



**Virginia Supplemental Early Language and Literacy Resources
for Deafness/Hard of Hearing (VA SELLR-DHH) Project
Advisory Committee Meeting**

February 3, 2023

The Richmond Police Training Academy, Auditorium (Room 103)
1202 West Graham Road, Richmond, Virginia 23220

Minutes of Meeting

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Emilie Mulholland, Advisory Committee Chairperson, at 10:06 a.m.

Roll Call of Members: The roll call of members was conducted, and the advisory committee members and guests introduced themselves.

Members Present: Briana Bates, Robin Bliven, Dr. Lori Bobsin, Michele Bronnenberg, Wanda Council, Ashley M. Esteva, Janet Knust, Carrie Martin, Emilie Mulholland, Terri Nelligan, Eric Raff, Dr. Irene Schmalz, Jessica Sheffield, Hunta Williams, and Laura Yellin

Members Absent: Valerie Abbott

Guests in Attendance: Dr. Zenia Burnett and Sarah Peters, Virginia Department of Education; Tracey Yurechko, Technical Assistance Center for Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Hilary Hodes, Virginia Project for Children and Young Adults with Deaf-Blindness; and Michelle Long and Sheena Cobb, members of the public

Communication access services were provided by American Sign Language Interpreters: John Folker, Liz Leitch, Katherine Malady, and Bernice McCormack; Cued Language Transliterators (virtual): Maureen Bellamy and Carolyn Livingston; and Communication Access Realtime Translation Captioner (virtual): Rhonda Tuck

Old Business

Review of December 1, 2022, Meeting Minutes: Mr. Williams commented that the meeting minutes did not reflect all comments that were made by committee members during the meeting and lunchtime discussion. Ms. Council provided clarification that the meeting minutes reflected a summary of the information that was presented on the agenda items during the meeting. Ms. Council offered to assist

with ensuring Mr. Williams had obtained the complete summary of the December 1, 2022, meeting minutes.

Ms. Mulholland referenced the subcommittee meeting that was held on December 13, 2022, at the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Copies of the subcommittee meeting agenda and minutes were included in the advisory committee members' materials.

New Business

Review of Agenda: Ms. Council reviewed the scheduled items on the meeting agenda, and she informed the committee members that the next advisory committee meeting would be held on March 10, 2023.

Dr. Bobsin requested clarification regarding the subcommittee meeting that was held on December 13, 2022. Ms. Council clarified that the subcommittee meeting was scheduled as a work session for the three designated lead-agency representatives and Dr. Brenda Seal, an independent educational consultant, who attended to assist with compiling the list of selected language developmental milestones resources that was sent to the advisory committee members on December 20, 2022. Dr. Bobsin requested at least a one-week notice be given to the committee members about future subcommittee meetings to allow adequate time for their input prior to the meeting.

Communication Etiquette Reminders: Mr. Raff provided recommendations for utilizing appropriate communication access throughout the meeting, which included each person providing a visual description of themselves upon introduction. Ms. Hodes reminded meeting participants to state their name before speaking.

Travel and Logistics: Ms. Peters provided an overview of the process for submitting the travel-related reimbursement forms and information.

Early Language Milestones List Overview: Ms. Council shared data regarding the 2021 Virginia Special Education Child Count, which reflected the number of children in Virginia, between the ages of 2-21 years, with an individualized education program (IEP) who had been identified under the categories of Deafness/Hard of Hearing (Hearing Impairment) or Deaf-Blindness and who received special education services as of December 1, 2021. Mr. Williams commented that the redacted data for groups of ten or fewer students would be helpful to include for the next advisory committee meeting. Ms. Council clarified that the Virginia Department of Education does not report data publicly on groups of ten or fewer students to protect students' personally identifiable information. Ms. Mulholland requested clarification regarding the child count data for children between the ages of birth-two years who did not have an IEP. Ms. Nelligan commented that although she was not previously asked to provide that information, she would be happy to share the data at the next advisory committee meeting.

Ms. Council facilitated the review and discussion for each of the 13 items included on the list of language developmental milestones resources. Committee members commented on each item for the consideration of its usefulness as a tool for parents to use to monitor and track their child's language

developmental milestones toward the acquisition of language and English literacy. All committee members were provided a rubric to assist with independently rating and providing feedback on each item. Ms. Nelligan suggested editing the rubric to include additional information about the languages and modalities addressed by each resource on the list.

Shared Language Experiences: During lunch, Mr. Raff facilitated a discussion among the advisory committee members about their experiences communicating with their family members as children and adults.

Early Language Milestones List Review: The advisory committee members further reviewed and provided feedback on the listed language developmental milestones resources. The committee members were asked to submit their top three choices of the language developmental milestone resources that were being considered from the list.

Parent Resource Guide Development: Ms. Council facilitated a discussion about two resource documents that are currently available for parents of children with hearing loss in Virginia: *Virginia's Resource Guide for Families of Children with Hearing Loss* and *Virginia's Resource Guide for Families of Children with Hearing Loss – A Companion Guide for Children in Elementary School*. Ms. Bates commented that some of the information did not accurately or appropriately reflect diversity among children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and the options for parents regarding the chosen language and mode of communication. She also expressed the need for the documents to be fully accessible. Dr. Bobsin commented that the development of those resources involved input from a diverse group of professionals who utilized varying languages and communication modalities. Dr. Schmalz commented that the documents can be accessed online and welcomed feedback regarding suggestions for the future updates and revisions. Ms. Esteva recommended having the resource documents available in Spanish as well.

Public Comment:

Michelle Long, Virginia Association of the Deaf, spoke on the need for children who are deaf or hard of hearing to experience Deaf culture.

Sheena Cobb, spoke on language deprivation and removing barriers to language acquisition for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Ms. Council acknowledged and thanked them for their comments.

Next Steps: Ms. Mulholland confirmed the advisory committee will review and discuss language assessment resources and tools for professionals at the next committee meeting. She mentioned the final meeting will be held on either May 4 or May 18, 2023. Ms. Council clarified that the committee members will also continue to review and discuss the language developmental milestones resources for parents, language assessment resources for professionals, and the parent resource documents at the March and May meetings. Ms. Council reminded the advisory committee members that they must make their final recommendation for the selected language developmental milestones for parents by June 1,

2023. Subsequently, the advisory committee members will be informed of the selected language developmental milestones that will be included in the parent resource document by June 30, 2023.

The committee members were asked to send information via email to Ms. Council by February 15, 2023, regarding recommended language assessment tools for use by professionals with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Dr. Schmalz commented that it would be helpful to include the language and mode of communication on the rubric that is utilized for rating the language assessment tools for professionals.

Adjournment: Ms. Mulholland thanked the advisory committee members and guests for their attendance and participation at the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.