

BEGIN WITH THE GOAL IN MIND: COMMUNICATION PLANS FOR 0-3

TARA KELLY

STATEWIDE COORDINATOR – DEAF/HARD OF HEARING 0-21

DELAWARE STATEWIDE PROGRAMS FOR THE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, AND DEAF-BLIND

WHO AM I?

- Teacher of the Deaf, Family Educator/Early Interventionist, School Leader
- Oversee 0-21 Deaf and Hard of Hearing services through DE Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind
- Support 19 school districts and 21 charter schools throughout the state
- Run the 0-3 DHH Family Education program statewide
- Mother of dragons (who look suspiciously like twin 19-month-old boys 😊)



WHY ARE WE HERE?

Let's get some questions answered:

- What are the key issues in the creation of communication plans?
- What are the benefits and challenges of communication plans?
- What are next steps for implementing and evaluating effectiveness of communication plans?
- Bonus points: Where do the single socks that disappear from the dryer go??



IFSPs SHOULD SUPPORT ATTAINMENT OF FAMILY GOALS & EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES

- The service coordinator is responsible for the implementation of the early intervention services identified in the IFSP, including transition services and coordination with other agencies and persons. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015)
- To ensure seamless transition and align Early Intervention efforts with the Department of Education assuring that children are ready for preschool and kindergarten. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015)
- The Department of Education recognizes that, “it is especially important for infants and toddlers with disabilities to have access to high-quality early intervention services that prepare them to successfully transition to preschool and kindergarten. The Part C regulations will support the Education Department’s commitment to the goal of preparing more children with high needs with a strong foundation for success in school and beyond.” (U.S. Department of Education, 2015)

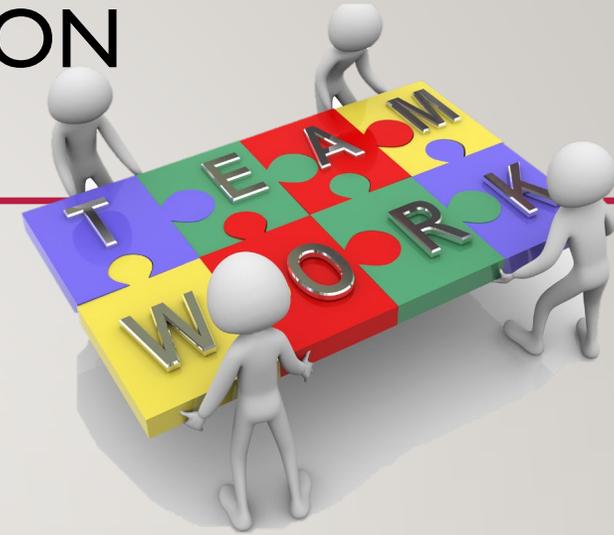
HOW DO COMMUNICATION PLANS FIT INTO THE IFSP?

Communication plans should:

- describe how the child is currently communicating across all settings and with all communication partners throughout their day
- guide discussions between team members around what communication opportunities exist and best fit the child's individual needs
- document the action plans that address areas of need – supports progress monitoring

Best practice = all children identified as d/Deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind should have a communication plan

WHO DEVELOPS COMMUNICATION PLANS?



The child's IFSP team should include:

- Family
- Service Coordinator
- Service Providers (ECE, SLP, Deaf Mentor, Educational Audiologist, etc).
- Early Intervention Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind - will typically facilitate the conversation
- Childcare/Nursing Care (if applicable – involvement/understanding critical)
- School district representative – can help to ensure smooth transition to preschool

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT OUR *Goals* ARE?

- First, ensure opportunities for families to meet d/Deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind individuals with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences
- **Representation matters** (for all of us)
- Move swiftly, but smartly – time is of the essence, but informed decision making is paramount
- Informal conversation prior to developing the plan

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT OUR *Goals* ARE?

