



HANDS &
VOICES™
ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS E.A.R.S

E.A.R.S = EVENTS AND RESOURCES STATEWIDE



GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE™
ILLINOIS

"What works for your child is what makes the choice right."™

WHO ARE WE?

The Illinois Families for Hands & Voices mission: A parent-driven, non-profit organization that supports families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodologies.

The Illinois Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side mission: Provides free, unbiased emotional support and resources by trained Parent Guides to families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

If you are looking for resources, parent support, events or anything else, we want to help! View our contact information on page 24.

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ILLINOIS HANDS & VOICES

MEET THE BOARD

The Illinois Hands & Voices Board of Directors is a group of parents and professionals who oversee the programs and activities of our chapter to ensure the wellbeing of our organization and that all activities uphold the Hands & Voices philosophy of unbiased support. Over the past year or so, we have brought on several new board members and had several members transition off the board at the end of their term. So, this is a great time to re-introduce you to the Board!

ANDREA MARWAH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andrea is a parent of an adult who is DHH and is a professional in the DHH community, serving as an outreach trainer, advocate, and consultant for families through the Illinois School for the Deaf. She became president of ILHV in 2010 and was promoted to executive director in 2021. Andrea lives in Naperville.
AMY KESLINKE, PRESIDENT	Amy started out as a Parent Guide in 2020 before joining the Board in 2023 and being elected president in 2024. She is the mom of a DeafBlind 3rd grader and is working on her masters of social work degree. Amy is from the northwest suburbs of Chicago.
MAIRA NAVA, VICE PRESIDENT	Maira also started out as a Parent Guide and remains one of the bilingual Guides on our Guide By Your Side team. Maira is passionate about diversity and helping Latinx and DHH families connect. She is the mom of an elementary schooler and lives in the Chicago suburbs.
HANNA SWEARINGER, SECRETARY	Hanna took on our secretary role last year and has brought great organization, creativity, and processes to our team. Hanna is also a Parent Guide and is mom to a hard of hearing preschooler. She is from

Page 6-7 | Meet the Board

BY: MAIRA NAVA
VICE PRESIDENT

MOM'S NIGHT INN

We opened and closed the evening in a circle, beginning with introductions and a powerful reminder that while each family's journey is unique, we are united by shared experiences, hopes, and a commitment to supporting our deaf and

Page 8 | Mom's Night Inn Wrap-Up

We gathered for two rounds of table discussions, first focusing on our

BINGO NIGHT
Fundraiser

HANDS & VOICES ILLINOIS GUIDE BY YOUR SIDE ILLINOIS

GAMES | PRIZES | FOOD | FUN

VFW - CANTIGNY POST #367 - 826 HORSESHOE DRIVE, JOLIET

Page 15 | Save the Date

BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY:
<https://tinyurl.com/ILHVbingo>

must be 18 years or older to purchase tickets



Andrea Marwah
Special Education Advocate | COPAA Member |

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that Illinois students in public schools with disabilities. Illinois does not have the right to any requirements under IDEA; however, they can add to it. Illinois often adds requirements. In January of 2026 the following requirements were added to it that you should be aware of. Important to note, this is educational information advice.

New for 2026:

Law	Effective	What Changed
HB 1366 / P.A. 104-0047	Jan. 1, 2026	Parents must be informed the advocates and support people Districts must provide informed IEP Facilitation
SB 1231 / P.A. 104-0368	Jan. 1, 2026	New timelines for publicly fun Expanded transition planning regarding graduation and loss

Let's break these new laws down:

House Bill (HB 1366)

- The first addition to the law requires districts to include on your Notice (which is the invitation you received that includes where and when the take place and who will attend the meeting) that you "have a right to in who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, and advocate, parent, guardian, or child". As is best practice, the law encourages districts request in the notice that parents, students or legal guardians inform the who is coming.

- Newly Included in this law is that the district must inform parents of the Sponsored IEP Facilitation including what IEP facilitation is, how to request it can help resolve disagreements before mediation or due process.

Page 11-12 | All Things SPED

Dear Families and Supporters,

I want to express my deepest gratitude for your incredible support during this legislative session. Your commitment to filling out witness slips and sharing your stories has been vital in bringing the needs of our children to the forefront of the conversation in Springfield.

