



## **A Collaborative Approach to Supporting the Individual Needs of Students Who Are Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing and/or Blind/Visually Impaired in Inclusive Environments**



Florida Instructional Materials  
Center for the Visually Impaired

SERVING FLORIDA SINCE 1972

This session is provided by discretionary projects funded by the Florida Department of Education, Division of K-12 Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B.



<https://bit.ly/FamilyCafe2023>

# Agenda

- Project Descriptions
- Basics of Inclusion
  - Law Overview
  - Inclusive Classrooms
- Family Support
  - Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (D/HH) Strategies & Resources
  - Visual Impairment (VI) Strategies & Resources
- Parent's Involvement in the Collaborating and Advocating Effectively



# Mission

The Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) collaborates with all districts and schools to provide customized services and supports ensuring all students with disabilities have the same educational, social, and future opportunities as their peers.

- District capacity-building
- School-based planning, implementation and support
- Family support and information
- Resources and products

[Section 1003.57, Florida Statutes, \(F.S.\)](#)



# FIN's Mission Implementation

In partnership with districts, FIN facilitates the implementation of best practices for inclusive education through

- data-driven, student-focused planning and problem-solving across districts and schools
- data-driven professional development and technical assistance to increase knowledge and skills of district and school personnel



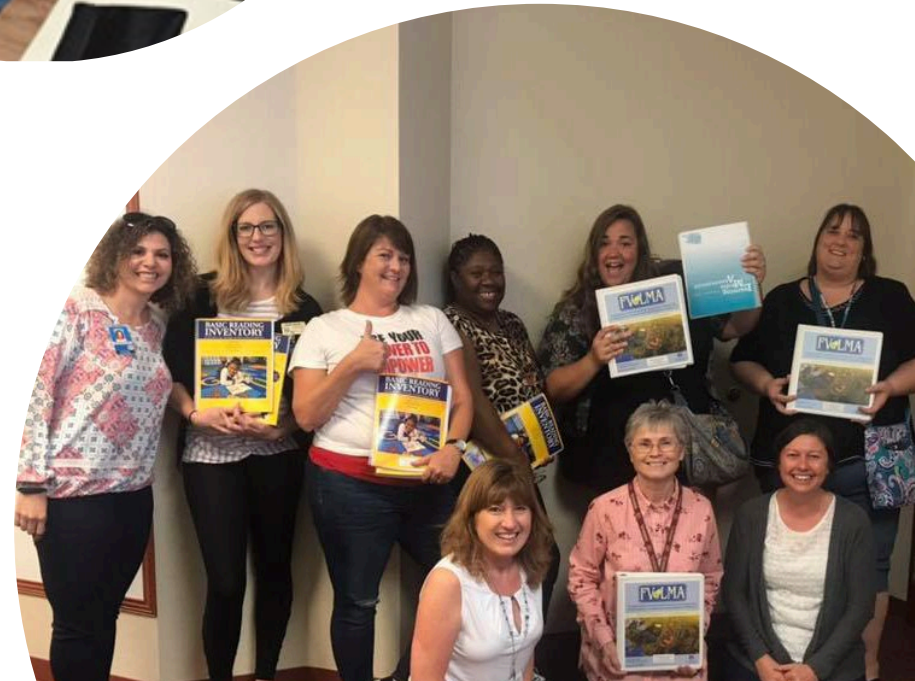


# FIN's Mission Implementation

- Coaching and resources for district and school personnel to build and sustain capacity
- Sharing information to build collaborative relationships between families, schools and districts

# FIMC-VI Information

- Statewide resource center for the K-12 students who are visually impaired and enrolled in public or private schools, as well as home school students in formally organized educational programs
- Operates under the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) through an annual grant



# FIMC-VI Mission Statement

To promote the success of Florida's students with visual impairments by:

- Providing free, high quality accessible instructional materials in a timely manner, and
- Providing teachers, administrators, families, agency personnel and others with resources and opportunities for training and professional development



