

**ONE FINGER POINTS AT YOU
AND THREE BACK AT ME:**
CHANGING THE DYNAMIC FROM NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE

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Presenters: Who We Are

- Dinah is a member of the Colorado State EHDI Team representing early intervention. She has more than 25 years experience in early intervention, including serving as the statewide Program Coordinator of the Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP). Currently Dinah is working as a consultant in the field.
- Denise is an SLP, TOD, and an Infant Specialist. In addition to years of experience as a preschool teacher, she has more than 30 years experience as a Colorado Hearing Resource Coordinator for early intervention services for children who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Both are members of the Board for Colorado Families for Hands & Voices.

Financial Disclosure

- We have no relevant financial or non-financial relationships to disclose.

“When you point a finger there are three fingers pointing back at you”



This saying reportedly comes from the Navajo people of the American Southwest and is the observation of our physical structure. Try pointing your index finger at anything and discover your middle, ring and little fingers pointing right back at you; three fingers pointing back at you for each finger pointed at anyone else.

Of course, the idea is to look within yourself for faults before you start pointing them out in others.

We are approaching this topic with the idea that as professionals we are responsible to connect with families and children; we are responsible to ensure we approach families in a way that leads to success.

In other words, what can we as professionals do differently to assure we are relating to families and if we are not connecting to a family, what can we do to change the dynamic ?

Work hard to establish a relationship and trust.
(Honoring, respecting the parent).

An effective partnership is dependent on mutual trust and respect.

Families need to feel supported and have trusting relationships in order to team with you to improve their child's outcomes.

I struggle with the family that.....

- Cancels and/or misses numerous appointments
- Seldom or never follows through with my suggestions
- Watches TV/ uses the cell phone during our visits
- Doesn't keep the hearing aids on the child
- Is not learning sign language fast enough
- Isn't communicating with their child
- Chooses a communication system that I don't agree with
- Chooses a preschool setting that I feel is not the best option for that child
- Doesn't discipline their child the way I think they should
- Doesn't recognize the child's other needs

Overcoming barriers to follow through

- Analyze your approach...
- Effects of poverty/ maternal education/ literacy levels
- Other life stressors
- How adults learn
- Different priorities or goals for intervention
- Parents may be uncomfortable with what we ask them to do
- Parenting struggles and challenges
- There is something else blocking success

Analyze your approach...

- **Professional-centered approach**

- Directive approach: The interventionist is the person to offer expert advice. The interventionist decides what is important for the family/child to learn. This approach is change oriented, solution focused, and goal setting is based on professional expertise.

- **Family-centered approach**

- The intervention respects the family system and preferences; recognizing that family beliefs and values will vary based on culture, background, personal preferences, and individual variability; placing a high value on seeking and respecting family views ; individualizing services to the needs and desires of the family and involving families in decision-making; recognizing that family systems are dynamic rather than static, with family interactions and needs changing over time; engaging the family and using familiar items in various aspects of the evaluation and intervention sessions; recognizing family constellation

- **Child-centered approach**

- Allows the child to make their own choices; focuses on the concept of allowing more freedom to the child, giving them the ability to use their own individual approach; encourages kids to explore their interests; focuses on developing a child's unique sense of creativity not just through artistic expression, but in how they learn new concepts and solve problems.

And modify it

International Consensus Statement on Best Practices for Working with Families of Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (2013)

- Family-centered early intervention is viewed as a flexible, holistic process which recognizes families' strengths and natural skills and supports development while promoting:
 - Joyful, playful communicative interactions and overall enjoyment of parenting roles
 - Family well-being (e.g. enjoyment of the child, stable family relations, emotional availability, optimism about the child's future)
 - Engagement (active participation in the program, informed choice, decision making, advocacy for the child)
 - Self-efficacy (competent and confident in parenting and promoting the child's development).



We encourage providers to use an approach that is **Family-centered**
.....**And child led!**

Unless it is not successful, then analyze and modify.