Open-ended questions help to develop familiarity and shared vision

- “What are some of the activities that your family enjoys doing together?”
- When you picture your child in the future, what do you see them doing at home? At school? In their community?”
- “How do you see them interacting with friends? With teachers/other adults? With people in their community?”
- “What communication opportunities do you want them to have?”
- **“How do you see them connecting with d/Deaf and hard of hearing peers and role models?”**

GREAT! SO NOW THAT WE HAVE OUR GOALS...
HOW ARE WE GETTING THERE?



WHAT'S IN A COMMUNICATION PLAN?

- Information about the child's current receptive and expressive communication across all settings and with all communication partners
- Current opportunities for direct communication with family, peers and professionals in the child's language(s) and communication mode(s); if direct opportunities are not currently provided, an action plan must be created
- Assistive technology information regarding the child's current equipment and any other assistive devices or tools that may be needed

WHAT'S IN A COMMUNICATION PLAN?

- Educational opportunities for child and family – all opportunities on continuum should be offered and families' decisions respected
- How the child will have full and consistent communication access in all settings and activities throughout their day
- Any supports the family may need to access resources/services
- Monitoring for all action plan items, including data collection and assessments (if needed) and who is responsible for each

COMMUNICATION PLAN TEMPLATES

Early Intervention Communication Plans:

- CDC Making a Plan for Your Child: <http://tinyurl.com/yy6dfv4b>
- Pennsylvania Early Intervention Communication Plan: <http://tinyurl.com/y3aqtt97>

General Communication Plans:

- Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness Communication Planning Guide: <http://tinyurl.com/y2nqnr48>
- Hands and Voices Communication Plan: <http://tinyurl.com/y5gstm58>

COMMUNICATION PLAN BENEFITS

- Shared responsibility between team members to assist in the development and implementation of responsive child and family-centered goals
- Collaboration with Deaf Education professionals who contribute knowledge and expertise to the IFSP team that it may not have otherwise
- Serves as a touchstone for team discussions and baseline for progress monitoring; can become a “living history” of communication development

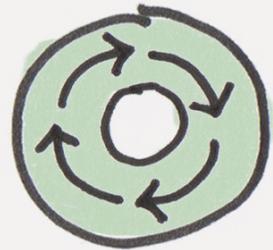
COMMUNICATION PLAN BENEFITS

- Creates a smoother transition from Early Intervention to school-based services for children, families and professionals
- “It is essential for the well-being and growth of deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind children that educational programs recognize each child’s individual language needs.” (Chapter 474, DE House Bill 283, 2010)
- **Bottom line: can help to ensure full and early access to communication**

COMMUNICATION PLAN CHALLENGES

- Many states do not require communication plans; those that do typically focus on school-aged children (i.e. 3-21)
- Some communication plans that are not early intervention-specific do not emphasize family involvement and support needs
- Writing plans for a program rather than for an individual child
- Insufficient training and lack of action plan monitoring – need the right people at the table
- Inconsistent and/or reduced funding often results in staff turnover and shortages – many programs are unaware of communication plans and how they impact 0-3 services

WE'VE GOT A PLAN – NOW WHAT?



vs.



COMMUNICATION PLAN REVIEW & REVISION

- Communication plans should be completed and then shared with all team members
- Should be reviewed every six months for children 0 to 3; more often, if needed
- All action plan items should be monitored, with appropriate data collection and assessments completed and shared with team at each review
- Should be revised to reflect child's changing needs, equipment and/or new communication and educational opportunities
- Data from communication plans can help inform service needs and placement decisions when transitioning to school-age services

COMMUNICATION PLAN RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES AND PROVIDERS

- CDC Decision Guide to Communication Choices for Parents:
<http://tinyurl.com/yxzbvg4y>
- Hands and Voices Communication Considerations A-Z:
<http://tinyurl.com/y5972hoh>
- Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center – Supporting Linguistic Competence for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:
<http://tinyurl.com/y38ggnfx>
- CEASD Advocacy Toolkit for Communication Plans:
<http://tinyurl.com/y55lh6sv>

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THANK YOU

Contact information:

Tara Kelly

Delaware Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind

Email: tara.kelly@christina.k12.de.us

Phone: (302) 256-8506 (voice/text)

Videophone: (302) 722-4569