While we have made significant progress, I am writing to share that, unfortunately, neither HB 4215 nor SB 3741 were heard for a floor vote before the 104th Legislative session concluded. While this is a temporary setback, our mission to ensure a healthy future for every Illinois newborn remains unchanged. We are already looking ahead and fully intend to refile this legislation in the fall with the continued leadership and support of Representative Diane Blair-Sherlock.

Our goal is to establish sustainable funding for the IL EHDI program through a modest increase to the newborn screening fee. This change is critical because the federal grants that currently fund the program are slated for elimination and are meant for expansion in services of the EHDI program, not to maintain the basic operations. Without this bill, we risk the infrastructure that tracks and supports nearly 6,000 Illinois newborns referred for testing each year.

As many of you know, 95% of children with hearing loss are born to parents with no prior family history, making the EHDI program a vital lifeline for families who are often "surprised and overwhelmed". This funding will not only protect EHDI services but also provide essential congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV) education and parent-to-parent support.

Early identification is a major cost-saver, potentially saving the state between \$250,000 and \$400,000 per child in educational costs alone. Please continue to share our mission with other families. We will need your voices again this fall to ensure Illinois joins the 11 other states that already successfully utilize this funding model.

With Gratitude,

Carrie Balian
Parent of a son who is DHH
ILHV GBYS Coordinator
HV HQ Region V Coordinator
HV HQ GBYS Program Lead
HV HQ L2L Mentor

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they stand for.



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News from our Illinois
Hands & Voices President,
Amy Keslinke



President's Corner

Happy summer! I hope you are getting some rest and relaxation mixed with fun after a busy spring.

At ILHV, we had a busy spring as usual. Spring is conference season for us, and we had representatives from our chapter presenting at several conferences, including the Illinois Academy of Audiology, Illinois Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and the national Early Hearing Detection & Intervention conference. Our chapter is proud to have a group of talented presenters, and we love being able to go to these conferences and make sure parent perspectives are heard.

Spring also comes with one of our favorite events of the year—Moms Night Inn. We had nearly 30 moms & female caregivers in attendance this year for a day and night filled with connection, relaxation, and fun. You'll see a longer update on this event later in this newsletter. If you're interested in attending next year, mark your calendar for April 3 & 4, 2027!

The rest of the year will bring more opportunities to connect with other families and support our mission! We have plans for a park meet-up in July at three different locations across the state. We are also hard at work planning our Bingo Night Fundraiser on October 17 in Joliet. This fall, several of us will also be heading to the Hands & Voices Leadership conference in Colorado to present, learn, and help celebrate the 30th anniversary of Hands & Voices headquarters!

Can't wait to see you at one of our events this summer and fall!

Board of Director Spotlight

by Andrea Marwah, ILHV Executive Director

HANNA SWEARINGER

Hanna has been with the IL Hands & Voices Board of Directors since 2025. She has also been a parent guide since 2023. I had the pleasure of interviewing Hanna and getting to know her a bit better, now I share her with you. If you have questions for Hanna, you can reach her at the contact information below. Enjoy getting to know her!



Hanna.....

-lives in Morton, IL with her husband Nathan and their 2 sons Ezra (7) and Callum (4), Calum is hard of hearing. She grew up in Vermont.
-is our thinker, she's always coming up with ideas, she likes to think outside the box, a true creative problem solver.
-is a yoga instructor.
-joined our organization because she wanted to be involved, to be in the room where it all happens.
-would tell her younger self, "Invest in Google and Amazon."
-would tell her older self, "You always know what is right for you, follow that intuition."
-shared her most memorable nickname of Nina because her younger brother couldn't say Hanna. Her funniest nickname was from a gym teacher in high school who mispronounced her last name as Sweatringer!
-always offers an advocacy book and hearing aid resource that she created to families she is supporting.
-has a tuning fork on her desk along with a hockey puck and "Queen" from Cars 2.
-would rename herself Stella because it just fits her better.

