



A Volunteer USA Program



# The Deaf Family Literacy Academy

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# ...Our Clients, Our Community

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- Located in Broward and Pinellas Counties in Florida
- Children with any degree of hearing loss and their hearing and deaf parents (Pinellas County)
- Some children with multiple disabilities
- Children ages birth to age 12 (focus on early intervention)
- 60 families in the program
- 33% of the children in program have cochlear implants
- Demographics
  1. 61% are low income/working poor
  2. 71% Black/African American
  3. 14% Hispanic/Latino
  4. 10% Caucasian
  5. 5% Asian

# Main Components of the Deaf Family Literacy Academy

- Early Intervention
- Parent Support Groups
- Home Visits
  - American Sign Language Instruction
  - Language and Literacy Instruction for children
  - Parent Education
- Deaf Mentors
- Family Learning Socials
- Saturday Signing Stories Programs



# 4 Components of Family Literacy

- Adult Education
- Child Education
- Parent Education
- Parent and Child Together Activities (PACT time)



# Our Approach

"Ears don't think, minds do"



## ■ Dual Language Acquisition

## ■ ASL/Spoken English

### ➤ Early Exposure to ASL

- ❖ Research: babies who are hearing
- ❖ Research: babies with a hearing loss

### ➤ Spoken English

- ❖ Early and consistent use of amplification
- ❖ Speech and auditory therapy





# Program Description

## Adult Education

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- ✓ **American Sign Language instruction**
- ✓ **Shared Reading Project from Gallaudet University**
- ✓ **In the families' home with deaf and hearing teachers**
- ✓ **Specialized ASL Curriculum for families**
- ✓ **Pertinent to everyday conversations with their child**
- ✓ **Opportunities to practice with deaf mentor, child, and other parents**



# Child Education

## ***CURRICULUM/APPROACH***

- ❑ Language exposure
- ❑ Pre literacy skills
- ❑ Creative Curriculum
- ❑ Dual Language (ASL/English)
- ❑ Early access in order to acquire language naturally and on time







# CASE STUDIES

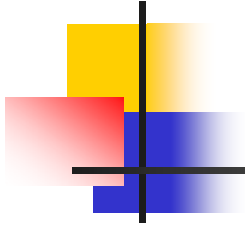
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- Kennedy

- 4 years old
- Profoundly deaf
- Cochlear Implant at 14 months old
- Started with ASL at 6 months old now is on age level in spoken language and pre academic skills

- Brianna

- 2 years old
- Moderate hearing loss
- Started with 1 sign and no spoken words when entering our program and after 6 months in the program signs and understands over 100 words. She also says over 25 words in spoken English



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- Video Clips

# Parent Education & Support

## Parent workshops

- At the library and in the community
- Topics: Early intervention, Assistive Technology for deaf children, How to teach reading through American Sign Language

## Parent support groups



## Family Learning Socials



# Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time

## **In home and at the library**

Provides opportunities for parents and children to practice language and literacy activities





# OUTCOMES

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From data collected on each preschool (1 -4 year old) child's vocabulary development every six months, 90% of the children in the class improved their score on the *MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory* since the beginning of the program. Most children improved their expressive vocabulary by 200-500 words or signs.

According to the observational checkpoint results of the creative curriculum paperwork, all of the toddler and preschool children made steady progress in the areas of social/emotional development, physical development, cognitive development, and language development.

Data collected at the beginning and end of the program show that 100% of the parents in the program improved their communication with their deaf and hard of hearing children. All of the parents say they feel more confident in reading to their children now than they did in the beginning of the program.

According to data collected on pre and post American Sign Language (ASL) vocabulary tests, 90% of the parents in the program improved their expressive and receptive ASL skills.



# Outreach & Recruitment Strategies

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- Referrals from Early Interventionists/therapists, pediatricians, and local agencies
- Partnerships with other agencies
  - Get to know other agencies in the community
- Referrals from parents in the program
  - Ask parents to volunteer to tell others about your program and/or sit at booths at fairs in the community



# Funding and Collaboration

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## ■ Funding Sources

- Volunteer USA Foundation – Florida Family Literacy Initiative
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Sun-Sentinel Children's Fund
- United Way of Broward County
- Peacock Foundation
- Community Foundation of Broward
- Private Donations

## ■ Collaboration

- Broward County Public Schools
- Family Central
- Department of Children and Families
- Social Service Agencies (housing, food, basic necessities)
- Children's Diagnostic and Treatment Center – Early Intervention
- League for the Hard of Hearing



# Contact Information

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# Questions or Comments

