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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
COUNTDOWN TO MAINSTREAMING:  
HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR  
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>> Good day, everyone. Welcome to today's hear to learn webinar brought to you by the Department of Communicative disorders and Deaf education at Utah State University. This webinar is being recorded.

Today's presentation is entitled, countdown to mainstreaming, how to prepare for the next school year which will be presented by Kaytie Cook-Ward. Kaytie Cook is a teacher of the Deaf in the sound beginnings program at Utah State University. Leading the kindergarten class, she gets to incorporate her love of language, reading and movement at a fun and interactive level. At the conclusion of this presentation, I will be opening up a text field for you to submit any questions or comments you may have for our presenter.

Now I would like to welcome Kaytie Cook to today's webinar.

>> Thank you so much for joining us today. Today I'm excited to talk about our very timely topic, countdown to transitions in mainstream, how to prepare for next school year. My name is Kaytie Cook-Ward and I'm a teacher of the Deaf at Utah State University. I'm also the cooperating classroom teacher for our graduate training program at Utah State University for candidates seeking their master degrees in Deaf education with a listel

and -- and this year we have had many opportunities to facilitate transitions, some planned and some not planned. I hope we are all doing well and adjusting as best we can.

For today I'm excited to dive into tips for transitions to school services together.

Today we will cover the referral process and joining us as being an early intervention services. We will talk about the differences between mainstream and inclusion classroom settings. Clarify the components of an IEP and 504 educational plans. And end by covering how to best prepare for success in new settings and in new classrooms.

So what is the referral process? Children with hearing loss have many agencies, schools and service providers they can choose to see during early intervention. As these children with hearing loss prepare to enter services with their school districts, you will want to make sure a referral has been done, whether you are a provider or a parent, it can be helpful to review this process and make sure all team members are on the same page as transitions begin.

So is what a referral? Children with a hearing loss are eligible for services at school that ensure they have appropriate access to their curriculum and school activities. In order to receive these services, they need to be enrolled in the school special education system. After an assessment of eligibility. The initial contact to request the assessment is called a referral and is usually a simple process. It can be a phone call to your school's office or an e-mail requesting services. My recommendation is to do a written form of communication like an e-mail so you and your team have an electronic trail they can refer back to. If your child is already involved in services provided by the school district, a referral isn't necessary as they are already in the system. A common question with the referral process is: Who can refer a child? Anyone who knows a child can refer them. This can be a parent, grandparent, current teacher or provider or even a well-known neighbor. Once the referral has been made, federal law mandates the school district must complete eligibility testing within 60 school days and have a scheduled meeting with the parent or guardian to review the assessments and determine what services a child will be eligible for.

The school district has 30 days to create an approved service plan and begin services. Certain states have set a higher standard of doing eligibility testing within 45 school days. If a parent or guardian would like, they can extend that time line but a school district cannot do that independently. This is to ensure timely services and response to referrals.

This can sound like an overwhelming process. How do we make it smooth like creamy peanut butter? Both parents and professionals can make this process smooth by starting the conversation early and being proactive by offering the school districts any current testing progress reports or parent insight. A school may still choose to do their own assessments, but a baseline of a child's ability can help things run smoother.

Once a child qualifies for services, there are many ways these services can look in action. We are going to discuss the differences between these settings and plans. We will start with mainstreaming and inclusion. It's helpful to define the terms as professionals we use them interchangeably. As parents and professionals always clarify when these terms are stated. Mainstreaming is the term used to describe an educational setting where the primary placement for the child is a pullout classroom for special education services or a Deaf and hard-of-hearing classroom. A child may then participate in partial inclusion into a general classroom, but their primary placement is in a separate space. When participating in partial inclusion, a child typically joins a general classroom setting during non-academic hours of the day like recess, art, choice centers or media. These inclusion times may be facilitated by a special education teacher or itinerant teacher.

Full inclusion, a child's primary placement is in the general classroom and the child may receive support from an itinerant teacher who specialized in specializing in children with hearing loss. The next most common question we receive is, what and who is an itinerant teacher?

Here you can see me with our wonderful school districts itinerant teacher. An itinerant teacher is a teacher of the Deaf who services children with hearing loss in an assigned school district. An itinerant teacher will travel within their geographical area and work with the classroom teacher to provide the appropriate support for a child to be successful. An itinerant can provide services within the classroom or do pullout

sessions if needed. They can assist with technology training and troubleshooting, coach self-advocacy skills for a child, and pre-teach and post teach classroom content for higher success in a child's inclusion setting.

As we review this slide together, we are going to look at the different signs a child may show that can help determine what placement may be best for them. It's important for parents and professionals to really look at these signs carefully to make sure the chosen setting provides the best support to ensure success for a child's successful educational placement. For mainstreaming, a child may be functioning within a year or two in all areas. This is listening in spoken language, social and emotional, and their academics. They are able to follow directions including routine directions with simple prompts. They comment sometimes and they can follow a chain of communication and understand at least 50% of what the teacher is saying.

