

# Wisconsin Sound Beginnings Parents Reaching Out and Expansion of Waisman Center Family-to-Family Support

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# Concerns of new parents:

- How will I bond and communicate with my baby if they can't hear like I do?
- Will they need to attend a school other than our local one?
- Will we need to move?
- Will I need to learn a new language? And a new culture?
- Will my baby be able to talk?
- How will I pay for hearing aids or cochlear implants?
- Will my child get bullied?
- Etc.
- How can I do this all on my own?



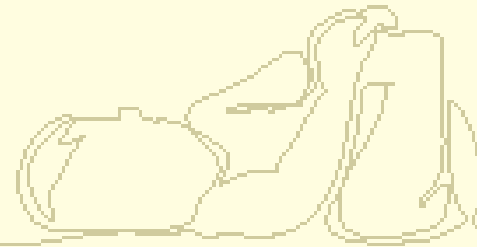
# WSB Parents Reaching Out (PRO):

- Started in 2017
- Reach out to every family whose child under age 3 is identified with a hearing difference, and referred to the Birth to 3 Program (our state's Part C early intervention).
- Use WE-TRAC, our state's EHDI tracking and referral system.
- Help families understand that over 100 kids under age 3 in WI are identified with hearing difference and **they are not alone.**
- There is a **community of support and resources** we can share.





Wisconsin  
Sound Beginnings  
Program



*parents*

Reaching Out



# Support Offerings:

- One-on-one connection with a support parent and new family
- Email listserv – share resources and connection opportunities
- Sounding Board Tuesday – Virtual and in the Evening
- Collaborate with DPI's WESP-DHH to offer in-person opportunities:
  - Meet & Greets
  - Zoo
  - Family Conference



# Other reasons why PRO works:

- We work with WSB co-workers who deal with the pre-diagnosis process to help get kids under age 3 get from screening to referral, if needed, as soon as possible so families can get immediate support.
- We work closely with WSB CARES team who support Birth to 3 and families to understand the unique needs of their children.
- We reach families who are not in the Birth to 3 Program.
- We reach families whose children have additional special health care needs.



# Our Support Parents:

- Reflect diversity of lived experience, including children with a range of other special health care needs
- Paid for their work
- Provide input into the support offered to new families
- Meet monthly via Zoom
- Attended National EHDI conferences and other trainings



# Connecting Families:

- January 2023, Waisman Center received funding to expand CYSHCN parent-to-parent support
- **Environmental scan** of evidence-supported models of parent-to-parent support and availability of culturally and linguistically responsive support
- **Interviews with families and key stakeholders** to learn about needs
- Began gap analysis to identify unmet needs





# Continuation and Expansion:

## 1. Provide parent-to-parent support through existing programs:

- Parents Reaching Out for D/HH
- Sankofa Midwest
  - Parent-to-parent support group developed and led by Black family and professionals to meet needs of families of color with CYSHCN

## 2. Build out culturally and linguistically responsive models:

- Rural families
- Families of children with medical complexity
- Spanish-speaking families of CYSHCN

## 3. Provide expanded support to support parents



# Contact information:

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