



Supporting infants, children, and youth with combined vision and hearing loss

The Beacon

Newsletter of
The Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project
Volume 2, Issue 4: December 2012



November Technology Grant Statewide Family Meeting

WDBTAP sponsored its third regional family meeting on Saturday, November 3rd at the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells. The meeting started with a welcome and lunch meeting focusing on the new WDBTAP collaboration with the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Grant.

Families were provided information on this grant and were able to discuss the eligibility and benefits. The technology grant is just beginning in Wisconsin and will continue until June 30, 2014. The goal of the **National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP)** is to ensure that every person with combined hearing and vision loss has access to modern telecommunication tools and the training necessary to use them, granting every individual the opportunity to interact with the world as an involved, contributing member of society.

A parent shared:

"Lots of planning but very much worth it. You get to meet new faces and share stories and exchange information and advice. It is awesome to know that you are not alone."

The program — promoted by **iCanConnect** — provides outreach, assessments, telecommunications technology and training free of charge to those who meet federal eligibility guidelines. WDBTAP is partnering with the Public Service Commission, the Center for DB persons, and ODHH to provide these services in Wisconsin. An application was shared with families and is now available on line at www.icanconnect.org/Wisconsin (see page 2 for more information). If your child is under age 21, applications are returned to WDBTAP for eligibility determination. If you have questions or would like to discuss this grant, please contact Jolene Gruber at 608-356-0091 or jolene.gruber@wesp-dhh.wi.gov **(continued on page 2)**



Register Now!!
11th Annual Statewide Family
Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Deaf-Blind Conference
March 8-10, 2013
Radisson Paper Valley Hotel

Early registration ends January 25th—Don't Wait!!

This exciting conference offers:

- Informative presentations and workshops
- Network with other families around the state
- Child care for your deaf-blind child while parents are in workshops

See our website at www.wdbtap.wi.gov/events.cfm
or visit us on Facebook for more information.



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“It was our first meeting, so it was nice to place a face with the people involved with WDBTAP.”
-from a new parent

After the lunch meetings, families were able to enjoy their time at the Wilderness, which has several waterparks to enjoy along with a lot of other amenities, including lots of walking! Families returned for a dinner together with lots of time to get to know each other and share experiences.



WDBTAP provided information on the upcoming family conference in Appleton March 8-10th and encouraged families to attend and to continue to build on the relationships developed during the day at the regional meeting.

Lending library materials were also on display in the evening for families to see, play with and check out. If you would like to know what lending library materials are available please check out the website www.wdbtap.wi.gov and click on “Lending Library” or call WDBTAP to request a current catalog. The lending library is a service for families and service providers of deaf-blind children to check out books, videos, toys, and learning equipment and try it out. It is a no cost service offered and has a lot items that are especially for deaf-blind children.

“Believe it or not, it is interesting to talk to other families and feel you are not alone and to be able to share resources or information. Even though all of our kids are different, we found some commonalities.”
--from a parent

WDBTAP Family Text Club To Begin

WELCOME TO THE CLUB!

Many of you have asked if WDBTAP could send text reminders of registration and events. We have now set up the **WDBTAP Family Text Group** and invite you to give it a try! Please be assured we won't be flooding you with texts, just some reminders of upcoming events and registration deadlines.

JOIN TODAY!!

To join the WDBTAP family text group:
Text **Family** to (608) 588-8611

Standard messaging rates may apply.
Please contact your cellular phone service for details.



NDEDP Connections Online

The iCanConnect initiative seeks to educate people about the availability of communications technologies - from screen enlargement software and video phones, to off-the shelf products that are accessible or adaptable - that can assist this segment of the population.

Individuals, family members or caregivers can find information about the program such as eligibility requirements and what equipment is available at:

www.iCanConnect.org/Wisconsin

There they will find information about:

- Who is eligible
- What equipment is available
- How it is being distributed and how to receive training



Questions? Contact WDBTAP at (608) 356-0091 or the Center for Deaf-Blind Persons, Inc. at (414)-481-7477.

ADVOCATING FOR OUR CHILDREN

Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices

Submitted by Jodi Anderson,
parent of Liam



Recently, Wisconsin Families for Hands and Voices sent out a survey and discovered that many people do not know what the organization is or what it has to offer. I have recently been appointed to the Board of Directors to represent the voice of the parent with a deaf-blind child and I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to learn more about this organization.

Hands & Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind without a bias about communication modes or methodology. The motto at Hands & Voices is:

“What works for your child is what makes the choice right”

A state-wide, parent-driven, non-profit organization, there are chapters in almost every state as well as international chapters. Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices provides families with information, training, advocacy support, parent-to-parent networking, a quarterly newspaper, *The Communicator*, a website with links to many resources, social gatherings for families, and other activities designed to provide families with the information they need to make good choices for their children. We help each other by sharing ideas and advice, collaborating on projects, and passing on information of interest to each other with the common goal of assisting our children to reach their highest potential.

What can this organization offer you?

Scholarship money: Are you interested in attending the 11th WESP-DHH Outreach Annual Statewide Conference in Appleton this March but money is a little tight? If you are a member of Wisconsin hands and Voices, you are able to submit an application and they can help out with some of the registration cost and/or hotel cost.

Advocacy Training: In collaboration with WI Family Assistance Center for Education, Training and Support (WIFACETS), they offer advocacy support to families of children with hearing loss, ages birth-6. This individual assistance enables parents to be more effective, knowledgeable members of their child’s IFSP/IEP team and the special education process.

Parent Match/ Guide by Your Side: As you may already know, parents of children with dual sensory loss provide invaluable support to each other by sharing experiences, frustration, knowledge, and joys. There is a common bond between parents of deaf-blind children. Yet, many times parents are not able to discover this bond as they don’t know where to turn to find other parents facing similar situations. This organization will help you find that support and match families dealing with similar issues.

Together we can continue to raise the standard for children who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Deaf-Blind through communication access and helping them attain a quality of life we know they can achieve. If you have any questions, suggestions, or issues you need assistance with, please do not hesitate to contact me at froglobe4@gmail.com.



<http://www.handsandvoiceswi.org/>

Calendar of Events

- March 8-10, 2013:** **WESP-DHH Statewide Family Conference**
Appleton, WI
Registration is open!!
- March 7-8, 2013:** **WESP-DHH Statewide Professional Conference**
Appleton, WI
- February 21-23, 2013:** **Hands Matter – 2013 Texas Deaf-Blind Symposium**
Austin, TX
- July 25-28, 2013:** **11th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference**
Scottsdale, Arizona

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From the National Family Association for Deaf-Blind

Toy Guide for Differently-abled Kids

Selecting a toy for a child who has a disability? Toys"R"Us and the National Lekotek Center offer a helpful "Toy Guide for Differently-abled Kids" in English and Spanish. The guide includes thorough descriptions of recommended toys, quotes about the toys from family members, and a key to help identify specific skills the toy helps to develop.



<http://trus.imageg.net/graphics/media/trus/2012-DAG-English.pdf>

And don't forget the WDBTAP Lending Library is a great way to try before you buy!



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