

# Stronger Together

**Statewide Resources for Deaf/Hard of Hearing  
Students, Students with Visual Impairments  
and Students with Combined Vision and  
Hearing Loss**

# Division of State Schools

- Three State Schools
  - Atlanta Area School for the Deaf- Day School in Clarkston
  - Georgia Academy for the Blind- Residential and Day Program in Macon
  - Georgia School for the Deaf- Residential and Day Program in Cave Spring
- Georgia PINES- Parent Infant Network for Children Birth-5 with sensory loss
- Oversee the Implementation of Act 462
- Georgia Mobile Audiology Program
- Smokey Powell Center
- VI Outreach- Zelma Murray
- DHH Outreach- Vanessa Robisch

# State Schools

Atlanta Area School for the Deaf- Day School in Clarkston

Georgia Academy for the Blind- Residential and Day Program in Macon

Georgia School for the Deaf- Residential and Day Program in Cave Spring

- Referral Process

- Students are referred by local school systems
- Families are encouraged to observe at the schools and state school staff may want to observe in the current classroom when possible.
- IEP team meets to discuss placement. Must include someone from the state schools on the IEP team.
- IEP placement at one of the state schools is considered a continuum of services provided by the local school system so while there is no cost to enroll, transportation is provided by the school system. The state schools also collaborate with the school system on any additional services that may be needed.



**Provides**

**Developmentally appropriate**

**early intervention services to**

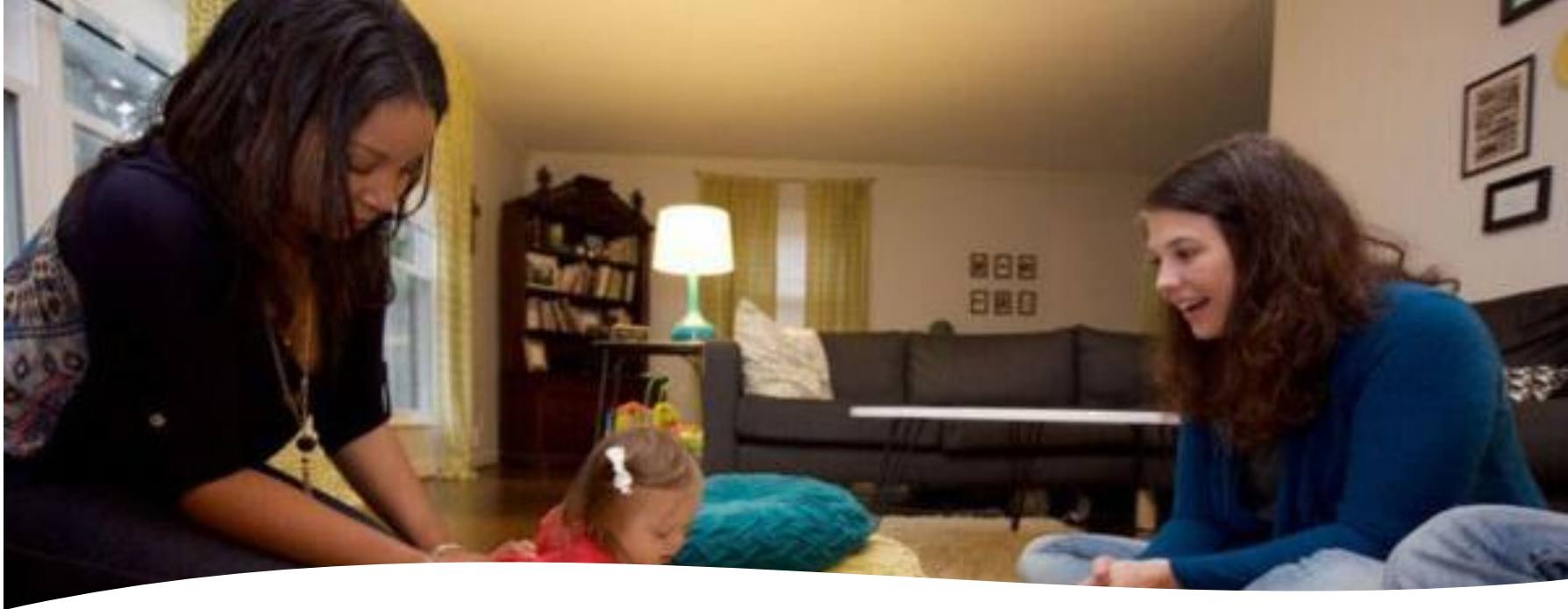
**young children** (ages birth to 3 years)  
**who have hearing and/or vision loss,**

