

Announcing the new EHDI Learning Center eBook for Professionals and Families

In early September, the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) posted a new eBook, [Preparing to Teach, Committing to Learn: An Introduction to Educating Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing](#), edited by Susan Lenihan, Professor and Director of Deaf Education at Fontbonne University. Lenihan was motivated to create the eBook by the dramatic changes in deaf education over the last 50 years. Advances in technology, especially newborn hearing screening and cochlear implants, changed the educational experiences of many children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) changed the way teachers and families plan for the education of students who are DHH. Research on practices for developing communication skills, literacy, and academic achievement provided evidence-based strategies for teaching these students and coaching their caregivers. These changes require that professionals prepare to teach by studying current knowledge and strategies and applying that learning under the guidance of skilled mentors. Lenihan invited colleagues to submit chapters on important topics in deaf education to provide an overview of current educational services for children who are DHH.

The goal for the text is to provide an open source eBook on deaf education that is available to students and faculty in professional preparation programs, practitioners in deaf education, and families of children who are DHH. Although the focus is on deaf-education teachers who are providing services to students who are DHH, the text is useful to students and faculty in related fields including speech-language pathology, audiology, and special education. Because the text is introductory in nature it covers a broad range of topics and does not replace texts that go into more depth on a particular aspect of deaf education such as literacy. The text includes valuable references and additional recommended readings and resources for further study. The text addresses the range of communication options used by students in deaf education, however, the emphasis is on listening and spoken language approaches and strategies which have often been only minimally addressed in introductory texts. References and resources for further study of approaches that are primarily visual are included.

There are many benefits to an eBook. Including:

- The free, digital medium allows students, professionals and families access to the content, reducing barriers to receiving information and implementing evidence-based strategies across a variety of settings and regions.
- The chapters are flexible in that they may be used as a whole text or individually for particular topics in a course.
- To meet the preferences of students and professionals in the digital age, the content may be downloaded to a computer thus providing a “green” alternative to paper.
- Since the text is in eBook format, the goal is to update the text regularly to reflect new research and changes in technology and services.
- This eBook also allows readers to explore certain topics in more depth through embedded links. These links will be regularly monitored and updated as needed.
- The eBook format also allows for the addition of appendices as needed and for the inclusion of video in the future which will provide examples of many of the strategies and concepts.
- The eBook format also allows for an interactive component through which readers may share ideas and comments for new content and updates.

Ultimately, relevant resources and applicable knowledge drive the preparation of well-rounded, collaborative professionals. Without access to current content, future teachers and practitioners cannot engage in a dialogue about how to best serve children who are DHH. This eBook can meet those needs by providing additional locations to seek further knowledge.

The collaborative model of *Preparing to Teach, Committing to Learn* allowed top academics and professionals in the field to share their expertise about the chapter topics. The authors include faculty in higher education programs, researchers, and practitioners in deaf education. Five of the contributors are DHH and three more have family members who are DHH. Most of the authors are professionals with many years of experience but a number of young professionals also contributed to the project. To learn more about the contributors, see the author information section of the text.

The eBook provides valuable content and resources for EHDI professionals and families of children who are DHH. Here are some highlights from the different chapters.

- Chapter 1: Stacy Lim and Don Goldberg provide an overview of audiology with a user-friendly resource, “alphabet soup of audiology”. Stephanie Gardiner-Walsh and Susan Lenihan describe.
- Chapter 2: Resources such as The Radical Middle and the Common Ground Project to encourage awareness of options in communication modality and stress that the choice should be individualized and based on the multifaceted needs and values of the family and the child.
- Chapter 3: Uma Soman describes the latest research on brain development and executive function and how cognitive skills are impacted by deafness.
- Chapter 4: Joni Alberg explores the importance of social and emotional development. She writes, “This is our goal for all children—to become socially accepted and participating members of the communities in which they live and learn.”
- Chapter 5: Janice Gatty, who has supported families and children for many years through family-centered services contributed a chapter on families with a developmental and literary perspective.
- Chapter 6: Colleagues from Gallaudet University, Heather Zimmerman and Thomas Horejcs collaborated to describe the history of deaf education in Europe and the United States with a focus on the implications of language and culture (or what they call languaculture).

Chapters 7 through 9 address strategies and approaches for early intervention and for educating young children who are DHH.

- Chapter 7: Sherri Fickenscher and Dan Salvucci provide a set of strategies used to develop listening and spoken language for children whose families have chosen this approach.
- Chapter 8: Jenna Voss and Arlene Stredler-Brown address the ways in which practitioners provide early intervention services with a family-centered focus, including specific examples of evidence-based practices in coaching caregivers.
- Chapter 9: Ellie White describes a model preschool using a listening and spoken language approach including detailed information about curriculum programming to support language, literacy, speech, and listening.

Educational placement decisions, instructional planning, and the more prevalent role of itinerant teaching are addressed in Chapters 10, 11 and 12.

- Chapter 10: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the variety of educational settings are described by practitioner Dawn Gettemeier.
- Chapter 11: Lauri Nelson and Blane Trautwein explain the importance of effective assessment and planning and provide numerous examples.
- Chapter 12: John Luckner describes the challenges and joys of being an itinerant teacher, stating, “Accepting change as a constant, not allowing oneself to get irritated and seeking to be a collaborative problem solver are essential behaviors.”

Chapters 13 through 16 address key topics for educators in deaf education: literacy development, students with disabilities who are also deaf/hard of hearing, the importance of ongoing professional learning, and career development.

- Chapter 13: Paula Gross and Lyn Robertson describe the ways in which students who are DHH develop the critical literacy skills of language comprehension and word recognition which will allow students to succeed academically.
- Chapter 14: Christy Borders and colleagues from Illinois State University use case studies to encourage readers to apply a framework and strategies for optimizing the development of students who are deaf with disabilities.
- Chapter 15: Sarah Ammerman and Mary Ellen Nevins guide the reader in developing the dispositions needed to be a reflective practitioner who is continually learning.
- Chapter 16: Megan Reister shares her personal story of growing up and finding her career path as a person who is deaf while also explaining the laws that support employment for individuals who are DHH.

The authors hope that professionals and families find current, relevant, and useful content in [Preparing to Teach, Committing to Learn: An Introduction to Educating Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing](#) and will return to the eBook for updates and new resources. This great resource can be found on the NCHAM website: <http://www.infantheating.org/ebook-educating-children-dhh/index.html>