

## Campaign for Language & Literacy Excellence

*“Promoting Statewide Systems Change for Young Deaf Children”*

The College of New Jersey  
**Center for Sensory & Complex Disabilities**

*in partnership with and funded by*

NJ Department of Human Services  
**Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

# INTRODUCTIONS

## **Elizabeth Hill, MSW**

Executive Director, New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## **Jerry G. Petroff, Ph.D.**

Executive Director, Center for Sensory & Complex Disabilities @ TCNJ

## **Steve Singer, Ph.D.**

Professor / Coordinator (Teacher of the Deaf Program)

## **Matthew Hall, Ph.D.**

Professor (Literacy)



# AGENDA

- ❑ Opening Remarks / Context
- ❑ CLLE Defined – Goals, Roles & Process
- ❑ The Evolution of a Unique Partnership
- ❑ What we have learned?
- ❑ Moving Forward



# OPENING REMARKS



# CONTEXT

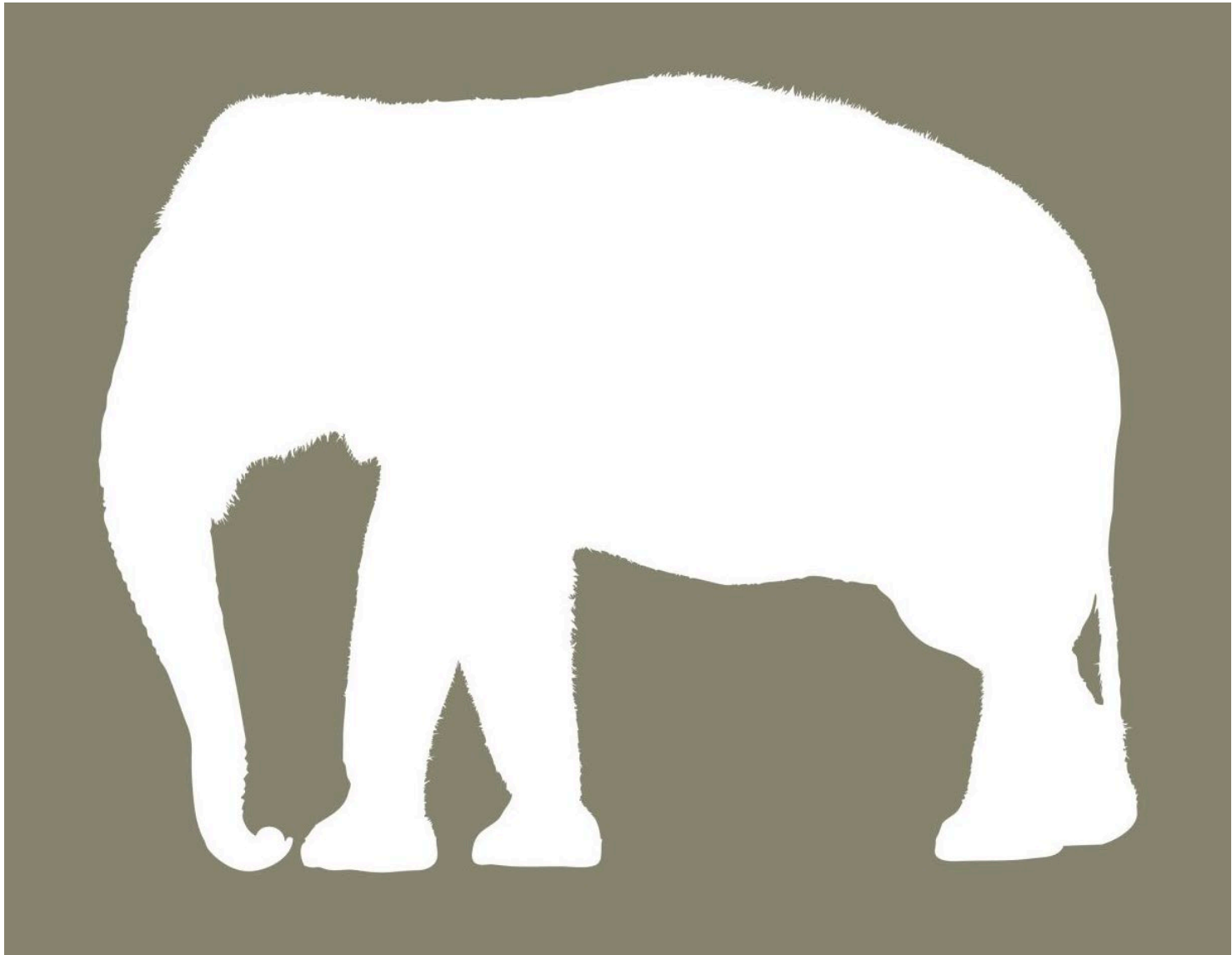
- **There is a shared concern that Deaf children are entering school with delays in language and literacy skills, compared to norms established for hearing children.**
- **Further, there is a concern that many Deaf children may be entering school without being rooted in any language.**





