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 OCGA 30-1-5

- Georgia Mobile Audiology Program

- Smokey Powell Center – Zel Murray, Tara Bowie, Sharon Lyttle

- DHH Outreach- New Hire Pending
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.
Georgia PINES provides state-wide specialized early intervention services for families of infants and toddlers with sensory loss.
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
• Includes 4 visits per month from a specially trained Early Intervention Specialist
• Follow specialized curriculum, based on a coaching model
• Focus on language nutrition on the child — regardless of language modality

Funded by the Georgia Department of Education/ State Schools Division
PINES and EARLY 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.
PINES and EARLY TRANSITION at 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.

• To support "Child Find", PINES sends each school district a report in January of each year, listing all the children in that district served by PINES.
Georgia Pines

REFERRAL LINE: 404-300-5905

Dr. Heidi Evans, Director:
404-298-4882 (office)
404-309-9667 (cell)
Hevans@doe.k12.ga

https://dhhpathways.georgia.gov/programs-partners/georgia-pines
O.C.G.A. 30-1-5

• 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 GOALS

- Families have access to audiology services in a timely manner
- The DHH ecosystem works more efficiently
- School-age students receive timely identification, on-going care, and management
- Families have someone to help them navigate through the system
Georgia Mobile Audiology (MAPINFO@doe.k12.ga.us)
www.gamobileaudiology.org

- Newborn Hearing Screening Follow-Up
- Diagnostic Non-Sedated Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) Evaluations
- Diagnostic Behavioral Testing
- Parent Navigation
- Family Education
- Community Outreach
- Care Coordination
Who Does GMA Provide Services To?

- Children birth to 22 years of age
- Children living in areas of the state with barriers to service (e.g., no providers close to their home, no health insurance, etc.)
- Professionals who are interested in continued education
- School districts interested in audiology services
Areas Already Visited by GMA
GMA Teleaudiology Services
GMA Mobile Truck Services

Mobile Audiology Clinic
Facts About Hearing & Vision Screenings

• Hearing and vision screenings improve access to the general education curriculum and increase student success.

• Mass screenings do not require parent permission.

• The prevalence of vision loss in school-age children is one in four children.

• The prevalence of hearing loss in children ages birth to five is 3 in 1000, but it goes up to 9 in 1000 for school-aged children.
Facts About Hearing & Vision Screenings

• Hearing and vision screenings are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Georgia Department of Public Health for all school-aged children.

• Additionally, all students suspected of having a hearing or vision problem should be screened.

• Georgia requires hearing and vision screenings in the following situations:
  • Upon school entry Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, And Nutrition Screening (3300 Form).
  • During the special education comprehensive evaluation process if suspected of having a disability in this area.
Otoacoustic Emission Screening (OAEs)

• Otoacoustic emission screening is used to measure how well your inner ear, cochlea (organ of hearing) is working. This test is often used to perform newborn hearing screening.

• House Bill 1186, effective July 1, 2022, allows trained personnel to administer otoacoustic emission screening on children from birth to 22 years. An automated OAE screener can be used under the supervision of a state licensed audiologist.
  
  • OAE screening is NOT a substitute for pure tone hearing screening.
Otoacoustic Emission Screening (OAEs)

• Use only for preschool and school age children for whom pure tone screening is not developmentally appropriate (ability levels < 3 years).
• Sometimes in conjunction with pure tone hearing screening (re-screen process)
  • MUST BE TRAINED BY LICENSED AUDIOLOGIST TO USE OAEs
  • WEBINAR & TRAINING COMING SOON!
Children with hearing loss are under-identified in GA.
Under-identification in School-Aged Children

- 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
- Children who are identified and receive Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) services earlier have better outcomes in language, literacy, and academics. (NCHAM Fact Sheet, 2010)
What Services Does GMA Provide?

NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING FOLLOW-UP

DIAGNOSTIC NON-SEDATED AUDITORY BRAINSTEM RESPONSE (ABR) EVALUATIONS

DIAGNOSTIC BEHAVIORAL TESTING

PARENT NAVIGATION

FAMILY EDUCATION

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CARE COORDINATION
Connecting Professionals

General Info:

Georgia Pediatric Audiology Network

www.gamobileaudiology.org
MAPInfo@doe.k12.ga.us (scheduling)
Monica G lapion-program director
Monica.Glapion@doe.k12.ga.us

How to make a referral?

• Email us at MAPinfo@doe.k12.ga.us
• Monica G lapion
• Program Director
• Monica.Glapion@doe.k12.ga.us
Outreach Department of the Georgia Academy for the Blind
Smokey Powell Center

Zel Murray, SPC Director, VI State Coordinator
Tara Bowie, Outreach Education Program Specialist
Sharon Lyttle, Outreach Education Program Specialist
Smokey Powell Center (SPC)
The Smokey Powell Center

• 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 services are free-no charge to the parent or the school districts.
The Smokey Powell Center

Four Main Outreach Components

1. Low Vision Clinics
2. AT Assessments
3. Professional Learning Classes
4. Instructional Support
SPC CREW
The Smokey Powell Center

Low Vision Clinics/Evaluations

• Required for VI Eligibility if the student has usable vision and can participate in the evaluation
• The Low Vision Evaluation (LVE) must be conducted by an eye doctor who is specialized in the area of Low Vision
• There are several clinics throughout the school year—This year 7 will be held at SPC and 15 off site
• Typically, the student is prescribed a telescope, magnifier, and specialized sun lenses all at no cost
The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology Assessments

