

Statewide Family Support Center NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 • Issue 3

NOVEMBER 2005



*Serving Kentucky's Families
with Children Who are Deaf
and Hard of Hearing*

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The Statewide Family Support Center NEWSLETTER is published monthly, September through June at the Kentucky School for the Deaf

An electronic version of this newsletter is available at www.ksd.k12.ky.us

Click on "Family Information"

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The SFSC is part of the Kentucky School for the Deaf's Outreach Services and the Statewide Educational Resource Center on Deafness, components of the Kentucky Department of Education.

To contact the SFSC, you can call or email:

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502-897-1583 ext. 108 (v)
800-540-3323 (v/tty)
chowle@ksd.k12.ky.us

PAT BRUCE
859-239-7017 ext. 2503 (tty)
800-540-3323 (v/tty)
pbruce@ksd.k12.ky.us

Write to us at:
Statewide Family Support Center
PO Box 27
Danville, KY 40423



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

"Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have learned to take advantage of technology to improve their lives and open their communication avenues with both deaf and hearing persons. There are many technological devices that have benefited the lives of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. They make communication easier and much more successful." (*SKI-HI Curriculum, Hope Inc., 2004, page 657.*)

This month, the SFSC Newsletter will give you some basic information about the different kinds of "assistive technology" or "assistive devices" as well as where you can order them and/or get more information. Next month, we will focus on Hearing Aids, FM systems, and Cochlear Implants.

TELEPHONES and TTYs

There are many different kinds of equipment available to deaf and hard of hearing telephone users in Kentucky. The best source of equipment and information is the TDD Distribution Program at the Kentucky Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Frankfort. You can find them on the web: www.kcdhh.org/oea/tddprog.html or call their office at V/T 502-573-2604 or V/T 800-372-2907.

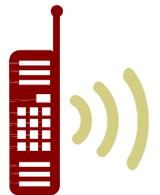
Their website gives this background info: The TDD Distribution Program was started in 1991 to "provide specialized telecommunications equipment (such as amplified telephones, TTYs, etc.) at no charge to the deaf, hard of hearing, and speech impaired residents of Kentucky. This law was passed to provide deaf and hard of hearing individuals equal access to the telephone."

The different kinds of equipment available through the program include:

➤ TDDs (TTYs) - This is a portable device generally used by persons who are deaf or speech impaired. The TDD is used to send and receive typed messages with another TDD via telephone. If one person does not have a TDD, then both persons can utilize the Kentucky Telephone Relay Service to make the call. Individuals who can hear but cannot speak can use TDDs with an existing telephone.

➤ Amplified Telephone - This phone allows for volume and tone adjustments for increased loudness and clarity for listening assistance. The unit is hearing aid compatible and has an adjustable ringer to increase the loudness of a ringing telephone. Amplified telephones are for persons who need assistance hearing telephone conversations and/or a ringing telephone.

➤ Voice Carry-Over (VCO) Phone - This unit has all the characteristics of the amplified telephone and also features a visual display (similar to a Caller ID). This telephone allows persons who are deaf or severely hard of hearing to speak directly into the phone to the other person, and the Kentucky Telephone Relay Service operator types the other person's response back to the VCO telephone. The other person's response can be read on the visual display. The VCO telephone is for people who cannot hear but prefer to speak instead of type (as with a TDD).