Fun Facts about Hanna:

- She has held a black belt in Taekwondo for over 20 years.
- Her go-to dance move when no one is watching is just to shake her booty.
- Hanna has 2 bucket list items: go to see bioluminescent bay in Puerto Rico and Black Sand Beaches in HI.
- If she had a talking pet, she would like to have a cat that would share deep wisdom served up in a hilarious way.
- Hanna's most adventurous thing? White water rafting.
- She chose "Feeling Good by Nina Simone" as her stage entry song!
- If Hanna were a cartoon character she would be the Cheshire Cat because he is amazing, the master of his universe and is unrattled by everything.

Hanna's advice to families: *"Trust your Gut!"*

Hanna Swearinger
ILHV Board Secretary
secretary@ilhandsandvoices.com



Illinois Families for Hands & Voices is a
501c3 Non-Profit Organization, EIN 06-1724201

www.ilhandsandvoices.org



ILLINOIS HANDS & VOICES

MEET THE BOARD

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**ANDREA MARWAH,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Andrea is a parent of an adult who is DHH and is a professional in the DHH community, serving as an outreach trainer, advocate, and consultant for families through the Illinois School for the Deaf. She became president of ILHV in 2010 and was promoted to executive director in 2021. Andrea lives in Naperville.

**AMY KESLINKE,
PRESIDENT**

Amy started out as a Parent Guide in 2020 before joining the Board in 2023 and being elected president in 2024. She is the mom of a DeafBlind+ 3rd grader and is working on her masters of social work degree. Amy is from the northwest suburbs of Chicago.

**MAIRA NAVA,
VICE PRESIDENT**

Maira also started out as a Parent Guide and remains one of the bilingual Guides on our Guide By Your Side team. Maira is passionate about diversity and helping Latinx and DHH families connect. She is the mom of an elementary schooler and lives in the Chicago suburbs.

**HANNA SWEARINGER,
SECRETARY**

Hanna took on our secretary role last year and has brought great organization, creativity, and processes to our team. Hanna is also a Parent Guide and is mom to a hard of hearing preschooler. She is from the Peoria area.

**KARI TAYLOR,
TREASURER**

Kari serves on our board as a professional and DHH adult. She is a skilled Behavior Analyst specializing in behavioral support for DHH and blind/low-vision children. Kari is from the Rockford area.

**CARRIE BALIAN,
GBYS COORDINATOR**

For many of you, Carrie may have been the first person you talked to when you got connected with the ILHV community. Carrie has served the DHH community in so many ways over the years and is the mother of an adult who was born deaf. Carrie lives in the McHenry county area.

TINA GREICO-CALUB

Tina has served on our board as a professional since 2019. She is a certified audiologist and Associate Professor at the University of Illinois Chicago with research funded by the National Institutes of Health. Tina's positivity and passion for helping DHH kids is a huge asset to ILHV!

**ANITA CERVANTES-
BOWEN**

Anita serves our organization in many ways, including as a Parent and Lead DHH Guide, and has been a member of the Board since 2020. Anita is a Deaf adult as well as mom and grandmother to multiple DHH children. Anita is from the Bloomington area.



ILLINOIS HANDS & VOICES

MEET THE BOARD**MICHELLE CLYNE**

Michelle is the coordinator for the Illinois DeafBlind project, and we can always count on her to advocate for all areas of accessibility. She has served our board as a professional since 2022 and is a team-player who is always willing to help. Michelle is from the Lombard area.

CAITLIN GOMEZ

Caitlin is another professional serving our board with her expertise and optimism. Caitlin is a certified speech language pathologist with experience in school and clinic settings providing interventions to kids in spoken language and ASL. She lives in the southwest suburbs of Chicago.

SARAH ESPARZA

Sarah is a Parent Guide since 2020 and board member since 2025. Sarah's enthusiasm is contagious, and she is part of the current cohort of the Hands & Voices Leadership to Leadership program. Sarah is mom to a deaf elementary schooler and lives south of Chicago.

MONICA CHAMBERS

Monica joined our board last year and has jumped in from the start. Monica is always willing to help and brings a positive attitude to every meeting. Monica's daughter who is DHH just graduated from high school, and she lives in the south suburbs of Chicago.

AMANDA SARGENT-JOHNSON

The first of our new board members, Amanda joined the Board in April, just before Moms Night Inn and our annual in-person meeting. She jumped right in, and her project management experience has been so helpful. Amanda is from Chicago.