# FIMC-VI Services

- Procurement or production and distribution of accessible instructional materials (braille, large print)
- Professional development opportunities
- Statewide assessment development in Unified English Braille (grades 3-12) contracted and uncontracted
- Volunteer services for braille
- American Printing House for the Blind products
- Loan Library
- Student and family events (Florida Regional Braille Challenge, Florida Cane Quest, Florida Festival of Families, APH Abacus Bee)
- Scholastic Book Program



# RMTC-D/HH Information

- Statewide resource center for stakeholders working with K-12 students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in Florida
- A discretionary project of the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)
- Housed on the campus of the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) located in St. Augustine, Florida



# RMTC-D/HH Mission



To work collaboratively with all stakeholders  
to support the educational needs of all  
students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing  
in Florida.





# RMTC-D/HH Services



Media and Materials Loan Library



Technical Assistance



Assessments/Evaluations

- Professional development
- On-site observations
- Consultations, trainings, and technical assistance
- Free loan library
- Language evaluations and assessment
- Information and referral
- Tons of resources

All services and materials available from RMTC-D/HH are provided at no charge to Florida Stakeholders.

# Think of A Loved One



What would you want for them?



# Know the Laws

- Every Student Succeeds Act
  - <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/essa.shtml>
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
  - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statute-chapter-33/subchapter-ii/1412/a/5>
- Section 1003.57, Florida Statutes (F.S.)
  - [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&URL=1000](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000)

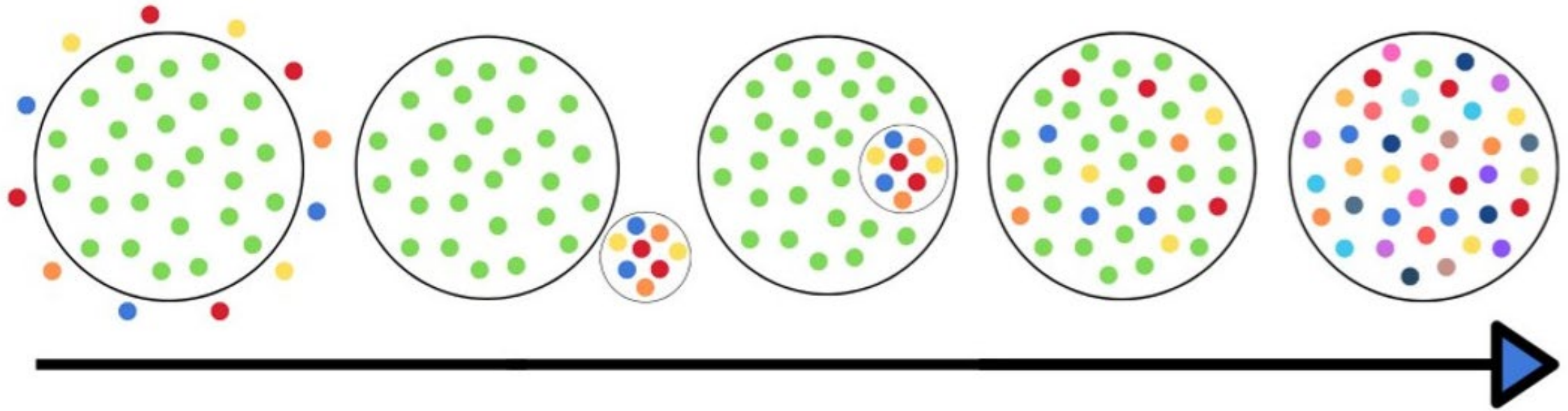
Exclusion

Segregation

Integration

Inclusion

Diversity



Where are you on this continuum? What's the next step?

A photograph of a classroom scene. A female teacher with long dark hair, wearing a white shirt, is leaning over a wooden desk, smiling and assisting four young students. The students, who are of various ethnicities, are sitting at the desk and working on papers. One student in the foreground is a girl with dark skin and braids, wearing a pink shirt and a blue headband with a flower. Another student is a boy with light skin and blonde hair, wearing a blue shirt. The background shows a bulletin board with several colorful papers pinned to it. The overall atmosphere is positive and supportive.

