

Talking Points



WASHINGTON STATE
**HANDS &
VOICES™**

A Provider's Script to the Guide By Your Side Program

To help you share information about Washington State Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side program, below are some talking points. More detailed information is found below the bolded talking points.

Parent-to-parent support is a key component of early support programs, connecting families going through similar experiences.

- Parent-to-parent support is an important part of your early support program. It gives parents the opportunity to connect with other families who are going through similar experiences. This support can be very helpful as parents navigate their family's unique journey.
- By connecting with another parent, new families on this journey can see what's possible and gain valuable insight.

Connecting with trained families provides insight into your child's needs based on lived experience and practical resources.

- When a parent connects with another family who has been trained to support families like theirs, they can help the new parent to understand their child's needs from a lived experience lens. These families have gone through the same challenges and know what resources and information can be helpful to you.

Hands & Voices in Washington State offers the Guide By Your Side (GBYS) program for families of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have combined conditions.

- In Washington State, Hands & Voices offers parent support through their Guide By Your Side (GBYS) Program. This is a parent-driven organization that works with state agencies to provide support to families of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have combined conditions.
- WA State Hands & Voices has been offering family support services since 2010.

GBYS Parent Guides are trained parents who provide free, flexible support to families with children from birth to 22 years.

- Through the GBYS program, you can connect with other parents who have lived through caring for a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. These trained parents, called Parent Guides, are here to support you. Their services are free for families in the state and are available for **children aged birth to 22 years**. Parent Guides offer help without promoting any one communication method or language.

Benefits & Getting Started



Benefits

Parent Guides can help by:

- **Listening to your thoughts and concerns about your child.**
- **Helping you understand what's possible for your family and how to meet your child's needs.**
- **Offering ideas on how to share important information with family, friends, and teachers, so you can better advocate for your child.**
 - Parent Guides can:
 - Meet with families and share lived experiences
 - Navigate birth to 3, educational, medical, and transition to adulthood systems
 - Assist with unbiased decision making
 - Connect with the Deaf Community
 - Explore amplification/listening technology
 - Answer questions along the way!

Support is available via email, text, or video chat, and can be scheduled at a time that works for you.

- Parent Guides are flexible and can connect with you at a time that works best for you — daytime, evening, or weekends. You also decide how often you want to connect. Some families may just need one conversation, while others prefer more regular support. Parent Guides can communicate through email, text, or video chat, depending on your preference.

Additional benefits of working with a Parent Guide include access to:

- **A private FB group for GBYS families**
- **Monthly Parent Connect eNews with resources and event updates**
- **A safe space for decision-making and confidence-building**

Get Started

To get started, you can fill out an online referral form found on the Washington State Hands & Voices website. Or ask your provider to help complete a referral form.

- A provider must receive verbal or written consent to complete the referral form.
- Go to wahandsandvoices.org
- Click on Support Services then click on Guide By Your Side. On the right side of the page there are three separate forms.
 - Two forms (1 in English, 1 in Spanish) that families can complete themselves.
 - The third form is for providers to complete on behalf of the family.

Intake

Once you're referred to the GBYS program you will be sent a welcome letter, and an Intake Parent Guide will contact you to plan next steps and answer any questions you may have.

- Once a referral form has been submitted, the Intake Parent Guide will email or mail the welcome letter within 24 hours (Monday through Friday) or the following week.
- A two-week grace period is provided to give the family an opportunity to review the welcome letter.
- The Intake Parent Guide will work to contact the family, per their request (immediately, in 2 weeks, or in 1 month) and through the method and time the family can be best reached.
- Once contact is made a phone meeting will be scheduled with the Intake Parent Guide. They will ask the families additional questions to make sure the family receives a match with the Parent Guide that is best suited.
- The Intake Parent Guide will connect the family with the matched Parent Guide via email or text. The Parent Guide will reach out within 2–3 business days (or as otherwise noted).
- If the family feels they do not care for the matched Parent Guide they can contact the Intake Parent Guide to request another match.