KATHERINE FERRERA

Katherine is one of our newest board members, joining the Board in May of this year. Katherine is a special education teacher and mom of a toddler who is hard of hearing. Since she attended her first Moms Night Inn, we knew she was part of the group! She is from the McHenry area.

HEATHER MILLER

Our other newest board member, Heather's daughter who is DHH is headed to college this fall. Heather has been a familiar face at ILHV events for years, and we couldn't be more excited to have her on the Board. Heather lives south of Chicago.



This picture was taken during our annual in person board meeting on April 26, 2026. It does not include all the board members listed above.

MOM'S NIGHT INN

BY: MAIRA NAVA
VICE PRESIDENT



We opened and closed the evening in a circle, beginning with introductions and ending hand-in-hand, reflecting on the connections we had made. It was a powerful reminder that while each family's journey is unique, we are united by shared experiences, hopes, and a commitment to supporting our deaf and hard of hearing children.



We gathered for two rounds of table discussions, first focusing on our children's journeys, with topics ranging from Early Intervention and school-age experiences to college and employment, and then shifting to our own interests, including reading, fitness, puzzles, and creative planning. These conversations provided opportunities to share resources, learn from one another, and connect not only as parents, but also as women with shared interests and experiences.

The evening continued with a delicious dinner, relaxing yoga, and chair-massages providing everyone with a chance to unwind and recharge.



Quinn West

Language Mentor Specialist

One of the highlights of the evening was hearing from a Deaf adult who shared her personal journey growing up in a hearing family with microtia. She spoke candidly about the challenges she faced, her search for identity and belonging, and the impact of finding connection with others who shared similar experiences. Her story emphasized the importance of Deaf community, role models, and mentors. Just as we, as mothers, seek out community and support from one another, our children also benefit from having connections with peers and adults who understand their experiences and can help them build a strong sense of identity and belonging.



Moms also had the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities, including creating personalized charm keychains or contributing to a community puzzle. These activities beautifully reflected the theme of the evening. The charms we selected represented pieces of our individual stories, while the puzzle symbolized how we are all connected. Like interlocking puzzle pieces, our lives intersect both consciously and unexpectedly, leading us to new relationships, experiences, and opportunities along the way.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making the evening so special. We left feeling encouraged, inspired, and reminded that none of us walks this journey alone. If you haven't had the opportunity to attend one of our Mom's Night Inn events yet, we highly encourage you to join us at a future gathering. These evenings provide a welcoming space to connect, share experiences, build lasting friendships, and find support from others who understand this unique journey.



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Meet the New Members of the GBYS Team



GUIDE BY
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ILLINOIS

Angelica Reyes

Angelica is a trilingual deaf adult who uses a cochlear implant. She assists families as a DHH Guide and lives in Cook County.

DHH GUIDE

Araceli Martinez

Araceli is the mother of one child who is hard of hearing. Araceli and her family live in Lake County.

PARENT GUIDE

Danielle Claxton

Danielle is hard of hearing. She is the parent of two adult daughters who are also hard of hearing. Danielle lives in Cook County.

PG/DHH GUIDE

Hunter Martin

Hunter is a deaf adult who uses hearing aids. He assists families as a DHH Guide and lives in Sangamon County.

DHH GUIDE

Karissa Urback

Karissa is the mother of 2 children one who is deaf. Karissa and her family live in Will County.

PARENT GUIDE

Kevin Johnson

Kevin is the father of 4 children, one who is hard of hearing. Kevin and his family live in Cook County.

PARENT GUIDE

Lisa Peavy

Lisa is the mother of 4 children, one who is hard of hearing. Lisa and her family live in Winnebago County.

PARENT GUIDE

Susan Tseng

Susan is the mother of 2 children one who is hard of hearing. Susan and her family live in DuPage County.

PARENT GUIDE

Tessa Bullard

Tessa is the mother of 3 children one who is hard of hearing. Tessa and her family live in Schuyler County.

PARENT GUIDE



Illinois Sound Beginnings

a partnership of the IL Department of Public Health Early Hearing Detection and Intervention and IL Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side. Committed to supporting families with children who are deaf/hard of hearing and deafblind TOGETHER.