Effects of poverty / maternal education

- “ It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”
 - Frederick Douglas
- 1 in 5 children in the U.S. live below the federal poverty level
- Negative impacts of poverty on child health and well-being may be life-long:
 - Health
 - Lower developmental and educational outcomes
 - Increased criminal behavior as adolescents and adults
 - Intergenerational cycles of poverty
- *Child Poverty in the United States Today: Introduction and Executive Summary, Academic Pediatrics, Vol 16, Number 3S, April 2016*

Potential Impact of Poverty on Children

- At least 3 types of disadvantage
 1. Income poverty
 2. Severe material hardship
 - Running out of money leading to stresses with utilities, food, housing, medical care
 3. Adult health problems, including mental health
 - Threaten economic security of family and child

Strategies to Help in Connecting with Families Struggling with Poverty

- Choose an interventionist who may have “walked in their shoes”
- Learn to be an active listener with an empathetic ear. Be mindful that “life” may be impacting the parent’s ability to follow-through with the suggested strategies.
- Check your judgement and misconceptions at the door
- Learn about supports in your community
- Establish relationships with professionals in your community who can assist you in supporting families
- Share resources to address life issues

Other life stressors

- High job stress
- Military deployment
- Job hours

- Sometimes being an active, empathetic listener is all that you can do

How adults learn

- As a SLP or Deaf Educator, utilize teammates who have had education in working with adults
- Read articles, take classes on adult learning styles
- Ask “How do you want to receive information....me sharing it verbally, written info, research?”
 - Just because you have shared it, that doesn't mean it was received!
- Principles of “Just in Time “ learning.
- Meeting the needs of partners in a family who learn differently
- Many adults want to know the WHY as much as they want to know the HOW
 - Without understanding why a particular skill matters and how it will benefit their child, parents may struggle with following up.
 - “She is nice. She plays with my child. But I do not understand how this will help.”

Awareness of past experiences

- Negative experiences in school
- Traumatic past
- Not feeling valued in the past
 - Understanding that they are driving the bus
- Outside pressures
 - Extended family
 - Cultural components

Different priorities or goals for intervention

- Review the IFSP goals with the parents – Goals can, should and do change!
- Plan your next session with the parents. This is a great opportunity to clarify what the parent is actually hoping to see happen for their child and family.
- Utilize assessments to begin a dialogue about the goals and priorities.
- Check your understanding of what the parent is seeking and why.
- Ask the parent for clarification. Sometimes we use broad terms that can lead to misunderstanding (ex. I want my child to be happy) when we develop goals.
- Have joint sessions with other professionals working with the family to make sure that the information shared with the family is consistent
- Check in with both parents

Parents are not comfortable with what we ask them to do

- Set up the relationship by initially granting permission to disagree with the activity, the time, etc.
- Have several ideas to achieve the mutual goal. Brainstorm with the parent how the goal might be achieved.
- Acknowledge that we are asking parents to perhaps pursue with vigor, techniques that they never imagined they would have to do
- The presence of a professional in their home may be perceived as an indication that the parent does not have the skills to raise their own child. The root of the word Intervention is Intervene