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Assistive Technology/Devices *con't from Page 1*

- Telephone with VCO/HCO/ Amplified Features - This multi-purpose equipment offers a combination of features to include Voice Carry-Over (VCO) for persons who can speak but cannot hear, Hearing Carry-Over (HCO) for persons who can hear but cannot speak, Amplified telephone for persons who are hard of hearing, and TDD for persons who are deaf. This multipurpose equipment would be recommended for persons with different communication needs. (For example, a deaf person and a hard of hearing person sharing the same telephone line.)
- Pocket VCO - easily attaches to a cordless phones as well as traditional phones to speak directly into the phone to the other person and the KY Telephone Relay Service operator types the other person's response back to the PVCO telephone.
- Large Visual Display TDD - installed in a TDD for deaf consumers with limited vision, this piece of equipment displays the typed messages magnified ten times larger than that of the standard TDD display.
- Braillephone - Telephone access for the deaf-blind user is provided through a microprocessor that enables messages sent from or received by the TDD to automatically scroll across a refreshable Braille display. It includes a signal detector which emits a strong vibration when the telephone detects a ring, busy signal or voice response.
- Visual Alert Signaler - see Alerting Systems and Devices below
- Tone Ringer - increases the volume of the telephone ring so that it may be heard by hard of hearing or severely hard of hearing persons.

RELAY SERVICES

The KCDHH website explains: "The Kentucky Telephone Relay Service (TRS) relays calls between deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired individuals who use a TTY or VCO and individuals who do not have access to a TTY. The Relay is a 24-hour a day, seven day a week service, allowing you to "talk" to anyone, anytime, and anywhere without having to worry about communication barriers on the telephone. It uses a third party, a "communications assistant" (CA),

to relay messages back and forth between a TTY/VCO user and a non-user."

The Kentucky Relay Service can be contacted by dialing 711. The KCDHH website clearly explains how to use the Ky TRS with a variety of phone equipment.

As technology develops (and it develops quite rapidly), there are always new kinds of equipment and services showing up on the market. With internet relay, you can connect to the relay using your computer or other web device— connecting to the relay via the Internet instead of calling 7-1-1 or an 800 number. The relay caller assistant (CA) handles an Internet relay call the same as a traditional relay call. The CA "voices" or reads everything you type to the other party—and types everything the other party says for you to read on your screen.

Another recent and popular way of "making a phone call" for the deaf is called video relay. Video relay calls are placed over a high-speed or broadband Internet connection (i.e. DSL, cable, or T1 line) through a videophone appliance connected to a TV, or through a personal computer equipped with a Web camera and specific software. The deaf user sees an ASL interpreter on their TV and signs to the interpreter, who then contacts the hearing user via a standard phone line and relays the conversation between the two parties. Hearing customers can also place video relay calls to any deaf or hard-of-hearing individual by simply dialing the toll free number provided by each of the Relay Service agencies via a standard telephone.

More specifics are available from the companies listed in the Resources section of this article.

CAPTIONED TVs and MOVIES

Since mid-1993, all new television sets 13 inches or larger manufactured for sale in the U.S. must contain caption-decoding technology. At that point, millions of people had access to captions with the push of a button on their remote controls. For older TV models, small closed-caption units are available.



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Assistive Technology/Devices *con't from Page 2*

Captioning has proved to be a big boost to the reading skills for many deaf and hard of hearing children. It has been very helpful and more families should be using it. However, not all TV programs are closed-captioned. Sometimes there are breakdowns and/or gaps in the information provided by closed captions. To help remedy this situation, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) is working to make more and more TV accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing communities. They have information available about captioning and consumer rights on their website (www.nad.org):



“Television has become an integral part of American society. It has become the most important medium from which Americans obtain instantaneous information from news and keep up with new developments and information

about the world around us. Deaf and hard of hearing Americans, in order to stay on par with fellow citizens, must have full access to television programs. The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) developed a position statement and provides instructions on how to file a complaint.” The NAD is working hard to protect deaf and hard of hearing consumers. Please contact them for more information:

814 Thayer Avenue
 Silver Spring, MD 20910-4500
 301-587-1789 TTY or 301-587-1788 Voice

Listening to TV in the presence of background noise can be frustrating for some hard of hearing people. Also, the loud volume of the TV might bother other people in the room. Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) are available so that a person can listen to TV (or radio, stereo, etc) at a more comfortable loudness level. Some ALDs connect directly to the person’s hearing aid. Others use infrared, audio loop systems, or FM systems. These can be ordered from several different companies listed in the Resources section of this newsletter.