"What works for your child is what makes the choice right."™

View our entire GBYS team at www.ilhandsandvoices.org

Hear Our Journey

THE GARNER FAMILY

THE BEGINNING

When my son was born, he failed his newborn hearing screening. Like many families, it was unexpected and difficult to process. Over time, we learned that his hearing loss is in both ears, with his right ear being weaker than his left. As we navigated appointments and next steps, we relied heavily on providers for guidance, but not all experiences felt supportive or sensitive, which made things even harder in those early moments.

IMPORTANT STEP FOR FUTURE FAMILIES

My advice to families just starting out is to stay strong and take it one step at a time. This journey can feel overwhelming, but your child will grow, learn, and thrive in their own way. Don't be afraid to ask questions and seek the support your child needs.

MORE TO BE DONE!

There needs to be better communication and support within school systems. As parents, it can be hard to fully understand what our children experience throughout the day, especially if they can't always express it. Stronger collaboration between schools and families is so important to ensure our children are truly supported.



My son is growing into a confident communicator and continues to build his independence. He actively engages in both sign and spoken communication and isn't afraid to advocate for himself—even correcting me when needed. He has a strong personality and enjoys expressing himself in his own way. It's been inspiring to see his confidence grow over time.

PARENT-TO-PARENT

Connecting with other parents made a big difference for me. It helped to talk to someone who truly understood the journey without needing a lot of explanation. Those connections remind you that you're not alone and that there are people who can guide and support you along the way.

QUOTE

"You're not alone—there are people who understand this journey and can help guide you through it."



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Andrea Marwah

Special Education Advocate | COPAA Member | ASTra Trainer

ALL THINGS SPED

Information and support
ALL THINGS SPEDial EDucation

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that Illinois follows for students in public schools with disabilities. Illinois does not have the right to change or omit any requirements under IDEA; however, they can add to it. Illinois often adds legal requirements. In January of 2026 the following requirements were added to IL School Code that you should be aware of. Important to note, this is educational information, not legal advice.

New for 2026:

Law	Effective	What Changed
HB 1366 / P.A. 104-0047	Jan. 1, 2026	Parents must be informed they can bring advocates and support people to IEP meetings
		Districts must provide information about IEP Facilitation
SB 1231 / P.A. 104-0368	Jan. 1, 2026	New timelines for publicly funded IEE's
		Expanded transition planning discussion regarding graduation and loss of IDEA eligibility

Let's break these new laws down:

House Bill (HB 1366)

- The first addition to the law requires districts to include on your Notice of Conference, (which is the invitation you received that includes where and when the meeting will take place and who will attend the meeting) that you “have a right to invite individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, and advocates for the parent, guardian, or child”. As is best practice, the law encourages districts to include a request in the notice that parents, students or legal guardians inform their district of who is coming.
- Newly Included in this law is that the district must inform parents of their right to State Sponsored IEP Facilitation including what IEP facilitation is, how to request it, and how it can help resolve disagreements before mediation or due process.

Continued to page 12



Andrea Marwah

Special Education Advocate | COPAA Member | ASTra Trainer

ALL THINGS SPED

Information and support
ALL THINGS SPED Education

Continued from page 11

Senate Bill (SB 1231)

- The law has changed timelines relating to Independent Education Evaluation (IEE) requests. These requests are typically because families disagree with the evaluation findings of the school team. Previously, districts had 5 days to respond to a parents request for an IEE, this has changed to 7 school days. The requirement still stands that the district either agrees to the IEE or files due process to defend their existing evaluation. Also, prior to January 1, 2026, the district had 30 days to complete the evaluation, now they have 60 school days to complete.
- New legal requirement is that by the school year in which a student turns 16, parents/guardians and students must now be told in writing that: graduation with a regular high school diploma terminates the student's eligibility for a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under IDEA; and the student may continue to receive IEP services until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 (example: if a student turns 22 in December 2025, they continue through May or June of that school year, May or June 2026) but the student cannot accept their diploma in order to continue services. The student can still attend the graduation ceremony or received a certificate but not their actual diploma. They will receive their diploma once they finish school on or before the last day of school in their 22nd year.