Parenting Struggles and Challenges

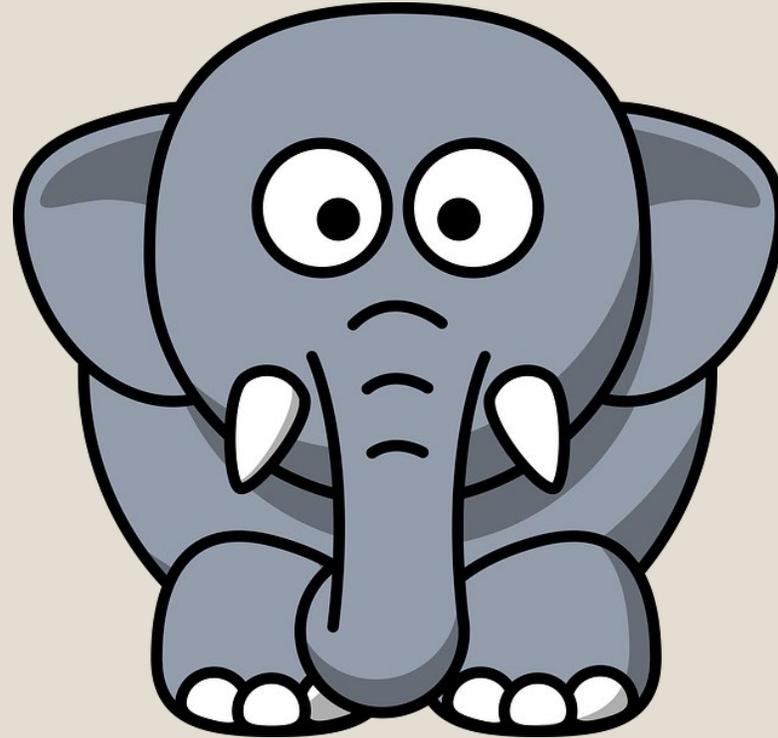
- Issues with attachment, bonding
 - Provide resources
 - Consult another professional
 - Educate yourself on infant mental health and how this impacts literally everything!
- Fussy baby
 - Acknowledge that this is very real
 - Assist the parent in strategies
 - Provide resources
 - *The Happiest Baby on the Block*
 - *Your Fussy Baby*
 - Is there a medical issue that needs to be addressed (for example reflux)?
- Impact of Grief/blame
- Maternal depression

CDC: 1 in 9 women nationally experience Maternal or Post-partum Depression

- Experiences that may put some women at a higher risk for depression can include (CDC):
 - Stressful life events.
 - Low social support.
 - Previous history of depression.
 - Family history of depression.
 - Difficulty getting pregnant.
 - Being a mom to multiples, like twins, or triplets.
 - Being a teen mom.
 - Preterm (before 37 weeks) labor and delivery.
 - Pregnancy and birth complications.
 - Having a baby who has been hospitalized

There is something else blocking success

- There's an elephant in the room and we don't know what it is...



- Resources for counseling.
- Just not a good fit between Parent and Interventionist

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Cancel and/or misses numerous appointments

- Analyze the reason **why**
 - Not a convenient time
 - Doesn't recognize the importance
 - Avoidance

Seldom follows through with my suggestions

- Check for understanding. Have you clearly conveyed what you would like the parent to do?
- Is the barrier low expectations
- Are your ideas/strategies/suggestions a good fit for the family's daily routine? Why isn't the family following through? Can you get at the same goal with a different strategy that better fits the family's lifestyle?
- Are you bombarding the family with too many ideas and strategies? Do you need to break the idea into smaller pieces in order for the family to experience success? Ex. This one thing I will do...
- Without meaning to, have you conveyed a sense of failure to the family? Are you focusing on the small changes and how these are positively impacting the child?
- Are you willing to "give up" the control and see where the family leads?

Watches TV/ uses the cell phone during our visits

- Begin the relationship by setting up the parameters
 - These are my expectations, What are yours?

Not keeping hearing aids on

- Analyze the reason **why**
 - Too hard
 - Are the HA set properly (60% are not)
 - Not understanding purpose or repercussions later on of not wearing them
 - Fear of loosing expensive equipment /daycare
 - Struggling with the visual representation of the need for hearing aids
 - The use of amplification does not match communication goal for family

Not learning sign language fast enough

- Analyze the reason **WHY**
 - Instruction doesn't match adults learning strength
 - Vocabulary not relevant
 - The use of sign does not match communication goal for family
 - Physically difficult to learn
 - Access to instruction
 - Access to practice with users
 - I know I need to but I don't want to

Isn't communicating with their child

- Analyze the reason **WHY**
 - Doesn't know how to play/interact with their child
 - Introverted/quiet parent/s/
 - Trapped in grief
 - Poor parenting examples
 - Having the guts to have the conversations that will expose the vulnerability of each of you. "You want them to talk and learn as well as their peers. The way that will happen is by consistent access to language. How can we make that happen?"
 - Are the stated goals on the IFSP the real goals for this parent? Discuss!
- Use appropriate assessments to demonstrate what is happening (LENA , videotape language analysis)
- Analyze the information you have shared – Have you communicated clearly the disconnect between the parent's goals and the lack of communication with the child?