Going to the movies is another commonly accepted activity for most people but it can be very frustrating for deaf and hard of hearing consumers. Kentucky is just beginning to have

assistive listening devices and/or captions available for movie-goers. The following movie theaters currently offer either open captioning on some movies or reflective captions.

- Lexington: Regal Hamburg Pavilion 16
- Danville: Danville Cinemas 8
- Louisville: Showcase Cinema Stonybrook
- Okolona: Showcase Cinema 16 de Lux

Contact the movie theater in your area to ask for either assistive listening equipment or captioning to be made available. The more people who ask (and keep asking), the sooner these services will be provided.



ALERTING SYSTEMS and DEVICES

There is a WIDE variety of alerting devices available: alarm clocks, smoke alarms, phone ring signalers, doorbell signaler, sound signalers (baby cry, oven timer, etc), and more. These devices can be purchased individually or can be set up in your home as an entire system where you select the specific sounds to which you want to be alerted. The alerting devices can be visual (flashing light), auditory (amplified sounds) or tactile (vibrations). Also, personal and in-home assistive listening devices can help hard of hearing persons.

PAGERS

The About Deaf website (<http://deafness.about.com>) has this information: “Wireless text communication has become a basic communication necessity in the deaf community. Through wireless pagers or handheld communication devices, deaf and hard of hearing people are exchanging e-mail, instant messages, and can communicate in emergencies. More and more companies are offering wireless communication services with alphanumeric messaging or paging.” You just have to decide which one is best for you.

The three most commonly found devices are the Blackberry, the Sidekick, and the Treo. These can be purchased from local stores and/or catalogs listed in the Resources section below. Service are paid for through the plan you select from your provider.

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Technology changes very fast! Pagers and other devices that were considered 'new' 5 years ago are not even in use today. Items discussed in this article will be considered 'old' before you realize it. The positive side of that is really new things are coming along to replace the old ones. Some of the ideas that we will see very soon involve speech recognition. These devices (hearing aids and assistive listening devices) will allow the deaf or hard of hearing person to read what hearing person is saying as it is being spoken.

RESOURCES for ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

The following are SOME of the resources used to compile this article as well as others that we are aware of. There are MANY more. Go to your public library (if you don't have a home computer with internet access) and do a search for "assistive technology for the deaf." You will find a lot of information there.

Catalogs

ADCO

5661 South Curtice Street
Littleton, CO 80120
www.adcohearing.com
1-800-726-0851 (v/tty)

BEYOND HEARING AIDS

6900 Houston Rd.
Bldg 500, Suite 3
Florence, KY 41042
800-838-1649 (v/tty)
www.beyondhearingaids.com

HARRIS COMMUNICATIONS

15155 Technology Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55344-2277
www.harriscomm.com
800-825-6758 (voice)
800-825-9187 (tty)

Websites

http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/infotogo/alert_commdevice.pdf - explains common assistive devices for the deaf and hard of hearing and gives some resources
<http://www.entcolumbia.org/acd.htm> - gives information on assistive communication devices
http://www.netac.rit.edu/downloads/TPSHT_ALD_s.pdf - this is a tipsheet for the classroom on using assistive technology

Agencies with more information

Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project has information specific to the needs of persons with dual disabilities. Contact Diane Haynes at 502-897-1583, ext. 279 (voice) or email her at dhaynes@ksb.k12.ky.us.