These new requirements to inform families are very important because families may not be aware of these legal rights. If you are having difficulties with your IEP or 504 plan and your child is deaf/hard of hearing, deafblind or blind/low vision you can receive free advocacy support from the IL School for the Deaf Outreach including: consult, preparation and direct support at your meeting. You can request support here: <https://tinyurl.com/ISDAdvocate>

Please note, Andrea Marwah is not an attorney so this information should be considered educational only, not legal advice. If you require legal advice you should contact a special education attorney or www.equipforequality.org.



Strategies for Language Development

Resources:



[Infant and
Toddler Language
Toolkit](#)



[Language
Development](#)



[Supports for
Language
Acquisition](#)



[Social Emotional
Development
Video](#)

A strategy is a simple, purposeful thing you can do during everyday moments to help your child learn and communicate.

These strategies are:

- Easy to use, with clear language
- Helpful with spoken words, sign language, or both
- Useful for all modes of communication
- Flexible for any family, anytime
- **Start Strong and Connect:** Building a strong bond with your child early helps them grow socially, emotionally, and learn better.
- **Joint Attention:** Share the focus through joint attention. This happens when a caregiver and child focus on the same thing, like looking at each other, then an object. Support it by following your child's lead and joining their interests.
- **Make it Interesting:** Children's videos or books that use fun songs, stories, or pictures to teach words can keep kids interested and engaged. A good example is the [Signing Time](#) series.
- **Repetition:** Using repetition helps your child remember words and understand their meaning, which builds strong language skills over time.
- **Use Big Words:** Use different kinds of words and descriptions. Don't just use simple words—try mixing it up! Your child can learn and grow by seeing or hearing a wide range of vocabulary.
- **Communicate with Purpose and Ease:** Give your child real-world, meaningful language every day. Keep it natural—use your normal voice, daily routines, and everyday moments for genuine connection.
- **Make Communication Fun:** Sing, rhyme, read, and use big, expressive movements to keep your child engaged! Use facial expressions, change up how you say or sign things, and slow it down. This helps your child notice and remember language.
- **Prompt and Pull:** Means setting up moments that invite your child to communicate—giving them a reason to express themselves. Create opportunities that spark their desire to share, ask, or respond.
- **Take Turns:** Back-and-forth interactions build language by teaching kids to listen, respond, and take turns- when your child speaks, respond. When you speak, wait for their return.
- **Expand and Add:** Expanding on your child's communication attempts means meeting the child where they are and adding more.
- **Reading:** Reading with your child from an early age builds lasting literacy skills. Read to, with, and around your child.
- **Share Joy:** Give your child space to explore on their own while enjoying moments of connection together. There's no need to feel like you have to be their constant language teacher. [View Fostering Joy resources.](#)

6.2025 Language Development Strategies

THIS PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH EARLY HEARING DETECTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM AND THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, PREVENTIVE HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES (PHHS) BLOCK GRANT AND ITS CONTENTS ARE SOLELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE FUNDING SOURCE.

This SNIPPET is one of our 8 most recent editions to support families in raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. View the following page in this newsletter to learn more about SNIPPETS, see the whole library of SNIPPET topics and scan the QR code to visit this online resource.



SNIPPETS are:

- Simple
- Concise
- Easy to read
- Shareable
- Educational
- Information at your fingertips

Languages available:

- English
- Arabic
- Chinese
- French
- German
- Korean
- Polish
- Russian
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese

Scan the QR code to
view our SNIPPET
library



Current List of SNIPPET Topics:

- Agency & Program Acronyms *
- Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder
- Aural (Re)habilitation
- All about ASL (American Sign Language)
- Audiologists
- Benefits of Music
- Benefits of DHH Guide Support
- Bone Conduction Hearing Aid
- Building Confidence in Children with Hearing Loss
- CHARGE Syndrome
- Choosing a Daycare
- CMV Prevention
- Common Acronyms
- Communication Strategies
- Communicating with your Child
- Communication Tips
- Conductive Hearing Loss
- Developmental Therapist - Hearing (DT/H)
- Early Intervention (EI) Clearinghouse *
- Fostering Joy
- From Culture to Connection
- Genetic Testing
- Hearing Device Tips
- Literacy Development
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
- Microtia / Atresia
- Mixed Hearing Loss
- More Than Hearing Loss
- Navigating Early Intervention (EI) in Illinois *
- Pediatric Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist (ENT)
- Receptive Language
- Recommended Tests
- Sensorineural Hearing Loss
- Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)
- State Funded Resources *
- Strategies for Language Development
- Supporting Literacy
- Unilateral Hearing Loss / Single Sided Hearing Loss
- What is an Audiogram
- What is Cytomegalovirus (CMV)?
- What is DSCC? *

