

# **MCDHH**

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

## **Children's and Family Services**



Families with Deaf or hard of hearing children face considerable obstacles while trying to secure the best possible future for their child. It is our mission to provide you with unbiased information and the support you need.

## About MCDHH

MCDHH was established in 1986 to act as the focal point within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for Deaf, late deafened and hard of hearing people needing services that were not available or accessible anywhere else. In the intervening years, MCDHH has become a national model for other states seeking to set up similar services. While MCDHH's original focus was to provide services to culturally Deaf individuals, our mission has grown to include all citizens of the Commonwealth who are deaf or have a hearing loss, and their families.



## Children's Services

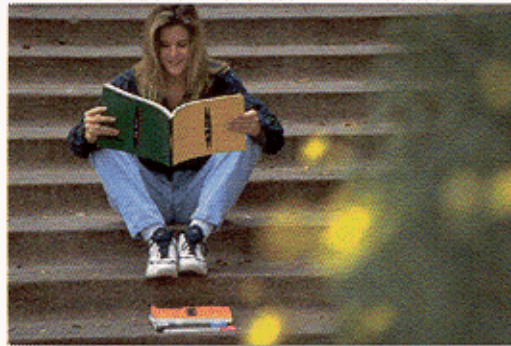
Realizing that parents of children who are born Deaf or with hearing loss faced an especially difficult and emotionally draining challenge, the Department of Case Management and Social Services successfully lobbied the State Legislature for the establishment of three specialized regional positions to provide unique support services to these families and their children.

Children's Specialists help to identify needs and issues, provide information about hearing loss, make referrals to appropriate specialized resources and assist

parents in working with other agencies. In addition, Children's Specialists also consult with or educate other service providers about the special needs of children who are deaf or have hearing loss.

Children's Specialists are carefully selected staff with an understanding of children and family issues. All Children's Specialists are fluent in English and American Sign Language. Their services are free and completely confidential. They include the following:

- **Parent Education** relative to the effects of hearing loss at birth, during childhood and in the teenage years



- **Identification of Intervention Strategies** for parents and others, including the appropriate usage of hearing aids, assistive listening devices and systems, alerting and signaling devices, medical procedures, early intervention, communication and language development and more.
- **Objective Information** regarding choices for "first language" development.
- **Information and Referral** to specialized services such as speech and language

pathology, audiology, psycho-educational evaluation and testing, and targeted counseling services.

- **Technical Assistance** to Early Intervention and other educational programs regarding the communication needs of Deaf and hard of hearing children, including acoustical classroom modifications, closed captioning of educational materials, and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART).
- **Education on the cultural perspectives of Deaf parents** of Deaf and/or hearing children
- **Advocacy and Support** to families and agencies in the development and utilization of service plans such as the **Individual Family Service Plan** for children in early intervention, the **Individual Education Plan** for school-age children and the **Individual Transition Plan** for young adults transitioning from education to adult services.
- **Connecting Children and Families** to recreational and social activities as well as other families and adult Deaf and hard of hearing role models.
- **General case management services**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is a state agency under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. For more information, please visit our website at:

[www.state.ma.us/mcdhh](http://www.state.ma.us/mcdhh)

## Common Questions Asked by Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children:

- ◆ How will I be able to communicate with my child?
- ◆ How will my child make friends?
- ◆ How will I be able to teach my child the things s/he will need to know?
- ◆ What will my child do when s/he grows up?
- ◆ Are there other families who share similar concerns?
- ◆ Is there someone we can talk to?

The good news is that having a Deaf or hard of hearing child is not the tragedy it was once thought to be, and that the vast majority of these children will grow up to be happy, productive and successful adults.

The key to success is acting quickly once the hearing loss is identified. The earlier a plan is put in place, the better the chances of minimizing social, linguistic and cognitive delays.



Our Children's' Specialists work in regional offices to be closer to the families they serve. Currently, those locations are:

### **BOSTON NORTH REGION and MCDHH HEAD OFFICE**

150 Mount Vernon Street  
Suite 550  
Boston, MA 02125  
(617) 740-1659 Voice  
(617) 740-1759 TTY  
(617) 740-1850 Fax

### **BOSTON SOUTH REGION**

61 Industrial Park Road  
Plymouth, MA 02360  
(508) 747-8175 Voice  
(508) 747-8176 TTY  
(508) 747-8365 Fax

### **CENTRAL AND WESTERN REGION**

436 Dwight Street, Suite 204  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413) 886-0517 Voice  
(413) 886-0518 TTY  
(413) 731-5177 Fax

### **Have a General Question?**

Please E-mail us at:  
[MCDHH.Office@state.ma.us](mailto:MCDHH.Office@state.ma.us)