Kentucky Assistive Technology Service Network - **consists of a statewide network of organizations and individuals connecting to enhance the availability of assistive technology devices and services to improve the productivity and quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Their main office is in the Charles McDowell Center, 8412 Westport Road, Louisville, KY 40242 but they have some regional offices, too. For more specifics, call 800-327-5287 or visit their website at www.katsnet.org.**

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - their information on Assistive Technology in their Directory is very helpful. Contact Bobbie Beth Scoggins at 800-372-2907 (v/tty) or email through their website: <http://www.kcdhh.org>

Kentucky School for the Deaf - contact Fran Hardin, Director of Outreach: 859-239-7017, ext 2200 (v/tty) or email: fhardin@ksd.k12.ky.us

Lexington Hearing and Speech Center - contact Shelby Rutledge by calling 859-268-4545 (v/tty) or email: Shelby.Rutledge@lshscky.org

Louisville Deaf Oral School (at Heuser Hearing Institute - contact Mona McCubbin at 502-515-3320 (v/tty) or email: info@thehearinginstitute.org.

Self-Help for Hard of Hearing has a chapter in Louisville and is in the process of establishing a chapter in N.Ky. Contact Paula Esterle for more information: 502-339-8037 (voice) or email her at paula@kentucky-shhh.org.



ONE SPECIAL BROTHER!

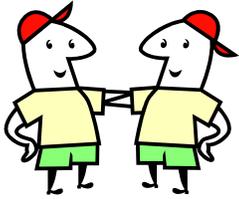
The following is a letter written by Austin Howell. His twin brother, Justin is deaf. They are in the 6th Grade in the Boone County public schools.

"Justin! Justin!" He still can't hear me! Let me tell you how hard it is to live with a deaf brother. Do you wake up and hear the birds chirp? Well my brother can't do that. He is deaf. He can't hear and he can hardly talk. Have you ever tried to cover your ears and shut your mouth all day? It's like that for him everyday.

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One Special Brother! *Continued from Page 4*

Deafness is a special life quality and is nothing like hearing. I could whisper in your ear and you could hear it but I could yell in my brother's ear and he couldn't hear me. His life is nothing, and I mean nothing, like ours. If you walk outside and your neighbor says "Hi!" you would instantly say "Hi!" back. If someone did that with my brother, he would walk right on by.



If you are wondering why he's deaf he was deaf at birth. He must wear a cochlear implant to hear anything and he still does not hear the same way we do. If I start to ignore him everyone else will. If I talk to him more maybe everyone else will at least try to talk to him. His cochlear implant helps him hear better. A cochlear implant is a small, complex device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or severely hard of hearing. The implant is surgically placed under the skin behind the ear.

Next time you see a deaf person don't treat them different. At least say "Hi!" Remember, they're not different they just can't hear.



THE STATEWIDE FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

The Kentucky Department of Education established the Statewide Family Support Center (SFSC) to provide information to any family in the state who had a child with hearing loss. The SFSC publishes this monthly newsletter and will mail it to any family and/or interested professional who requests it. We ask those of you who already receive the newsletter and other mailings, to let other families know how to receive their own copy. Simply send us their name and address and we'll put them on the mailing list.

We also have a small lending library available to anyone who would like to borrow books and/or videos on a wide variety of subjects. We can snail-mail or email the sign-up form and the materials list... just let us know.

The SFSC will try to answer any questions you might have and refer you to other professionals and other families who can give you information. You can call, write, or email. See the back page of the newsletter for the contact info.

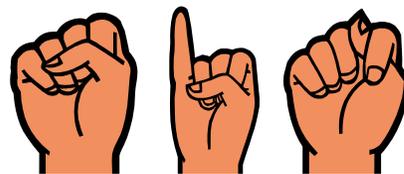
THE LITERACY CORNER

Spelling is crucial for literacy success. Even with today's spell-checker technology, children need to learn to spell words in order to accurately communicate their thoughts in writing.

Spelling for those children who use sign language often starts with fingerspelling and fingerreading. Fingerspelling is the act of spelling words by using handshapes that represent the letters of the alphabet. Fingerreading is the act of "reading" fingerspelling. Both of these acts are considered components of English literacy.