Chooses a communication system and/or preschool setting that I don't agree with

- Analyze the reason **WHY**

- Make sure that the decisions are based on the parent receiving complete unbiased information to make an informed choice
- Help parents understand the big picture
- Introduce family to adult deaf role models
- Introduce to Hands & Voices Guide/resources and/or other families
- Visit preschool options
- Let your opinion go

- NONE OF THIS SHOULD BE DONE WITH MANIPULATION AND/OR THE GOAL OF CONVINCING THEM YOU ARE RIGHT.
- YOU, AS THE PROFESSIONAL, DO NOT WALK IN THAT PARENT'S SHOES
- YOU, AS THE PROFESSIONAL, ARE NOT GOING TO LIVE WITH THAT CHILD FOREVER.

Doesn't discipline their child the way I think they should

- Analyze the reason **WHY**
 - Respect the values of the family and their culture
 - Point out potentially dangerous situations
 - Discuss the concept of teaching appropriate behaviors; it's not innate
 - Provide resources
 - Provide connections to other professionals and parents who might be able to offer support and understanding

Doesn't recognize the child's other needs

- Focus on assessment information not just your opinion
 - Perhaps use an assessment that is a parent checklist. This puts you in the position of discussing and reflecting on what the parent shared rather than in the position of judge.
 - Ask 'Do you think this accurately reflects your child's progress? Is there something I am missing?'
- Parents have a right to know what you are thinking
- Share when you observe the child doing something that does not match your experience with little ones who are deaf and hard of hearing
- Prepare them with the language that they may hear from others

Who knows best???

- Respecting parent goals is essential for continued follow up through-out the week and long term
- Following the child's lead, determining interests is essential for the child's buy in
- As well as recognizing that the interventionist is the educated professional, who possesses a level of knowledge and access to resources that the family may need. Professional training is based on expertise that we are going to implement with the family and the child. Inherent in that is the idea that you know best

Letting go and respecting that everyone has expertise..... Parents, child, professionals

Use self-assessment documents to improve your services

- Find a self-assessment checklist that you can use following a session for review/reflection.
 - JCIH Appendix Listening and Spoken Language Self-Checklist (N. Thompson)
 - JCIH Appendix ASL Checklist (B. Benedict, J. Crace, P. Horn-Marsh)

Your job is to guide me to reach my potential



Difficult families'' is a lazy and disrespectful way of describing families who are:

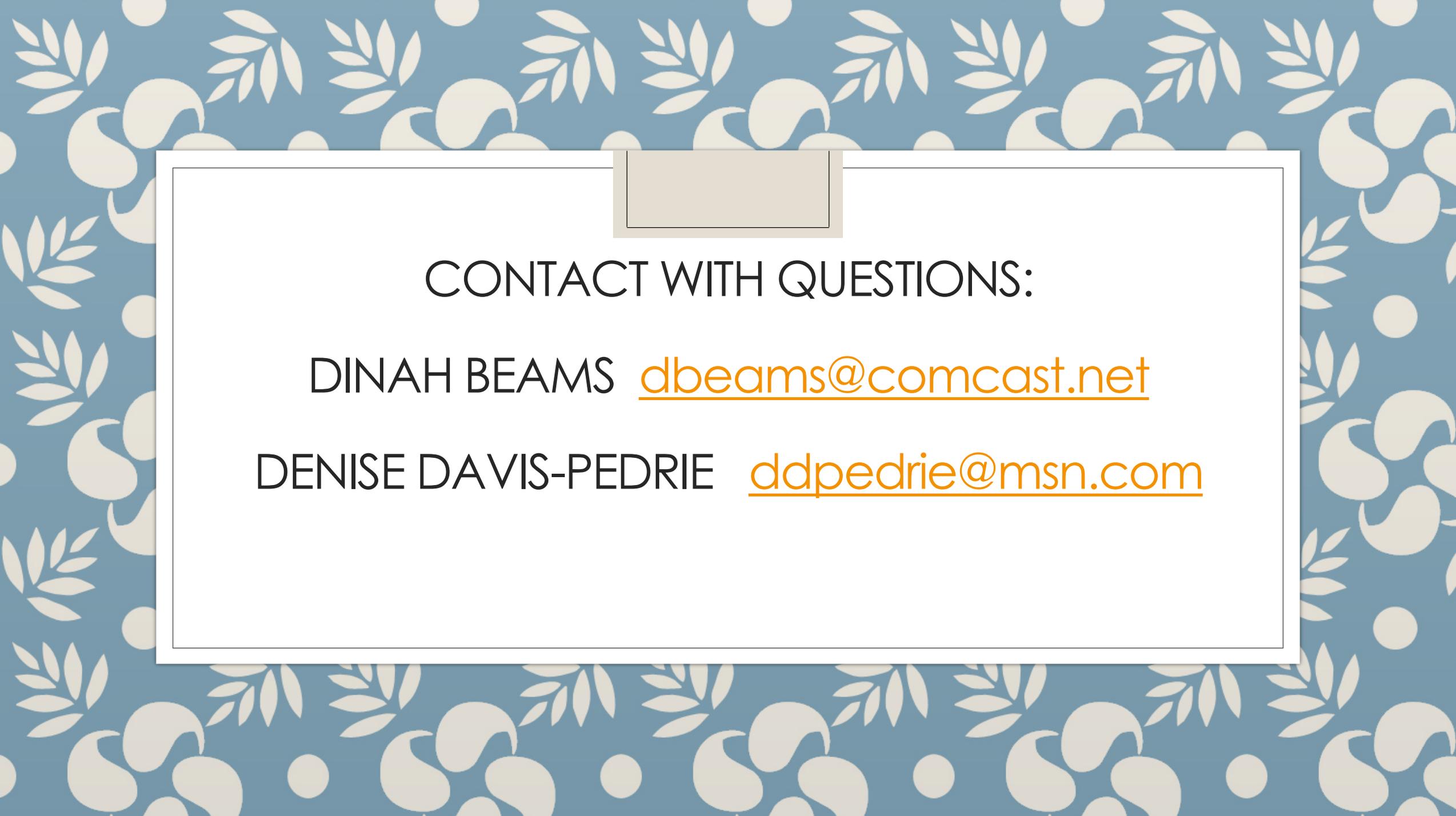
- desperate for their child and family to have a decent life
- scared of what the future may hold
- frustrated by a lack of support for their child's education, health or care
- angered by abuse
- intimidated by 'professionals'
- bewildered by the system
- infuriated by not being believed and taken seriously
- exhausted by lack of sleep
- living with uncertainty about their child's health
- struggling to understand how to meet their child's need
- worried about how they will pay the bills
- physically broken by the 24/7 care and lifting they give
- lonely and isolated because there is nothing left for friends and relationships
- low on patience because things have gone wrong so many times
- experiencing daily hate crime from neighbors (and people could add to this list)
- <https://www.certitude.org.uk/difficult-families/>

Resources: Articles

- *Supplement to Joint Committee on Infant Hearing 2007 Position Statement: Principles and Guidelines for Early Intervention after Confirmation a Child is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (2012).*
 - Appendix 2: Example of Fidelity of Intervention Monitoring. Listening and Language Self-checklist by Nan Thompson
 - Appendix 3: Example of Fidelity of Intervention Monitoring for ASL for Use by Parents and Professionals/Facilitators by Beth Benedict, Jodee Crace, Petra Horn-Marsh.
- *International Consensus Statement on Best Practices for Working with Families of Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (2013).*
- *Maternal Depression. First steps families & advocates can take to help mothers & babies thrive.* National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ).

Resources: Books

- Karp, H. *The Happiest Baby on the Block*. New York, NY: Bantam, 2002.
- Weissbluth, M. *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child*. New York: NY: Ballentine, 2003.
- Weissbluth, M. *Your Fussy Baby*. New York, NY: Ballentine, 2003.



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