**through the use of**

**standards and evidence-based practices,**

**in conjunction with support to the family**

(Based on research on the sense of urgency for children from birth to 3 to develop language and the importance of parent involvement as foundation for school success)



Georgia PINES serves ~ 500 families across Georgia

Child must have a diagnosis of sensory loss:

- Hearing loss - audiogram
- Vision impairment - eye report

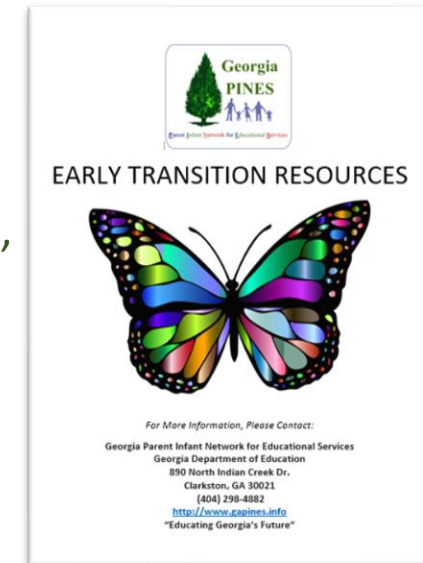
Georgia PINES services

- Are FREE to eligible families
- Are provided at the family's home\* (*distance learning provided during COVID-19*)
- Include 4 visits per month from a specially-trained Early Intervention Specialist
- Follow specialized curricula, based on a coaching model
- Focus on language nutrition for the child – *regardless of language modality.*

Funded by the Georgia Department of Education / State Schools Division

# PINES and TRANSITION at Age 3

- In general, Babies Can't Wait (Georgia's state's Part C agency) is responsible for transition to school as children approach the age of 3.
- However, Georgia PINES' Early Intervention Specialists provide additional assistance to families with understanding the transition process, and making contacts with the school district, as needed.
- In collaboration with GSAP (Georgia Sensory Assistance Project), PINES has developed a binder of resources to share with families as their child approaches age 3
- If requested by the parent and acceptable to the district, our EIS's may attend initial eligibility/transition meetings.
- Georgia PINES maintains ongoing, current assessment data for the children we serve, and that data is available to school districts, via the child's parents.





# GEORGIA PINES



**REFERRAL LINE: 404-300-5905**

Dr. Heidi Evans – Director: 404-298-4882 (office)  
404-309-9667 (cell)

[Hevans@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:Hevans@doe.k12.ga.us)

# Act 462

- AKA the Language and Literacy Act for DHH children- passed in May 2018
- Yearly report due to Legislature on September 15
  - First year, not as much data as we would like which is one of the reasons the law was created
- DHH children are severely under identified and are very difficult to track unless they receive special education services due to a primary DHH eligibility.
- Children who are identified as DHH will receive a GTID immediately.
- Language and Literacy Assessments will be administered every 6 months until the age of eight.
  - This will hopefully lead to more consistent communication with families, early interventionists, and educators





# Georgia Mobile Audiology

# Georgia Mobile Audiology Staff

- **Melanie Carter Morris, Au.D. - Audiologist**
  - Formerly a clinical audiologist at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
  - Specialized in electrophysiological testing
  - Specialized in working with at-risk populations
- **Monica Patterson, M.S. - Audiologist**
  - Formerly a school audiologist for Clayton Co. Schools
  - Supervised mass hearing screenings for 56,000 students
  - Organized management and evaluations for all students who are DHH
- **Stormey Cone, M.Ed. – Family Education & Engagement Specialist**
  - Certified Teacher of the Deaf
  - GA PINES Early Intervention Specialist
  - Specialized in working with children who use ASL and children who use spoken language
- **Jessica Page Bergeron, Ph.D. – Program Manager**
  - Formerly a program manager for an early intervention program at the Atlanta Speech School for children who are DHH
  - Specializes in working with families

# What we knew . . .



- Research data shows that children who are identified and receive services earlier have better outcomes in language, literacy, and academics<sup>1</sup>
  - 1 month, 3 months, 6 months benchmarks<sup>2</sup>
  - Lifetime educational cost savings of **\$115,600** per child over the course of the child's educational career<sup>3</sup>
- Research on Georgia's children who are DHH show that children in (a) rural areas; (b) families who speak a language other than English; and (c) families in low-income geographic areas are disproportionately represented because they are late identified.