For full inclusion, a child is at or above age grade level in all areas. They can independently follow directions. They are able to participate in class discussion without a lot of prompting. They can independently ask for help. And they follow a chain of communication and understand at least 90% of what it teacher or instructor is saying. As you may notice, the skills are very similar for both mainstreaming and inclusion, but the difference lies in the level of independence and level of performance in language and academics.

I think it's important to note that a placement like mainstreaming shouldn't be viewed as holding our child back or academic punishment for a child who needs more supports. Additionally, if a child is showing signs for success in an inclusion setting it shouldn't be viewed as losing specialized supports. Each setting is designed to push a child forward with the supports they need to succeed in the long run. Often a child can start in a mainstream setting with the clear goal of full inclusion as they progress forward in schooling. Other times a child is able to reach their personal and family goals better with the support of a mainstream setting and specialized teachers dedicated to their success. The children we love and serve are not test scores or eligibility statistics. They are amazing humans preparing for what they want and need in their education. As we really analyze the placement options, we can help place a child with the supports they need to best do so.

Based on eligibility determined by testing and your school district's specific guidelines, your child will either receive an IEP which stands for individual education plan or a 504 plan. Each is designed to provide the supports needed for a child with hearing loss to successfully access their school's curriculum and activities. If a child doesn't meet the requirements for eligibility for an IEP, a parent may worry that their child won't have support in their classrooms. A valid concern often stated is: My child was doing so well with the supports in the earlier setting. I do not want them to lose that progress by removing all of the supports they had before.

A 504 plan was designed to address this concern. It protects students who don't qualify for an IEP or mainstream setting but still have a barrier blocking them from accessing their classroom. This includes a hearing loss. A 504 plan can be written to the request and ensure to have preferential seating in a classroom, receive extra time to process spoken test questions. And other accommodations recommended by a service team and requested by a child with hearing loss.

I want to pause for a few seconds and allow everyone to take a minute to read through each column and think about what supports your child or a child you serve may need.

I like this quote because it's a reminder of how important it is to make sure that your child has the foundation to be successful. This quote reads: We should keep in mind that the child's progress or lack thereof should help guide the decision between the different placement and/or service options. Without the basic prerequisite skills and ongoing support, the inclusion model fails too many children.

As a team member who works with children of hearing loss, we can help a child be placed in the best possible setting to receive the best possible supports that they need to achieve their goals.

Understanding our classroom placements. Often an important step but what more can we do? We will look at preparing our children for mainstream placement. Parents and professionals can work hand in hand to see how to implement some of these tips and brain storm creative ways to address the concerns unique to each of the children we serve.

Helping a child prepare for a new setting means helping them feel confident with using a managing technology. We can encourage wearing technology as much as possible, and provide opportunities for them to help change batteries, tell you when they aren't hearing something well. And, of course, talk, talk, talk. Access to quality sound is the first step. Providing conversation is the second. Academically, one of the most effective ways to prepare is to read daily at home. Let your child pick different picture books to read or try reading out loud a chapter book that interests them. Include your extended family and friends in these goals and activities. This can be using video chat to read stories with grandpa and grandma who may live far away or calling a friend and providing your friend an opportunity to recount something exciting that happened that day.

When we look for places to have meaningful conversations, our friends and families are excellent resources.

Next we want to make sure we provide opportunities to socialize with typically developing children. Research suggests that one of the most important factors in a child's success in a classroom setting isn't academic preparation. It's knowing how to play and connect with peers and environments that they feel safe and loved in. We can help build these skills through lots of play. Go to parks. Join a play group. Invite neighbors over for games. Join a community recreational team like soccer or basketball. Go to sibling school events and meet current teachers. There are so many ways to connect and play. The skill we develop in play are those that we will use and help your child feel more confident as they transition into a new place and are meeting new friends.

Another important step to prepare for any transition is understanding advocacy. Both for yourself and your child. For a child with hearing loss, we can help them practice specific language for expected situations. These can be things like asking for a new seat. Requesting that someone speak louder or slower. Asking for a repeat of information. Explaining what their technology is. Or answering questions about the technology. As we do this, we help them feel successful and prepared for things that happen at school regularly. Parents and service team members need to remember that a parent knows the child best. This knowledge makes them their child's best advocate. As professionals, our job is to use observation in a

variety of assessment tools to create a plan for best services possible. However, these observations and assessments can miss important information that would change what are suggested. It's imperative that parents feel they can share information that they know their rights and are comfortable using national and local resources provided to families with hearing loss. At the end of the presentation, there will be a slide to a link with some great resources for families and professionals to use as we navigate this tricky process.