# What makes a classroom inclusive?

## What makes a classroom Inclusive?

Desks are arranged in groups around the classroom.

Visual learning aids are used, such as daily schedules, timers, posters, and charts. Many students are visual learners, and even those that aren't can benefit from this support.

What makes  
a classroom  
inclusive?

A variety of learning materials are provided for all students.

A class-wide behavior program supports positive social skills and behaviors in students.

Technology (including assistive technology) is available to support students.



# Person First Language

## PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE

Rather than using labels to define individuals, person first language (PFL) puts the person before the condition or trait. PFL is about respect and dignity and focuses on the person, not the label.

### SAY:



A person with a disability



He is a person with an intellectual disability



Maria is a student with Autism



Thomas has Down syndrome



She has a learning disability



Jade receives special education services



He has an emotional or behavioral disability



Lee has developmental delays



She rides in an accessible bus



He has ADHD

### INSTEAD OF:



A special needs child



He is slow



The Autistic girl



Thomas is Downs



She is LD or learning disabled



Jade is ESE or in special ed



That EBD kid



Lee is developmentally delayed



She rides the handicap bus



He is ADHD



The Florida Inclusion Network is a discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part H.

[www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com](http://www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com)



# Presumed Competence





# Universal Design for Learning (UDL) & Differentiation



# Accommodations and Modifications



## **Accommodations:**

- Change *how* learning takes place
- Do not change the standard
- Are aligned with statewide academic standards assessment

## **Modifications:**

- Change what is taught in the course
- Provide instruction through Access Points
- Are aligned with statewide alternate achievement assessment





Co-Teaching or  
Support  
Facilitation and  
Collaboration



# Signs That Inclusion is Working for Your Child

- You visit the classroom; you see your child participate in learning activities with same-age peers that do not have disabilities
- You visit the classroom; you see your child's classmates helping each other in academic and other activities
- Child brings home a variety of work that gives them a chance to demonstrate strengths and interests
- Child's seat in the classroom does not separate them from peers without disabilities
- Child's daily schedule is mostly in the general education classroom

# Signs That Inclusion is Working for Your Child

- Child participates in extracurricular activities, such as sports or clubs, with students who do not have disabilities
- The teacher shows commitment to meeting the needs of diverse learners in the class
- The teacher celebrates the accomplishments of all students throughout the year
- Child speaks positively about other students in the class
- Child is greeted by other students in his or her classes
- Child likes going to school

# What Can You Do To Help?

Ask

Ask the teacher what you can do at home to help your child be included.

Stay

Stay on top of your child's learning.

Read

Read stories to your child about friendship and belonging.

Share

Share ideas with the school about what is helping at home.

Be

Be a school citizen.

Help

Help support other families, especially those of students with disabilities.

Thank

Thank teachers for efforts to include your child.



“Disability is not something an individual overcomes. People with disabilities are successful when we develop alternative techniques, and our communities choose inclusion.”