- Infants and children may not have appropriate aural/oral support.
- Infants and children may not have access to native users of ASL
- Infants and children are typically identified later than what is optimal
- Infants and children may not have access to visual communication supports
- Infants and children usually do not have parents who understand deafness
- Infants and children may have additional challenges









# OTHER VARIABLES THAT INFLUENCE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN DEAF CHILDREN

- Recent Arrivers to the US from other countries
- Children who have abandoned / never adequately used their cochlear implants or hearing aids
- Deaf children with additional disabilities
- Deaf children searching for an identity



# CLLE DEFINED — GOALS, ROLES & PROCESS



# NEW JERSEY

*A dedicated group of Deaf adults, parents, professionals, and others are concerned about the incidence and made their voices heard to both legislators and state agency representatives, and so . . . .*

*The Campaign for Language & Literacy Excellence was established as a partnership between a state agency and an Institution of Higher Education to explore and identify solutions to the challenge of assuring all deaf children entering school with developmentally appropriate language and literacy skills.*



# WHAT IS CLLE?

The Campaign for Language & Literacy Excellence (CLLE) is a TCNJ Center for Sensory & Complex Disabilities' statewide project funded and in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, to promote early language development in infants and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The foundation of this collaborative project was to engage four constituent groups, to lead the project in establishing a common understanding of the nature and documented **challenge** of assuring that young deaf and hard of hearing children enter school at 5 years old with language levels and development comparable to their hearing peers.



# CLLE BEGAN WITH FOUR DISTINCT GOAL AREAS:

- 1) Family Language Immersion Opportunities
- 2) Statewide Educational Campaign for Language Equality
- 3) Early Literacy Project for Families with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
- 4) Statewide Provider Symposium on Language Deprivation in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Young Children



# CLLE PLAN

- Establishing a collaborative working core team
- Establishing a Stakeholders Group / Meeting(s)
- Reaching out to the constituent groups: Deaf adults, parents, educators, and medical professionals to join a working group for each of the goal areas.
- Developing and implementing activities




# THE EVOLUTION OF A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP



# INTRODUCING **PROJECT CORE STAFF**

**Project Officer:** Elizabeth Hill, MSW



Program Leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Jerry G. Petroff</li><li>• Dr. Steven Singer</li><li>• Dr. Matthew Hall</li></ul>
Program Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heather Osowski</li><li>• Michelle Ragunan</li></ul>
DHH Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carrie Pogue</li></ul>





# COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF STAKEHOLDERS



Deaf and hard of hearing adults/  
advocates



Families (Parents  
and Guardians)



Professionals



Academic  
Researchers/  
Experts



State Agency  
Representatives

**Currently, the CLLE Project reflects representation from all of the above groups.**



**WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED?**



# REVIEW

CLLE had an initial plan that involved four coordinated initiatives that reflect the overall mission of the project which is:


**MISSION #1** To establish a “common ground” message that represents current research (evidence) combined with the collective views of the stakeholders regarding the perceived dilemma that many young deaf and hard of hearing children are entering school at 5 years old significantly below levels of language and literacy development comparable to hearing peers.

**MISSION #2** To disseminate that message through a coordinated set of materials and activities throughout the state and to a variety of constituents such as audiologists, pediatrics, early interventionists, etc.

**MISSION #3** To develop new approaches to supporting families in their efforts to encourage language and literacy development through visual methods/American Sign Language in conjunction with spoken languages (where applicable)



# WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Importance of collaboration
  - Challenge of recruiting and retaining community-based stakeholders – long-term investment.
  - Merging of project initiatives to produce more successful outcomes
  - Establishing new and unique approaches to language/literacy development requires innovation, significant resources and time, and adjustments on the way.
  - Little to no outcome data on language and literacy levels of young deaf and hard of hearing children
  - Difficulty in identifying families for dissemination of information
    - Confidentiality
    - Capacity
    - Mechanism
  - COVID-19
- 

# POSITIVE EFFECTS OF OUR EFFORTS

A ***partnership*** (collaboration) between a Institute of Higher Education and a State Agency can result in unique and powerful outcomes.

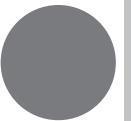
***Interdisciplinary approaches*** to the issues and dilemmas reflected in the field of early development in deaf/HOH children and their families

Provided within an ***equitable*** and ***collaborative structure***, stakeholder groups that often have different views can reach consensus and grow understandings that result in positive change.

Given the permission to ***“think differently”***, collaborative teams can generate new solutions to static challenges such as assuring Deaf / HOH young children are developing age-appropriate language skills.



# MOVING FORWARD



**WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED  
AND WHAT HAVE WE ADJUSTED  
(OR CHANGED)?**

*AND*

**WHAT ARE OUR PLANS FOR  
MOVING FORWARD?**





**Are There Any  
Questions?**