• Conducted (virtually) at the student’s school anywhere in the state of Georgia

• Equipment offered 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 can purchase the devices at a significant 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

• Zel.murray@doe.k12.ga.us
• Tara.bowie@doe.k12.ga.us
• Sharon.lyttle@doe.k12.ga.us
Professional Learning Classes

• The most important professional training for TVIs is the annual Georgia Vision Educators Statewide Training (GVEST) typically in the fall. [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/COMS stay current with developing technology and techniques used with our students.
The Smokey Powell Center

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
  OR

  * Visit our website at www.gabmacon.org and see the Outreach Smokey Powell link

The staff members of the SPC include Zel Murray, Tara Bowie, Sharon Lyttle, and Heather Francis
State Vision Coordinator

• Georgia Academy for the Blind is the hub for support to the local districts for all things vision

• Most children with vision loss (appropriate for services for Visual Impaired/Blind) enter school already identified and are under the care of an eye doctor. Children already identified are not required to participate in the screening process and VI Eligibility can be established quickly and the student start receiving services right away.
State Vision Coordinator

• After receiving an eye report from the clinical eye care specialist, the Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) must conduct the following assessments required for eligibility:
  
  Functional Vision Assessment
  Learning Media Assessment

Expanded Core Curriculum Assessment (ECC) (can be completed after establishing eligibility.)
If eligibility is questionable, then the TVI should complete the ECC Assessment in order to ascertain if the student has deficits in any of the following areas: Compensatory, Orientation and Mobility, Social Interaction, Independent Living Skills, Recreation and Leisure, Career Education, Assistive Technology, Sensory Efficiency Skills, and Self-Determination

* The TVI is responsible for teaching skills related to the ECC. The role of the State Vision Coordinator is to support parents, TVIs, and administrators across the state.
* We conduct 2 statewide vision consortiums annually that includes all state updates as well as professional learning specific to the needs of TVI's across the state.
  * All updated Information is distributed to the Georgia VI-Google Group
DHH Outreach

Consortiums and Professional Learning

• Still working on finding all the professionals working with DHH students.
• Monthly Emails to more than 700
• Regional Consortia - six areas of the state. We are looking to add one more in the Augusta area.
• On-going professional learning through the consortia as well as non-traditional DHH learnings going on this year.
DHH Outreach

Consortiums and Professional Learning

• Slack Platform- online platform specifically for any educational professional working with DHH students
• Monthly Outreach meetings with State Schools Staff, Georgia PINES, GMA, 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
Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

5. Goals, Services and Placement
6. School Environment Access and Accommodations
7. Post-Secondary Transition
8. Personnel
Deaf-Blindness Defined

When we hear the term deaf-blind, we often imagine a person who is unable to hear or see anything; however, this is typically not the case.

“Deaf-blind” describes any combined hearing and vision loss that significantly limits children’s ability to get information from people and objects around them.
## MATRIX OF COMBINED VISION AND HEARING LOSS
Georgia Child Count 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision Loss</th>
<th>Hearing Loss</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Vision</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legally Blind</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Perception</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Further Testing</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Loss</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversity in Deaf-Blindness

- Degrees of Vision and Hearing Loss
- Age of Onset
- Stability or Progression of Loss
- Presence of additional disabilities or health concerns
- Access to communication

These aspects make the population very diverse!
Deaf-Blind Children Learn Differently

**Traditional Learners**
- Learn most information incidentally - just by seeing and listening to what goes on around them

**Deaf-Blind Learners**
- Incidental learning is difficult or does not occur
- Hands-on experience, systematic instruction, and consistency is essential to learning
- Often need specialized support in order to learn, communicate, and interact with the world
Georgia Sensory Assistance Project

- Funded through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs

- Housed at the University of Georgia

- Provides technical assistance to families, teachers, and service providers of children and youth with deaf-blindness (birth-21 yrs)

- Part of a network of state projects connected by the National Center on Deaf-Blindness.
GSAP’s Mission

- To identify children with combined vision and hearing loss
- To increase awareness of deaf-blindness and the needs of children and youth who are deaf-blind
- To provide technical assistance to school teams, service providers, and families.
Deaf-Blind Child Count

State projects are required to keep a census of children with deaf-blindness.

Census information (without names) is submitted to the US Department of Education as part of an expanded child count.

Assists with funding and planning technical assistance to meet the needs of children.
Technical Assistance from GSAP

- includes consultation, sharing information and expertise, instruction, and skills training

- addresses issues related to deaf-blindness—such as communication strategies, visual and auditory accommodations and adaptations, instructional strategies and resources

- can be requested by the educational team, family members, or related service providers

- is provided at no cost
GSAP Training and Workshops

• Open Hands, Open Access Modules
• Annual Summer Institute
• Conferences - GVEST, SERID, CHARGE, DEC, IDEAS
• District or Regional Trainings
• Active Learning and Adapted Books workshops

Training opportunities are posted on our website
GSAP Family Support

- Workshops
- Networking / conference calls
- Individual Support
- Working with your school team
- Family Sign Language classes
- Transition support (EI to school, new classroom, school to adulthood)

Diane Foster
GSAP Family Engagement Coordinator
Find More Information & Connect with GSAP

Website
https://tinyurl.com/gsapweb

Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/Georgia-Sensory-Assistance-Project-151810591532627

Carol Darrah, GSAP Coordinator
cdarrah@uga.edu
Questions?

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