-Haben Girma, Harvard Law graduate who happens to be deafblind

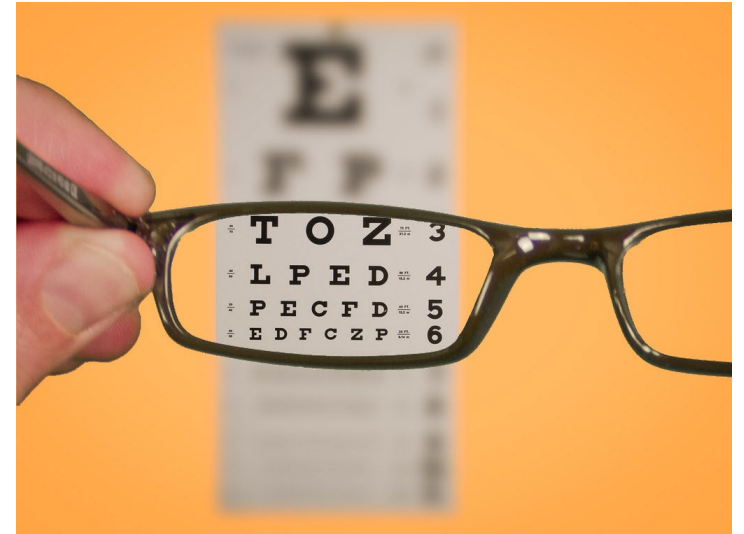


# Understanding Visual Impairments

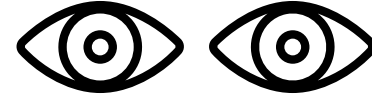
- According to VisionAware, it is estimated that the sense of sight provides approximately 80% of all the information we receive about the world. (visionaware.org, 2022)
- Children with visual impairments lack the easy access to visual learning that sighted children have. The enormous amount of learning that takes place via vision must now be achieved using other senses and methods. ([Center for Parent Information & Resource](#), 2022)
- Being able to see enables us to capture the “whole” of an object immediately. This isn’t so for children with a visual impairment. They cannot see the “whole,” they have to work from the details up to build an understanding of the whole. ([Center for Parent Information & Resource](#), 2022)

# Types of Visual Impairments

- A visual impairment is any visual condition that impacts an individual's ability to successfully complete the activities of everyday life. (Project Ideal, 2022)
- Acuity deficit after best correction
- Visual field loss
- Visual motor difficulties
- Decreased visual response due to a neurological problem affecting the visual part of the brain ([American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus](#), 2022)



# Learning Strategies



- Students with a visual impairment have a limited ability to learn incidentally from their environment
- Compensatory skills and adaptive techniques must be directly taught
- Require specialized instruction in 9 essential skill areas:
  - communication skills, social skills, orientation and mobility, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, use of assistive technology, visual efficiency, career education skills, and self-determination
- Students with visual impairments can learn at roughly the same rate as other children but require direct interventions to develop understanding of the relationships between people and objects in their environment

([Project IDEAL](#), 2022)

# Always Remember...

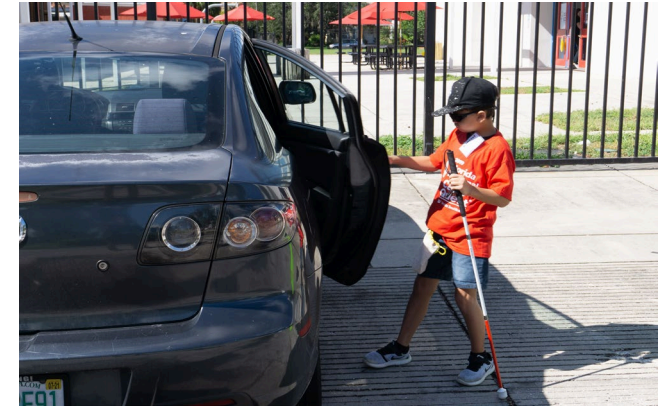
- Encourage your child's independence by letting them do things, rather than you doing it for them such as:
  - assisting in the kitchen to prepare meals
  - dressing themselves
  - Brushing their own teeth and hair
  - paying for a snack
  - making a grocery list and reading it as the family shops
  - getting the mail
  - taking out the trash
- This will improve the self-esteem, expand their self-determination skills and lay a firm foundation for self-sufficiency in the future!





# Orientation & Mobility

- Movement is important to everyone. Orientation asks the questions:
  - “Where am I?”
  - “Where am I going?”
  - “How do I get there?”
- Mobility involves traveling safely and efficiently.
- Orientation and mobility (O&M) begins with understanding where your body ends and the environment begins. It also includes knowing about relationships between different objects in the environment.



([Paths to Literacy](#), 2022)

# Orientation & Mobility (Continued)

- Orientation and mobility is an important lifelong learning process because:
  - Movement teaches the brain. O&M teaches movement with a purpose.
  - Safety creates confidence and a sense of well-being. O&M skills enable children to safely explore and interact with the world, including the home, school, and community. When infants and children, including those with low vision or multiple disabilities, understand their environments, they feel safe.
  - Experience brings context to life. It provides real experiences essential to all children. The skills learned reduce isolation by giving students a “common ground” for interacting with family, friends, and future employers.