*These topics are specific to Illinois (IL)

For more information or to suggest future topics
email ilhvgbys@gmail.com



09.25 Flier

OCTOBER 17 | 5PM - 9PM



BINGO NIGHT

Fundraiser



GAMES | PRIZES | FOOD | FUN

VFW - CANTIGNY POST #367 - 826 HORSESHOE DRIVE, JOLIET

BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY:

<https://tinyurl.com/ILHVBingo>

must be 18 years or older to purchase tickets



**SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN
WHO ARE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING/DEAFBLIND**

IL Hands & Voices is a 501c3 organization - EIN 06-1724201
"What works for your family is what makes the choice right"

SUNSHINE & SMILES

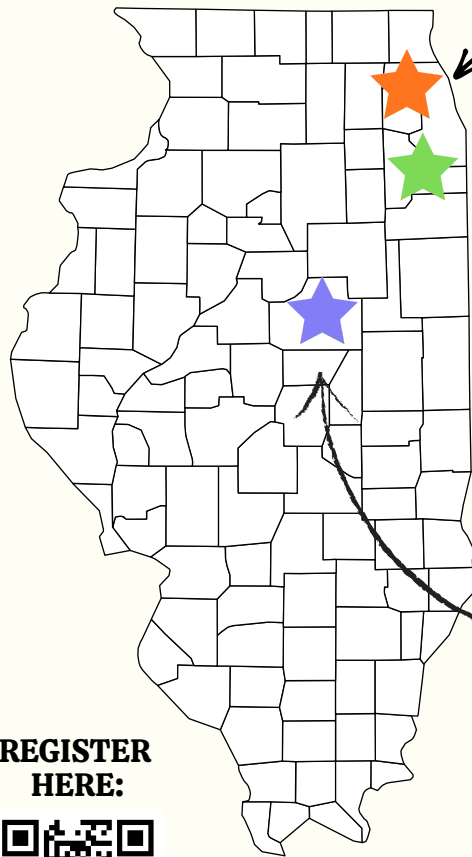


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At the Park



SPLASH!

**SOUTH RIDGE PARK
HOFFMAN ESTATES**



**COMMISSIONERS PARK
FRANKFORT**



SPLASH!

**MILLER PARK IN
BLOOMINGTON**

**REGISTER
HERE:**



BRING YOUR PICNIC BLANKET AND FOOD AND JOIN
US FOR FUN ON THE PLAYGROUND. MOST LOCATIONS
ALSO HAVE A "SPLASH PAD" PLAY AREA!

SATURDAY

11

JULY

3 LOCATIONS

10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

SCAN THE QR CODE TO RSVP BY: 7/7/2026

Illinois Hands & Voices is a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization EIN 06-1724201

"What works for your child is what makes the choice right."



Illinois Sound Beginnings

a partnership of the IL Department of Public Health
Early Hearing Detection and Intervention and IL
Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side. Committed to
supporting families with children who are deaf/
hard of hearing and deafblind TOGETHER.



Join our Fostering Joy zoom meet up

Register to receive a free journal and learn more!

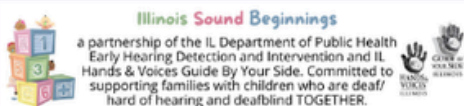
**July 15th
8:00 pm on Zoom**



Register at: <http://tinyurl.com/ilhvsignup2026>

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**Celebrating our Children
Focusing on Joy**

July 25th / 9-10 am CST

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

TIPS FOR MANAGING BEHAVIORS

Join us for a free, interactive Zoom session designed for parents to connect, learn strategies, and receive answers to their questions regarding behavior concerns for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.



