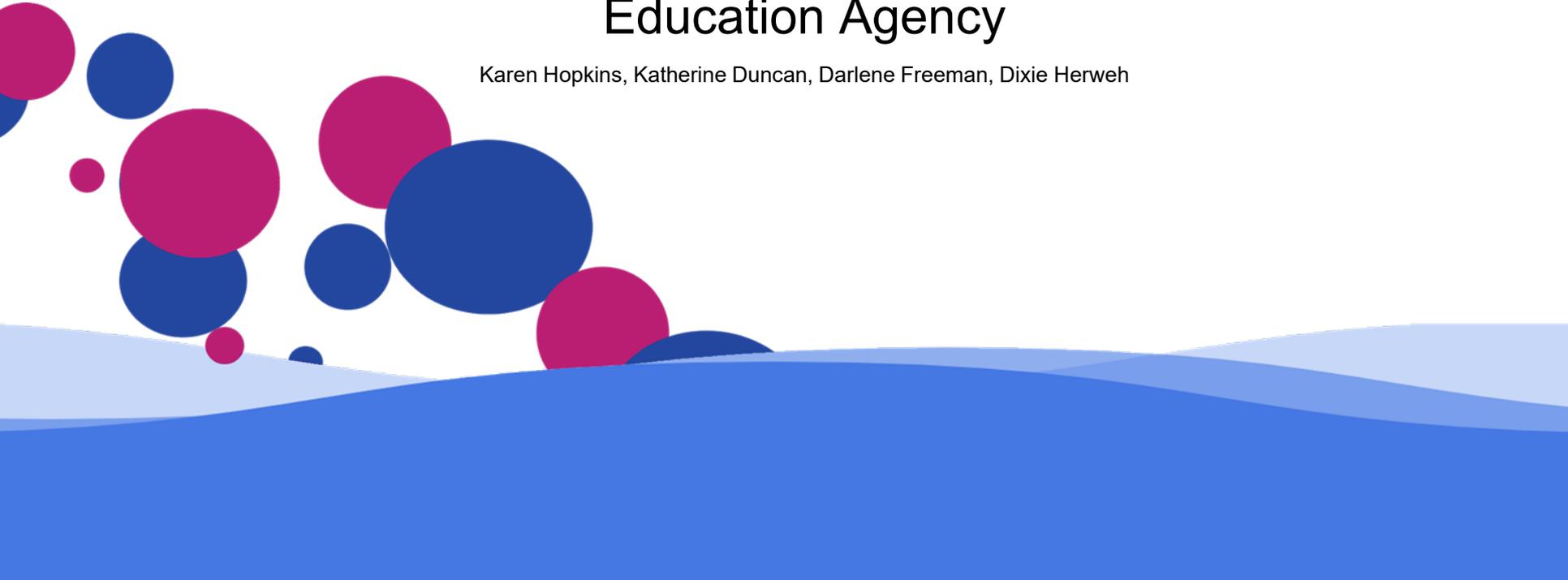




## **Earliest Interactions**

# A Holistic Approach: Collaboration Between a State EHDI Program and a Statewide Deaf Education Agency

Karen Hopkins, Katherine Duncan, Darlene Freeman, Dixie Herweh



# MECDHH History

## Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/ Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

- State agency supporting children who are D/HH from birth to age 21
- On-site and itinerant programming
- Early Intervention Programming
- MOU with statewide early intervention agency (Child Development Services)
- EI Specialists with expertise in working with children who are D/HH a part of each regional CDS team



# Why did MECDHH apply for HRSA grant?

- Changes in personnel at Maine EHDI Programming, hiring freeze resulted in reduced staffing capacity
- Strong relationship with Maine EHDI
- Strong relationship with statewide EI, audiology community



# Family Engagement

- Prioritizing parents of children who are D/HH as staff for the program
- Incorporating parents into decision-making/creation of resources
- Longstanding, positive relationship with Family-based Organization
  - Maine Hands and Voices



# HRSA-Funded Positions

Principal Investigator

Quality Improvement Specialist

Parent Consultant

Audiology Consultant

Director of Early Intervention and Family Engagement

FBO Positions



# Principal Investigator

- Deaf adult from northern Maine with personal experiences
- Mother of a hard of hearing teenager
- Educational Administrator
- Years of watching families struggle
- Responsible for overall grant oversight



# Quality Improvement Specialist

- Mother of a young adult who is deaf
- Assist in the planning, coordination, facilitation and evaluation of project deliverables and goals in all areas of the grant
- Assist with planning, scheduling and tracking project timelines and milestones
- Assist the team in meeting the goals of quality improvement



# Parent Consultant

- Serves as a *liaison* between the Maine Newborn Hearing Program, community resources, pediatricians' offices, Child Development Services and families of babies born in the state of Maine.
- Works *collaboratively* with the Maine Newborn Hearing Program and the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to identify babies who are deaf/hard of hearing and refer their families to service providers specializing in working with this population.

## **The Process:**

1. Referral
2. Family Support
3. PCP Contact
4. Diagnosis/Dismissal



# Audiology Consultant

- Providing expertise to program related to audiology topics, including test interpretation, audiologist's role in EHDI process, risk monitoring
- Collaboration with audiologists statewide to support progress toward EHDI goals
- Oversight of Pediatric Audiology Workgroup
- Development/revision of audiology resources
- Providing expertise to CDS as needed for audiology topics



# Director of Early Intervention and Family Engagement

- Currently vacant but supported by interim coordinators
- Administration of EI services for D/HH children statewide
- Oversight of HRSA grant activities
- Oversight of the Exploration of Language and Communication Opportunities (ELCO) process



# Collaboration with CDC

Monthly meetings

Collaborative projects

Overlap between HRSA and CDC grant aims



# Challenges

What is the EHDI Program? Inclusivity

Two different agencies

- Different leadership, rules governing projects

Communication

- Who takes the lead for projects?
- Ongoing, open communication needed



# Benefits

Collaborative program

One statewide family-centered program

More hands on deck

More direct relationship with EI providers

Relationship with audiologists

Parent Consultant involvement in EI meetings

QI - access to EI program and UNHS data

One statewide, seamless system...support beyond 0-3