([Paths to Literacy](#), 2022)

# Orientation & Mobility Instruction

- O&M instruction includes activities such as teaching
  - parents how to cope with their natural fear that their baby will get hurt as they learn to move throughout the many environments
  - a young child how to move towards a family member's voice
  - a young child with limited movement that those movements creates changes in his life
  - a student how to find her way in the community by using a telescope or monocular to read street signs
  - an adolescent how to use a cane and the bus system to independently meet his friends
  - a girl in a wheelchair how to find the bathroom independently
  - a student to travel independently to a future job in the community

(Adapted from [Paths to Literacy](#), 2022)



[Wearable 'Toddler Cane' Invented and Produced by CUNY Consortium Has Aided Nearly 1,200 Blind Children in 45 States and 21 Countries – CUNY Newswire](#)

# Inclusive Tips for Parents



- Learn as much as you can about your child's specific visual impairment.
- Understand that your child is **receiving small bits of information at a time**, not all at once through vision. Help your child explore new things with his or her senses and build up a concept of the “whole.”
- **Encourage curiosity and explore** new things and places often with your child. Give lots of opportunity to touch and investigate objects, ask questions, and hear explanations of what something is, where it comes from, and so on.
- Learn how to **adapt your home**, given the range and degree of your child's visual impairment. Help your son or daughter explore the house and learn to navigate it safely.

([Project IDEAL](#), 2022)



# Inclusive Tips for Parents – Part 2

- Work with the early interventionists or school staff (depending on your child's age) to build a solid individualized plan of services and supports that address your child's unique developmental and educational needs.
- Talk to other parents of children who have visual impairments similar to your child's.
- Keep in touch with the professionals working with your child. Offer support. Demonstrate any assistive technology your child uses and provide any information teachers will need. Find out how you can augment your child's learning at home.

([Project IDEAL](#), 2022)



# Communication Background Information

- Being deaf or hard of hearing only means the person cannot hear or does not hear clearly.
- Different hearing levels impact hearing, not intelligence.
- Being deaf or hard of hearing does not mean the person can read lips.
- A person who is deaf or hard of hearing in today's world has many different communication options.
- Pieces of information may often be lost during verbal communication.
- Language acquisition and access is a primary concern for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, regardless of modality.

Cheng & Mayberry, 2019)

# Expectations

- Hold students who are D/HH to high expectations
- Too much help = learned helplessness
- Presumption of competence
- Least dangerous assumption
- Reading levels



Students who are D/HH ***CAN LEARN TO READ*** on grade level.

# Access

## Influencing Factors:

- Primary mode of communication
- Relationship and comfort level to the speaker
- Ability to effectively advocate
- Auditory environment