**"Zip code lottery" – depending on where you live & income level determines your access to services, especially for children ages 0-5 years of age**

<sup>1</sup>NCHAM Fact Sheet, 2010

<sup>2</sup>Yoshinago-Itano, 2013

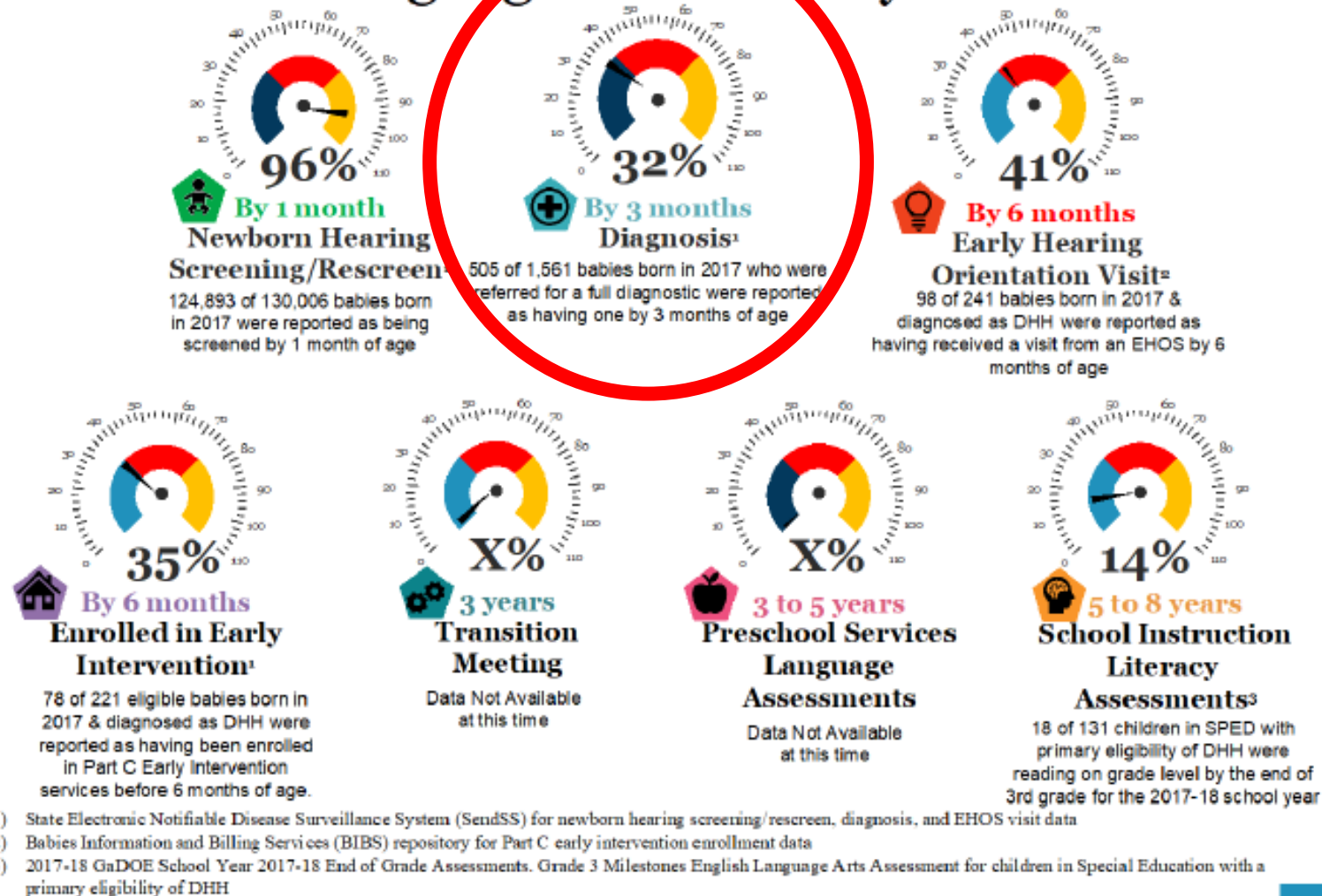
Cost Savings

<sup>4</sup>Georgia State University, 2014

# What have we learned?

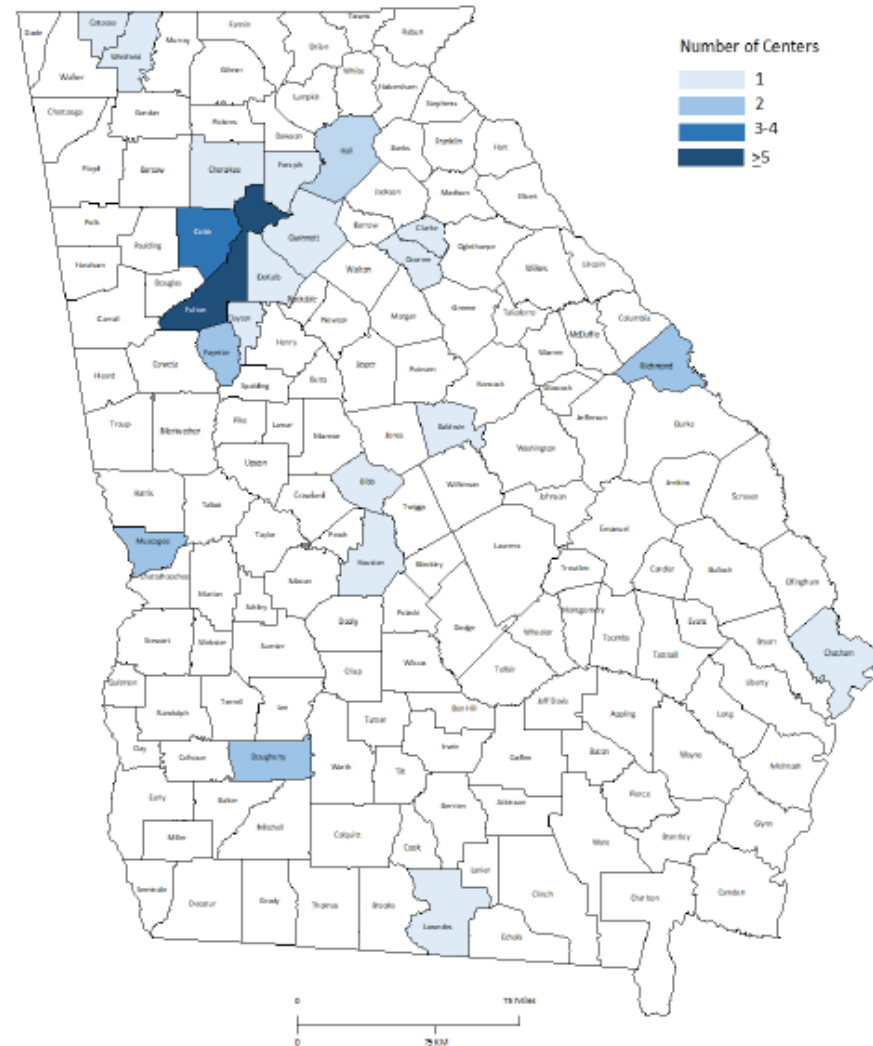
# Children with hearing loss are under-identified in GA

# DHH Language and Literacy Dashboard



[Language and Literacy Outcomes for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Georgia, 2019](#)

# Hearing Diagnostic Centers



July 2019  
EHD - Maternal and Child Health

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

[GA Map of Audiology  
and ENT Practices](#)



# Services that Require a DHH Diagnosis . . .

- Georgia PINES
- Babies Can't Wait
- Guide By Your Side Parent Mentor Program
- ASTra Advocacy Program
- IDEA Part B Preschool Services
- DECAL Inclusion Services
- Medicaid (in some cases)
- Tracking into OCGA 30-1-5 to get a Birth to Literacy Plan
- IDEA Part B School Services



# Current services with no diagnosis

- EHDI will assist you in getting a diagnosis
- Grady Hospital's *Access to Language* Program
- Mobile Audiology Program

# Under-identification in School-Aged Children



- Only about 1/3 of School Districts in Georgia conduct mass hearing screenings; almost all of the metro counties conduct screenings
- Prevalence of hearing loss goes up from 3 in 1000 to 9 in 1000 for school aged children (e.g. progressive losses, otitis media, late-onset, etc.)
- Mild and Unilateral hearing losses can have an effect on literacy outcomes
- Higher incidence of referrals on hearing screenings in low-performing schools\*

