

Louisiana Hands & Voices

Connections Newsletter

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GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE™

Parent support program in Louisiana

Louisiana Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side (GBYS) is a family support program that embodies the mission of Hands & Voices, which is to provide unbiased support to families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Many parents report that soon after they receive the diagnosis of their child's hearing loss, they want to talk with another parent who has been through the same experience, get more information about their options, and learn about agencies and resources that can help. GBYS has been designed to meet these needs.

Guide By Your Side does this through specially trained "Parent Guides" who work directly with families in need of the unique

These sweet little one's families participate in GBYS program and are new members of Louisiana Hands & Voices



support that comes from someone else who has walked the path him/herself and can share from direct experience and wisdom, while providing emotional support, and a perspective of optimism and hope on a shared journey.

Parent Guides likewise provide families with complete, impartial information, available resources and connections to services available.

Enrolling in the Guide By Your Side program is easy, confidential and free of charge. Parents and professionals can find out more or request services by contacting Mariah Ranko, the GBYS Coordinator at 504-919-8147. ♦



HANDS &
VOICES™

"What works for your child is what makes the choice right"™

Non-biased support for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing

For more information about Hands & Voices, please feel free to contact:

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Check out our **Facebook** page to help you follow all that is happening locally around our State, as well as throughout the nation.



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Back to School Already ???

It is hard to believe that summer is almost over! Time to get back to school supplies and new clothes and a brand new backpack. Maybe more importantly, back to school means meeting new teachers, new friends and re-connecting with ones you haven't seen for a few months. This becomes even more important when your child is deaf or hard of hearing! So what can we, as parents and guardians, do to ease this transition from being at home with familiar environments and ease of conversation to going to a new classroom with people who may not "get it"?

A few things I have found helpful and a few things other parents have shared -

- ★ Start NOW to get your kids on a better sleeping schedule if they aren't already! Scale back their bedtime and tv viewing/screentime until they are where they need to be for school night bedtime. Having a good night's sleep can make all the difference in frustration levels!
- ★ Find out when "meet the teacher" is! If you can't make it that day, ask if there is another time to visit. Look at the classroom and see where lighting is best for reading lips/watch interpreters and notice noises/distractions that will make it more difficult for your child to understand what is being taught. Factor all that in when your son or daughter chooses a seat.
- ★ Teachers in the younger grade levels often send a letter home telling the child and parents a little

bit about themselves. Have your child write a letter to their teacher(s) – what are their likes? dislikes? strengths? weaknesses? how can the teacher help them keep up in the classroom without singling them out?

- ★ Talk to your child about self-advocacy and being comfortable with friends. What are some things they want their friends (new and longtime friends) to know about them and about deafness? What are some ways they can let their friends know if they are lost in a conversation without hurting anyone's feelings?
- ★ Look over the IEP/IFSP – what accommodations are there for your child? Talk to the school and double check that any new staff is aware of the IEP, that equipment and/or interpreters are ready to go and that the teachers have been trained how to use the equipment and/or interpreters! Do you need to take hearing aids or CIs to the audiologist to get them serviced or ready for a new FM system?

But mostly, don't stress too much! Enjoy these last sleepy summer days with your child. There won't be as many childhood summers left with them as either of you want. Next thing you know they will be adults and on their way to bigger and better things! ♦

Article adapted and shared from Texas Hands & Voices blog



Non-biased support for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing

What's happening:

08/20/13 La H&V Board Conf Call
08/22/13 NHS Advisory Council Mtg
10/03-04 SPALS conference,
Cajundome, Lafayette

For more info on events, please see our Facebook page !



Families gathered to share more than the beautiful weather. They Families caught up with old friends, met new ones and shared good times. Families with children with hearing loss often share many common experiences and some of the same challenges. Through these GBYS events families have opportunities to share the joys of raising and growing up with kids with hearing loss. ♦