Early and consistent exposure to fingerspelling will enhance a deaf or hard-of-hearing (D/HH) child's success in reading and writing. I once was asked why teachers should start fingerspelling to younger (under first grade) D/HH children if they do not have a strong language base yet. The answer is simple, the earlier you start, the more they will succeed. For example, preschool students, who cannot read or write, know what B-U-S means. My kindergartners know that when I spell D-A-T-E, they have to copy the date that is written on the chalkboard. I fingerspell these to them using a natural pace, not slowing down for each letter. My students are able to fingerspell these words back to me, not as individual letters, but as a group of letters that together have meaning.

I often play fingerreading games with them.



One of their favorites is when I fingerspell an action, they have to read what I spelled,

then do it. For example, when I fingerspell S-I-T, they sit down.

Here is another game we love to play. I divide my class into 2 teams. I then write several three- and four- letter words on the board. I then fingerspell one of the words. A person from each team runs to the board and tries to cross off the word I spelled the fastest. They do not know what the words on the board mean, but they are learning to make the connection between fingerspelling and print. This is the same as a hearing child learning the connection between

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The Literacy Corner *continued from Page 5*

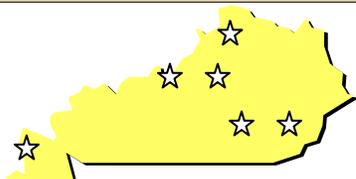
the sounds that make up a word and the word in print.

As parents, you can incorporate fingerspelling and fingerreading into your daily routines, regardless of your child's age.

- When reading to your child and discussing the pictures in the book, choose a picture, make the sign for it, then spell it.
- Fingerspell names of family members. Have pictures of each member, fingerspell a name and have your child point out the correct picture.
- Fingerspell items around the house and make a game out of it.
- Play red light, green light but instead of signing red or green, fingerspell them. Better yet, fingerspell stop and go.

The ideas are endless. Just remember that fingerspelling and fingerreading will help your child increase their success in reading and writing.

If you have any questions or comments that you would like addressed in future articles, please email me at heidigas@yahoo.com or write to SFSC.



AROUND THE STATE

Tuesdays in NORTHERN KENTUCKY – Family sign classes at River Ridge Elem. From 6:00-7:30, are open to any family with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Call Sue Frisbee for more information: 859-426-8036.

November 2 – “Fitting it all Together” Successful Transition workshop at the SOMERSET AREA families. They will meet at the Center for Rural Development on Hwy 27 in Somerset, from 9:00 til 3:00. Parents will learn how they can help their Middle School or High School child be better prepared for work or college. Contact Jerri LaFavers for more information: 859-239-7017 ext. 2409.

Thursdays in NORTHERN KENTUCKY – Sign classes for professionals will be at River Ridge Elem.

from 3:45-4:45, open to any professionals working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Call Sue at the number above

November 4-6 – PERRY COUNTY, Signing Exact English Skillshop conducted by certified instructors from the SEE Center. For registration and more information, refer to <http://www.seecenter.org>. Perry County Central High School in Hazard.

November 12 – DANVILLE area families are welcome to participate in the local Support Network for Families with Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children meeting. They will be in the SFSC meeting rooms in Lee Hall on KSD's campus at noon for lunch (provided) and an overview of parents' rights by Ky SPIN representative, Dana Rouse.

November 18 – DANVILLE area, the KSD Parent group and the KSD Alumni Association invite all to their annual Pancake and Sausage Day fundraiser. They will be serving all-you-can-eat pancakes from 6:30am til 2:00pm in Grow Hall on the KSD campus for only \$3.00. There will be a silent auction, door prizes, and a BIG list of drawing prizes. Lots of fun... see you there!

November 22 – BENTON area, join the families who meet for “Silent Dinner” to learn more about sign language and deaf culture. They'll be at the El Costeno Grill (formerly Los Amigos) at 244 US Hwy 68. Please RSVP to Paula Humphreys: humphreys@ksd.k12.ky.us or call 270-443-3055.