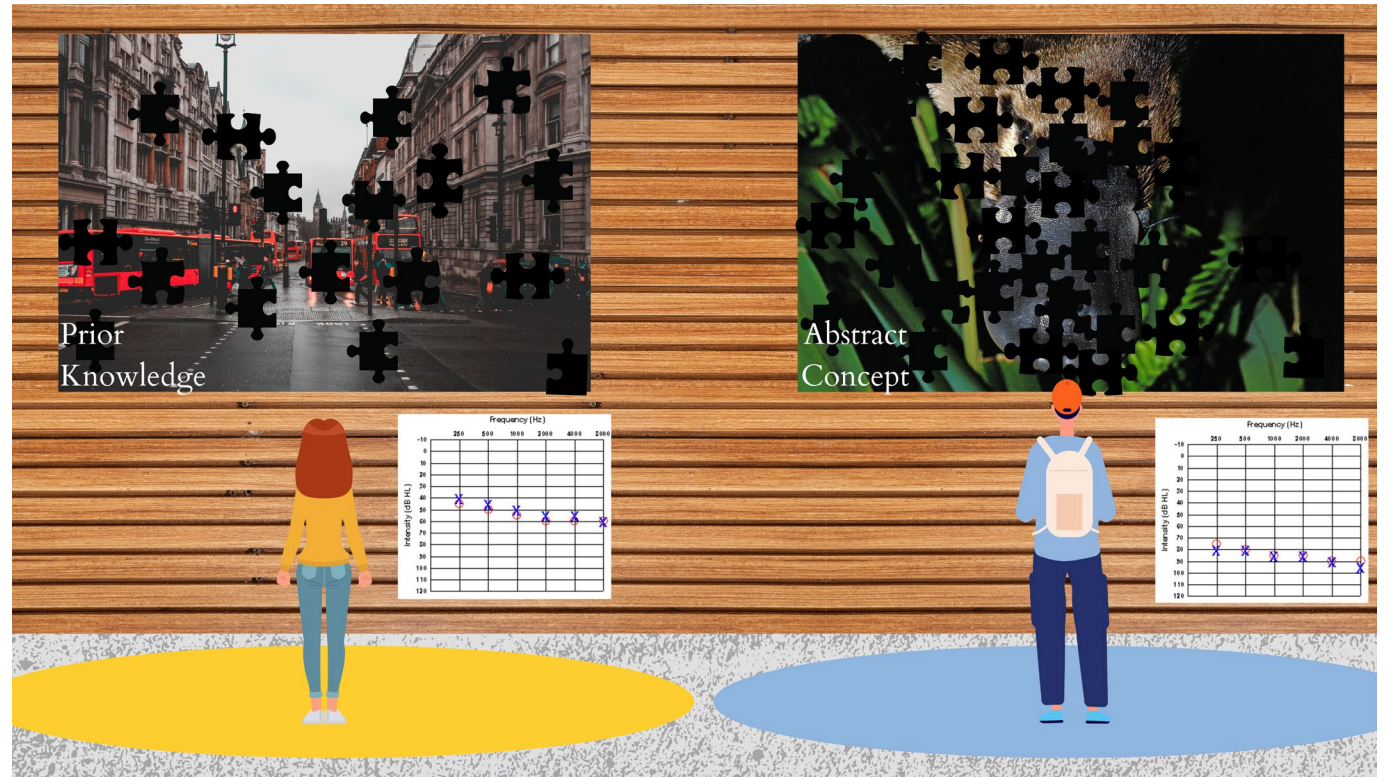


Poster credit: Action Deafness



# Every Part Matters

- Abstract concepts
- Concrete concepts
- Prior knowledge
- Degree of hearing
- Listening fatigue



