one hundred and six children that still need to be contacted.
- b. Committee Update: Language Outcomes – Jana Broussard
 - i. The committee met 2 out of 3 planned times. One meeting was canceled due to a weather closure and will be rescheduled. Reviewed a recent position statement from the National Association of the Deaf. Once additional information is provided, they will provide a report.
 - 1. Jill Hudson asked if the Language Outcome committee plans to use the data that comes from the language evaluations. Dana Hubbard said that they are sort of separate as they are being used as a baseline and to look at how kids in LA are doing longitudinally. Dr. Ashley Argrave-Smith is one of evaluators and said that she is gaining a lot of information that can be useful.

VII. New Business

- a. Vanessa Magnon made a comment: 02/24/24 there will be a three-hour Language Deprivation workshop presented by Louisiana Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (LRID). It will be online, and it is free (for LA residents). Registration can be accessed through LRID Facebook page.
- b. Jill Hudson posed a question for EHDI about focus groups for parents.
 - i. Currently there have been three focus groups planned for parents whose children were identified in the newborn hearing or heel stick (dried bloodspot) screening programs
 - ii. First focus group meeting participants were unable to verify they had a child born in LA within the specified time frame. The next two meetings, there were also no participants able to verify the same.

VIII. Public Comment

- a. None submitted

IX. Adjourn

- a. Motion to Adjourn at 1:45 by Susannah Boudreaux and 2nd by Dr. Ashley Argrave-Smith. Approved by unanimous vote.