# What are we going to do?

# Georgia Mobile Audiology GOALS

Families have access to audiological services in a timely manner

The overall rate of children lost to follow-up goes down and does not disproportionately affect children in rural areas

School-aged children receive timely identification, ongoing care and management

Families have someone to help them navigate through the system





# Questions?

[MAPInfo@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:MAPInfo@doe.k12.ga.us)

[www.GAmobileaudiology.org](http://www.GAmobileaudiology.org)



# Outreach Department of the Georgia Academy for the Blind Smokey Powell Center

Zel Murray, Outreach Coordinator

Tara Nelson Bowie, Outreach Education Program Specialist  
Smokey Powell Center (SPC)

# The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology

- Our services are provided to school aged students aged 3-22 who have an IEP Eligibility for Visually Impaired.
- The SPC has been in operation since 2007 because of a generous endowment from a man named James Emory “Smokey” Powell.
- All of our services are free-no charge to the parent or the school districts.

# The Smokey Powell Center

## Five Main Components

1. Low Vision Clinics
2. AT Consultations
3. Outreach Services
4. Professional Learning Classes
5. Instructional Support

# The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology

## Low Vision Clinics

- Required for VI Eligibility if the student has usable vision and can participate in the evaluation
- The LVE must be conducted by an eye doctor who is specialized in the area of Low Vision
- There are 16 clinics throughout the school year—12 are held at SPC and 4 are off site
- Typically the student is prescribed a telescope, magnifier, and specialized sunlenses all at no cost

# The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology

## Assistive Technology Consultation

- Conducted at the student's school anywhere in the state of Georgia
- Equipment is often very expensive up to \$6,000 or more
- Our loan program gives the student the opportunity to try the equipment for one year
- The LEA has the opportunity to purchase at a much discounted price

# The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology

## Outreach Services for Assistive Technology

- The Outreach Program Specialists support schools around the state for providing equipment and resources for the Teacher of the Visually Impaired.
- We are also available for consultation by phone or email: 478-751-6083 ext. 3624
- [zmurray@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:zmurray@doe.k12.ga.us)
- [tbowie@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:tbowie@doe.k12.ga.us)

# The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology

## Professional Learning Classes

- The most important professional training for TVIs is the annual Georgia Vision Educators Statewide Training typically in October [www.gvest.org](http://www.gvest.org)
- We offer several online or face to face trainings that address the unique educational needs of students with visual impairments that help TVIs stay current with developing technology and techniques used with our students



# The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology

## Instructional Support

\* Our outreach services include referrals to experts at GAB who will provide instructional support and one on one training to TVIs and their students around the state who have a specific need

# The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology

- For services from the SPC, contact Heather Francis at [hfrancis@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:hfrancis@doe.k12.ga.us)

OR

\* Visit our website at [www.gabmacon.org](http://www.gabmacon.org) and see the Smokey Powell link

The staff members of the SPC include Zel Murray, Tara Nelson Bowie, Heather Francis, and Lisa Edalgo

# State Vision Coordinator

- Georgia Academy for the Blind is the hub for support to the local districts for all things vision
- The role of the State Vision Coordinator is to support parents, Teachers of the Visual Impaired, and administrators across the state

# DHH Outreach

## Consortiums and Professional Learning

- Still working on finding all the professionals working with DHH students.
- Monthly Emails to more than 700
- Regional Consortiums- six areas of the state. We are looking to add one more in the Augusta area.
- On-going professional learning through the consortiums as well as DHH Pre-Conference during the ALL Students (IDEAS) Conference
- Slack Platform- online platform specifically for any educational professional working with DHH students
- Monthly Outreach meetings with State Schools Staff, Georgia PINES, MAP, Pathways, Outreach.
- Also working with the Smokey Powell Center as well as GSAP to provide consistent messaging for students with sensory losses.
- New Deaf Ed Guidelines - *Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*

# *Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*

1. Essential Principles to Optimize Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing- The Implementation Checklist in Chapter 9 is based on these 10 Essential Principles
2. Federal Laws and Policies
3. Early Identification and Intervention
4. Evaluation and Eligibility
5. Goals, Services and Placement
6. School Environment Access and Accommodations
7. Post-Secondary Transition
8. Personnel
9. Implementation: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program and Service Review Checklist

# Questions?

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