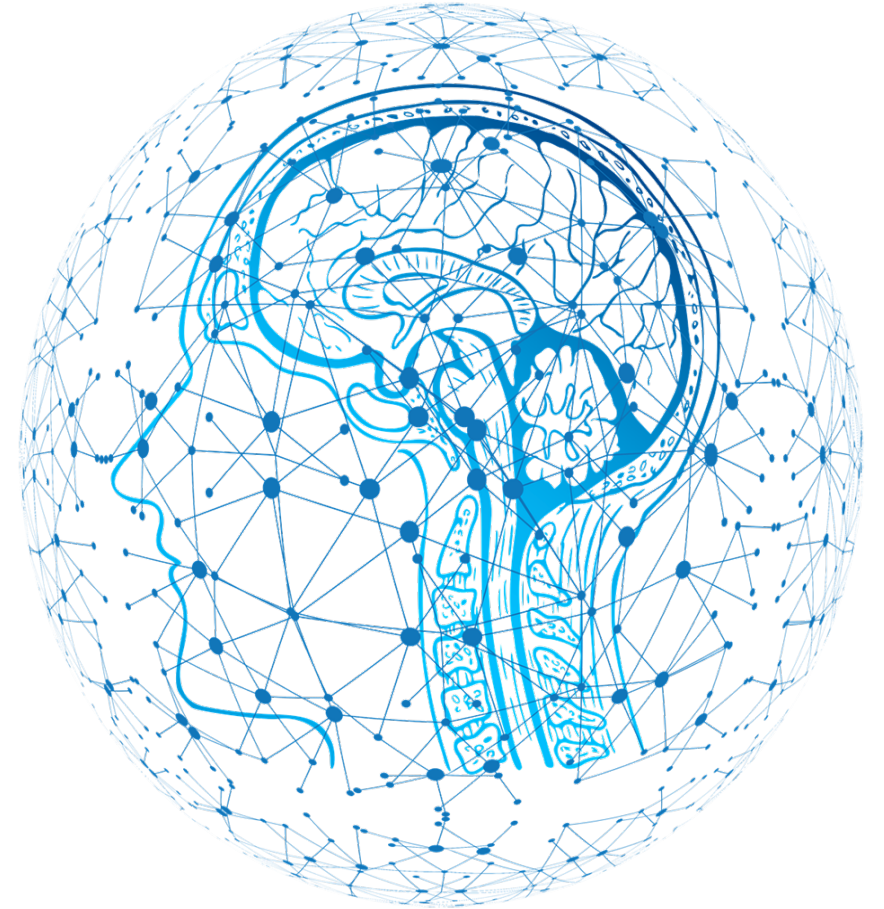
# Teacher of the Deaf

The teacher of the deaf and hard-of-hearing is a critical member of the IEP team that supports the education and academic/social development of students who are D/HH. Their unique perspective and scope of study allows them to identify areas of need and apply specific interventions to promote academic success across all environments.



# Family Considerations

The brain is stimulated in the same area by both visual and auditory language. It does not discriminate against the language it receives. It simply craves LANGUAGE.



(Bavelier, Newport, & Supalla, 2003; Kovelman, Shalinsky, Berens, & Petitto, 2014; Allen et al., 2014; Wake, Ching & Wirth et al., 2016; Geers, Mitchell & Warner-Czyz, 2017; Yoshinaga-Itano, Sedey, Wiggin, & Chung, 2017)

# Instructional Considerations

- Communication
- Curriculum
- Setting up the Instructional Setting
- Pacing, Restating, Visual Cues





# Student Considerations

- A hearing loss is only a small piece of someone's identity.
- Students who are D/HH can achieve anything their hearing peers can achieve.
- A hearing loss does not define a person's potential.





# Putting It All Together

- If you've met one child who is D/HH, you've met **one child** who is D/HH
- Be their advocate
- Believe in them, they'll believe in themselves

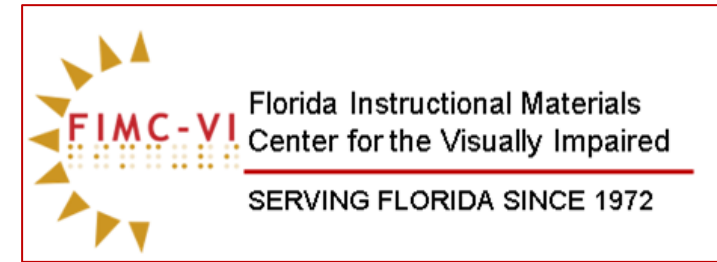


# Survey

Survey Name: Family Cafe - Collaborative 2023

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeGPWHwZNifKILbXxxu2L\\_YliMOU56hthhtJAKL18Rw9YIaPw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeGPWHwZNifKILbXxxu2L_YliMOU56hthhtJAKL18Rw9YIaPw/viewform?usp=sf_link)





Resource Materials and Technology Center for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing:

<https://www.rmtcdhh.org/>

Florida Inclusion Network:

<https://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/>

Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired:

<https://www.fimcvi.org/>

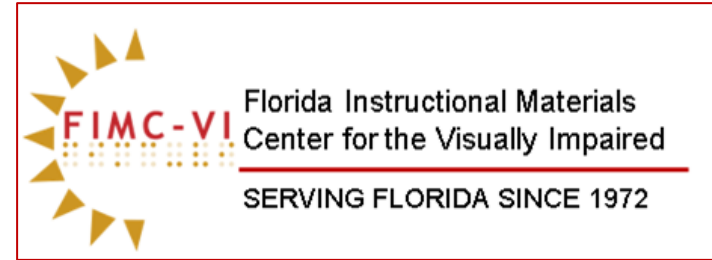


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