

# Deaf Mentor & Role Model Program

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# Welcome!

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Overview of Presentation
- ▶ My role



# Program Overview

## Deaf Mentor/Role Model program

- ▶ Texas Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Mentor Program, coordinated by Statewide Outreach Center through Texas School for the Deaf, is a *free* family support program that is offered to parents/guardians of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, from birth through 5 years old.
- ▶ The program connects families statewide with deaf or hard of hearing children with specially trained Deaf Mentors and/or Role Models

# Comparing the Two

## Deaf Mentors

### Who?

- ▶ Deaf and hard of hearing adults certified in mentorship and ASL instruction through the nationwide SKI-HI Program

### What do they do?

- ▶ Interacts with the child and family using ASL
- ▶ Shows family members how to use ASL through informal interaction and formal ASL lessons
- ▶ Teaches the family about Deaf Culture and introduces them to the local Deaf Community
- ▶ Provides knowledge about life as a deaf or hard of hearing individual
- ▶ May share their life story, adaptations that are a part of a deaf person's life, and things that are unique to being deaf or hard of hearing

### How Often?

- ▶ Works with matched families through consistent weekly visits on a year-long basis
- ▶ Connects either in person or remotely

## Role Models

### Who?

- ▶ Deaf and hard of hearing adults certified in role modeling through the nationwide Ski-Hi Snapshot program

### What do they do?

- ▶ Provide children who are deaf and hard of hearing and their families with snapshot insight into life experiences as a deaf or hard of hearing adult
- ▶ May represent a variety of communication preferences (e.g. Listening and Spoken Language (LSL), Cued Speech/Cued English, and/or American Sign Language (ASL))
- ▶ Do not teach ASL or deaf culture

### How Often?

- ▶ Families have the option to meet as many Role Models as they like
- ▶ Engage with a family on a short-term basis
- ▶ Connects either in person or remotely

# Benefits of of Mentors and Role Models

- ▶ “Mentors provide a “nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development”<sup>a</sup>
- ▶ “Role models (a) address a critical need and (b) contribute to important developmental processes”<sup>b</sup>
- ▶ Research on mentoring programs and interventions demonstrate potential benefits on:<sup>c</sup>
  - ▶ academics
  - ▶ employment
  - ▶ psychosocial health
  - ▶ quality of life
  - ▶ transition-related
  - ▶ life skills



# Importance of Early Intervention with Deaf Involvement

- ▶ Learning ASL from a deaf person is getting it straight from the source
- ▶ Provides families glimpses in the life of a deaf adult
- ▶ Teach and support families ASL and deaf culture/community knowledge
- ▶ A lifeline to the deaf community and connection with available resources
- ▶ Provide open-minded and non-judgemental perspectives on any questions families may have about communicating with and supporting their deaf or hard of hearing children



# State of the Program

- ▶ Completed our pilot year in **August 2020**
- ▶ Serving **20** families across the state with an active waitlist
- ▶ **5** certified Deaf Mentors
- ▶ **1** certified Deaf Role Model
- ▶ Currently planning future trainings and contracting of more Deaf Mentors and Role Models



# Experiences of Launching a Mentor Program

- ▶ Supply and Demand :: Mentor and Role Models
- ▶ Diversity in Family's needs
- ▶ Logistics, Logistics, Logistics
- ▶ Make friends at every level



# Current Parents Feedback:

- ▶ "My family and I had taken all the free ASL classes we could and had hit a hard spot of what to do next. [Our town] does not have a ton of deaf events and so having **our Deaf Mentor** come every week was just what we needed to continue learning and growing. She has been so kind, positive, and has really opened our extended families eyes to this beautiful community!"

- *Parent of a family receiving Deaf Mentor services*

- ▶ We feel very supported by the program. We haven't had a ton of questions for **our Role Model**, but the ones we have had have been handled really well. It's been great to know he's there as a resource and kind heart. It was also great for John\* to see a grown up that has two hearing aids and signs to supplement his communication. It's helped inspire an interest in ASL here at home."

- *Parent of a family receiving Deaf Role Model services*

# Thank you!

- ▶ If you have questions, comments, or feedback, please contact me at [dhhm@tsd.state.tx.us](mailto:dhhm@tsd.state.tx.us)



# References

- ▶ Anderson, E. M., & Shannon, A. L. (1988). Toward a conceptualization of mentoring. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(1), 38-42.
- ▶ Cawthon, S., Johnson, P. M., Garberoglio, C. L., & Schoffstall, S. (2016). Role models as facilitators of social capital for deaf individuals: A research synthesis. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 161, 115-127. doi:10.1353/aad.2016.0021.
- ▶ Lindsay, S., & Munson, M. R. (2018). Mentoring for youth with disabilities: National mentoring resource center population review. *National Mentoring Resource Center*.