November 26 – NORTHERN KENTUCKY will have a local SHHH meeting at the new Newport Branch of the Campbell County Library, at 10:30 a.m. the Sat. following Thanksgiving. We will be sharing coping strategies and communication tactics, as well as defining what we want from the meetings and working out dates, times and places and topics/activities. You can email Betty Timon at justbetty@fuse.net if you need more information or Kathryn McGee, katky@fuse.net.

Preparing for the ACT – A Short Course for D/HH High School Students The Outreach Department at KSD will be offering this short course in November. Call or email Ruth Sigler for more information: 859-239-7017, ext 2158 or rsigler@ksd.k12.ky.us

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Around the State *continued from Page 6***HEADS UP:**

- Person-Centered Communication: Teaching Receptive and Expressive Communication Skills to Children with Severe/Multiple Disabilities Including Deaf Blindness. December 5 – 9, in Louisville. The training and materials are FREE. For family members, overnight lodging at KSB is available at no cost, breakfast and lunch are provided and mileage can be reimbursed. Contact Diane Haynes for more information: 502-897-1583, ext. 279 or email her at dhaynes@ksb.k12.ky.us.
- DeaFestival '06 – Saturday, July 1st in Louisville. A full-day of FUN for the whole family!!!

KSD Happenings

Due to scheduling conflicts, there will be no November issue of the "KSD Happenings" newsletter. For information about KSD sports, academic events, and student life events, please contact your child's teacher, supervisor, or student life specialist. Call: 859-239-7017 or Email through their website: www.ksd.k12.ky.us.

Remember, the KSD PTCA and KSD Alumni Association will host their annual fundraiser, PANCAKE and SAUSAGE DAY, on Friday, Nov. 18th. All are welcome to join in and support the KSD students during this fun event!

**IDEA UPDATE**

The following was taken from an email from Barb Singleton at the Kentucky Department of Education on October 14, 2005.

Regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA)...

Troy R. Justesen, acting director of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education, would like to share with you an important message about a series of topic briefs regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

In response to public inquiry about the recently reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), and prior to issuing final regulations, OSERS is taking steps to assist in the explanation of the statutory language. To be as responsive as possible to

families, educators and administrators, OSERS has developed and posted to its Web site a series of topic briefs regarding several high-interest areas of IDEA 2004. These topic briefs include a summary of all relevant statutory language for 19 topics ranging from Highly Qualified Teachers to Discipline, with citations from the law and cross-references, when applicable, to related briefs.

Additionally, visitors to the IDEA 2004 Web page can view news and information concerning proposed regulations, public meetings, consideration of comments and suggestions, laws and policies, and technical assistance related to the reauthorized law.

I invite you to utilize these tools and information resources at

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>

**THE SUPPORT NETWORK for FAMILIES with DEAF and HARD of HEARING CHILDREN**

The Support Network is YOUR statewide organization. Any family member and interested professionals can join. There is no membership fee. The goals of the Support Network for this school year are:

- support and encourage the development of local parent groups throughout Kentucky
- continue to develop the basic framework for the statewide group

Sarah New, a parent from the Louisville area is the facilitator for this school year. If you have questions about how to set up a parent group in your area, how The Support Network can help, and other information, contact her at 502-367-7024 or email her at SarahL.New@ky.gov.

Heidi Givens, a teacher in the Davies County public schools is the webmaster for our group. You can join the listserv by emailing Heidi at heidigas1@yahoo.com. She'll send you the invitation and directions on how to sign up for the listserv. This is a GREAT way for families around the state to support each other and help answer questions.



Happy Thanksgiving!!!



Statewide Family Support Center
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Hearing*

**PO Box 27
Danville, KY 40423**

The Statewide Family Support Center is located in Lee Hall on the campus of the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville. Families from across the state are welcome to call, visit, or email us with questions.

Cathy Howle
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