- Join us for a free informal webinar on zoom
- To receive the zoom link register here or with QR code:
<https://tinyurl.com/ILHVSsignup2026>



HANDS &
VOICES[™]
ILLINOIS



GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE[™]
ILLINOIS



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Live Q&A

MONDAY, AUGUST 17

7:30 PM (CT)

What do you like to do for fun?

Is it hard to make friends?

What advice do you have for my family?

Join us for an opportunity to ask questions and learn more from our team of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) Guides.

Register through the QR code or at <https://tinyurl.com/ILHVSignup2026> to receive the zoom link.



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USA DEAF SOCCER

SUMMER SOCCER CAMP

USA Deaf Soccer is excited to host our annual Summer Soccer Camp at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind in Colorado Springs. This immersive experience is designed for kids in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community to develop their soccer skills, build confidence, and form lifelong friendships with peers who share their experiences.



REGISTRATION OPEN

**8-12 JULY
2026**



COLORADO



DEAF INCLUSIVE NIGHT @ WRIGLEY!



VS



SEPTEMBER 14TH
6:40PM CDT



TICKET PRICE
INCLUDES SPECIAL
EDITION CUBS
SWEATSHIRT

Choose "IL Hands & Voices" so a
portion of your ticket proceeds
goes to supporting families
with children who are Deaf/
Hard of Hearing.



HANDS &
VOICES
ILLINOIS

SCAN TO
LEARN
MORE





Get paid for your input!



We need Illinois parents of children who are deaf/hard of hearing to help review parent materials

Review meetings will be held in the evening and some work will be done on your own beforehand.

Only 6 participants needed per session. One session is 3 hours of work during the month.

We are looking to host multiple review committees over the next year. Selection is ongoing, and we will keep all submissions on file to potentially contact for a committee at a later date.



Scan the QR code. It will take you to the google form with more information and to submit your name as a potential participant.

<https://forms.gle/F5q4TC2E58urm5Ph7>



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Deaf & Hard of Hearing Guides share with families:

- ▶ Their unique lived experiences
- ▶ Technology tips
- ▶ How they navigate social situations
- ▶ How they developed their personal identity
- ▶ And so much more



NOW

Contact us to get connected for free!

AVAILABLE!

224.343.1873 Voice/Text

ilhvgbys@gmail.com



HANDS &
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GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE™
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What do you do to make
sure you don't miss hearing
announcements in
environments like an
airport?



ACRONYMS

HERE ARE SOME ACRONYMS THAT YOU MAY SEE THROUGHOUT THIS NEWSLETTER OR IN INFORMATION ONLINE

1-3-6 - Hearing screened by 1 months of age, Diagnostic testing by 3 months of age, and enrolled in Early Intervention and parent support by 6 months of age

AAP - American Academy of Pediatrics

ADA - Americans With Disabilities Act

ASL - American Sign Language

CMV - Cytomegalovirus

DBA - Doing Business as Agreement

DEI - Diversity & Equity Infusion

DHH - Deaf Hard of Hearing

EHDI - Early Hearing Detection & Intervention

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IDPH - Illinois Department of Public Health

IEP - Individualized Education Program

ILHV - Illinois Hands & Voices

ISRC - Illinois Service Resource Center

GBYS - Guide By Your Side

JCIH - Joint Committee on Infant Hearing

LTF - Lost to Follow-up

L2L - Leadership to Leadership

NCHAM - National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management

PG - Parent Guides (parents of children who are deaf/hard of hearing)

SNIPPET - Simple N Informative Parent-to-Parent Education Tools

Learn more on common acronyms here:

<https://www.illinoissoundbeginnings.com/acronyms>

Illinois Hands & Voices, Guide By Your Side does not support or endorse any specific organization, communication or amplification choice.

The information in this newsletter is to simply share with families and professionals the resources and events available to them.

FIND US HERE...

Follow us on Social Media:



@illinoishandsandvoices



@ilhandsandvoices



IL Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side (ILHV GBYS)

Carrie Balian, Program Coordinator

Phone: (224) 343-1873

Email: ilhvgbys@gmail.com

Andrea Marwah, Executive Director

Email: executivedirector@ilhandsandvoices.com

Web: www.ilhandsandvoices.org

IL EHDI Program

Phone: 217-782-4733

Email: DPH.newbornhearing@illinois.gov

Web: www.illinoissoundbeginnings.org



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