So what can parents do? Building off of this, we know that a parent can provide critical information that can make a good service plan into the best service plan possible. When we think critical information, we may go to allergies, age or medical needs. However this extends to likes and dislikes of the children we serve. I once had a student who was very quiet and reserved. I connected with his parents to ask about some of the things that interested him and what he enjoys at home. I learned this child loves pirates. I started embedding pirates into my lesson plans and all of a sudden I felt like I had a whole new student. His confidence increased as he was able to participate in conversations, share his interests and even bring toys and books from home to make and secure language connections and play skills. I would encourage us all to include interests, preferences, and consideration for individual personalities to be included in discussions as critical information. And preparation for this course I spoke with a few special education professionals and asked them what they hoped families understood most. Over and over again it was re-iterated the importance of parents and how needed their voice is in determining services and service plan goals. As professionals, encourage your parents to participate. Express concerns and lead in making the decisions for their child. As parents, know that we see you as the most important team member on your child's team.

How do we collaborate as a team? As we collaborate, we set our children up for success. Ask often within your teams: How is my child doing in the different developmental areas? How are they participating in the different settings? How can we work together to re-enforce language and goals in all settings?

Now that we talked about the preparation process, I want to move forward and talk about what happens after we transitioned into the new settings and how we can best support a child with hearing loss as they do so.

A great way to find success in transitions is to connect with others who understand the transitions happening. Professionals can help by creating these events spreading awareness of events and connecting families as appropriate. Your child can benefit from social opportunities with peers who understand hearing loss and new school settings. There are also some great books about children with hearing loss that use social stories to help children find vocabulary and language, to talk about the changes they may be facing. An important step I would encourage families and professionals to think about is to talk to the siblings of a child with hearing loss in a time of transition. Recently when giving a similar presentation to families I serve, a parent stated that a family member was having the hardest time was actually the older sibling who for the first time was going to have to navigate their sibling with hearing loss coming to their school seeing their friends and meeting their teachers. One of the child's concern was: How do I talk about my siblings hearing loss when asked? What if they tease my sibling and what I am I supposed to do when that happens. These are important conversations to have and to prepare siblings for and especially if it causes them concern.

As we encourage open communication and connection, we will be prepared and able to address problems as they come and acknowledge and celebrate the successes as they happen.

Along the lines of open communication, just as it's important to maintain an open line of communication with the professionals, it's just as important for parents and professionals to check in with the child they are serving. Ask sincerely, how are you feeling? How are your friends at school? And how are you liking school? What's your favorite class? How are your hearing devices working in class? Do you like going to school. A valuable phrase is tell me more. Oftentimes when asking these questions, we hear the typical, good. And then nothing else. As we practice wait time and encourage conversation, you will be surprised what we learn from checking in often and simply asking, tell me more about that.

As we get ready to wrap up, I would like briefly to look over available resources for families. This slide will be available to be viewed after a session if you would like to share it with families. This list is no way extensive but does provide a great snapshot of available resources for families as they

transition and start to navigate the ins and outs of services. I would be happy to share some great PDFs and handouts so feel free to reach out and request more resources. Our first website is [hear-to-learn.org](http://hear-to-learn.org) and one of my favorite sites for families and professionals. There are training videos for troubleshooting technology and materials for doing targeted language activities at home. [AG Bell.org](http://AGBell.org) is another excellent resource for checking with families with hearing loss and understanding hearing loss and the technology used. Our last two websites, [success for kids with hearing loss](http://successforkids.org). And [understood.org](http://understood.org) help directly answer questions about navigating school meetings like IEPs and 504 services, and can help you get connected to local resources and advocates to help facilitate the transition process that can sometimes be overwhelming.

Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. I would love to answer any questions or refer you to resources as we provide any needed information.

>> Thank you, Kaytie, for your presentation. I do want to point out that the PowerPoint slides are available for download, the bottom left corner pod. At this time, we are open for questions. Please type your questions in the Q&A pod that is opening up. And Kaytie will respond to those. I do want to note also that after this webinar, if you still have any follow-up questions or comments, please e-mail me at [Nicole.Jacobson](mailto:Nicole.Jacobson).

>> Linda, I see you raised your hand. Go ahead and type your question. I would be happy to answer it.

>> We do have a question also that says, what type of questions can a parent be asking to make sure their child is getting good visual access through their educational interpreter?

>> I love that. And I know we talked a lot about leading questions because sometimes when we ask a yes or no question, we don't get a lot of information. So I think something that we can ask is help parents have a check list. Kind of with that tell me more, tell me what you see? Tell me some things that you saw at class today? Tell me some things that you learned. You can learn that information and check with the teacher to see if it's true, was this the right information? Is my child missing large chunks and check out that recall and receptive language as well. That's an awesome question. I would really encourage that tell me what you see. Tell me what you are getting. Then the child

is able to help us understand what they are remembering without our prompting.

>> I will wait a moment to see if there are any other questions coming through.

Okay, we would like to thank all who participated on-line today. And remind you that a video recording of today's presentation will be available on our website [hear to learn.org](http://hear.to/learn.org). At the close of this session you will be invited to complete a very brief survey that will help us to improve future webinars. We again want to thank you for your participation in today's webinar and hope to see you back for the next one. Thank you for joining us.