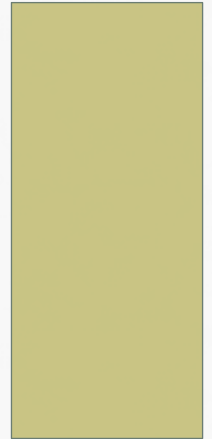


COMMUNICATING ALL THE OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

LORI L. BOBSIN, PHD, CCC-SLP, LSLs CERT. AVT



WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF DEAFNESS?



CHILDREN WITH THE MOST SEVERE
HEARING LOSS CAN LEARN TO LISTEN
AND TALK.

WILLIAM



WB_little pigs.mp4

PURPOSE

- Last year, Children from birth to age five who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing; parent resource” (VA HB1873 and VA SB983) were introduced.
- These bills, as presented, were both biased, misinformed, and unnecessary.
- We would like to present you with our justifications as to why this bill should not receive patronage for introduction into consideration for the next or future General Assembly sessions.

BIAS

- Formal manual communication training in the US began for children with hearing loss in the early 1800's.
- Oral communication became more prevalent in mid- to late-1800's.
- Thus began the oral/manual debate.

BIAS

- Deaf culture arose out of the desire for proponents of manual communication to sustain their way of life, including what they consider their native language, American Sign Language.
- Basic beliefs of Deaf culture:
 - Their deafness is not a disability;
 - They represent a linguistic minority not a disability group;
 - They generally believe that children who have hearing loss belong at residential schools for the deaf, where they can be immersed in Deaf culture.

BIAS

- LEAD-K supporters are pushing ASL on all children with hearing loss and attempting to set up a “resource” and “advisory committee” that support their initiative.
- The Virginia cohort of these supporters not only advocate against the use of listening and spoken language, but also against all other forms of sign language except ASL.

(Jenny Witteborg and Rhonda Jennings-Arey,
“LEAD-K: Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids”,
UVA ASL/Deaf Culture Lecture Series 02/28/17)

MISINFORMATION

“Deaf children’s success in acquiring language at age appropriate levels when exposed to sign language is well documented; however the majority of deaf children continue to be denied exposure to a visual language. It is a denial of their human right to language and the ineffective educational system policies that perpetuate this injustice. This failure by the educational system to acknowledge a deaf child’s visual experience of the world does not reflect the deaf child’s full potential.”

LEAD-K Website-at-a-Glance

MISINFORMATION: CLARIFIED

- Much of the assertions made by LEAD-K advocates...specifically about spoken language development in children with hearing loss...are based on outdated information.
- There was a time 30...even 20...years ago when technology did not provide enough auditory access to the child's brain to develop spoken language...THIS IS NOT LONGER THE CASE.

WHAT WE KNOW

- 95% of children born with hearing loss are born to parents with normal hearing thresholds;
- When given the choice, these families most often choose listening and spoken language;
- Why? Both advancement in hearing technology (hearing aids/cochlear implants) and early and appropriate intervention (EHDI / Newborn Screening Programs) allow children with hearing loss to develop unprecedented access to spoken language development.

WHAT WE KNOW

- Universal Newborn Screening Programs have lowered the average age of identification;
- Earlier detection allows for intervention to occur during CRITICAL PERIODS OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT;
- If the auditory areas of the brain are not activated during this time, it can destroy chances for spoken language development...we cannot develop spoken language SECOND LANGUAGE, as LEAD-K proponents have suggested.

WHAT WE KNOW

- With appropriate intervention (access to audiological services and qualified personnel in Early Intervention Programs and Schools) children with hearing loss can have the same access to educational, social and vocational opportunities as children with normal hearing.

Yoshinaga-Itano C, Sedey AL, Coulter DK, Mehl AL
**Language of early- and later-identified children
with hearing loss.**

Pediatrics. 1998 Nov;102(5):1161-71

EVIDENCE

- Children whose families used spoken language exclusively developed better auditory speech recognition skills after 3 years of CI use and had more intelligible speech than children whose families used sign language.

Ann E. Geers, Christine M. Mitchell, Andrea Warner-Czyz,
Nae-Yuh Wang, Laurie S. Eisenberg,
the CDaCI Investigative Team.

**Early Sign Language Exposure and Cochlear Implantation
Benefits.** Pediatrics. June 2017

EVIDENCE

- Children whose parents signed were statistically significantly more likely than children of nonsigning parents to exhibit spoken language delays in elementary grades and to fall behind age-mates in reading comprehension by late elementary grades.

Ann E. Geers, Christine M. Mitchell, Andrea Warner-Czyz,
Nae-Yuh Wang, Laurie S. Eisenberg,
the CDaCI Investigative Team.

**Early Sign Language Exposure and Cochlear Implantation
Benefits.** Pediatrics. June 2017

EVIDENCE

- Children without sign language scored significantly better in reading in late elementary grades compared with children whose families provided early exposure to sign language.

Ann E. Geers, Christine M. Mitchell, Andrea Warner-Czyz,
Nae-Yuh Wang, Laurie S. Eisenberg,
the CDaCI Investigative Team.

**Early Sign Language Exposure and Cochlear Implantation
Benefits.** Pediatrics. June 2017

WHAT WE KNOW

- Earlier detection, advancement in hearing assessment and technology, and appropriate and aggressive intervention gives families CHOICE;
- Hearing parents want to communicate with their children through the family's native language...they don't believe that ASL is their child's native language.
- Bills like HB1873 and SB982 would ELIMINATE CHOICE;

REDUNDANT

- LEAD-K proponents want a resource where assessment and recommendations can be provided to allow for kindergarten-readiness;
- IT ALREADY EXISTS!
- **IDEA**, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, provides early intervention services to children birth through age three (IDEA Part C) and free and appropriate public education for children ages three through twenty-one (IDEA Part B). Children who have IFSPs and IEPs *already* receive regular assessments to monitor their progress and assess their growth.

REDUNDANT

- WE DO NOT NEED ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION ON THE BOOKS TO FURTHER ENTANGLE OUR STATE SYSTEMS IN UNNECESSARY AND REDUNDANT BEAUROCRACY.

EXPENSIVE

- IDEA is federally-funded....

LEAD-K LEGISLATION
HAS NO FUNDING SOURCE;

CONCLUSION

LEAD-K LEGISLATION

- ITS PRINCIPLES ARE OUTDATED AND ARGUMENTS ARE IRRELEVANT BASED ON THE TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE TODAY;
- BIASED;
- UNNECESSARY/REDUNDANT;
- EXPENSIVE.