



## **What is Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side of PA?**

Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side of Pennsylvania (GBYS) is dedicated to directly supporting families and their infants and toddlers who are identified with any degree of hearing loss by offering them the opportunity to talk to or meet face-to-face with a Parent Guide.

## **What is unique about the Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side of PA program?**

GBYS Parent Guides are parents of children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind who have received specialized training that prepares them to function in this important capacity. This training provides a strong foundation in supporting families without bias regarding communication modes or methods, as well as a functional understanding of supports and services available to families and their children. Parent Guides are able to bring their direct experience, knowledge, and personal compassion to their role while making the family's needs their primary focus. GBYS Parent Guides can provide:

- Timely emotional support following the diagnosis of hearing loss
- Direct parent/peer support and networking
- Information and resource sharing specific to hearing loss, including insights on navigating the systems from a parent perspective
- Support to families throughout the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention years by combining an experienced parent's insight with knowledge of Early Intervention and educational systems
- Information about other parent support opportunities

## **Phone calls or visits with Parent Guides should:**

- Provide families with the opportunity to establish a supportive relationship with another parent of a child who has a hearing loss.
- Provide parents with unbiased information regarding communication options and considerations for their child
- Provide parents with an understanding of the unique needs of infants and toddlers who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind or deaf with additional disabilities
- Link parents to resources locally, regionally, statewide and nationally

## **For more information about Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side of PA contact:**

Anne Gaspich

Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side of PA Program Coordinator

PaTTAN

6340 Flank Drive Suite 600

Harrisburg, PA 17112-2764

717-541-4960 x 3908 or 800-360-7282 x3908 (toll free in PA only) [agaspich@pattan.net](mailto:agaspich@pattan.net)

**To enroll in Guide By Your Side or obtain additional information online you can visit our page on the PA Early Hearing Detection and Intervention website at:**

[www.paeearlyhearing.org/gbys.php](http://www.paeearlyhearing.org/gbys.php)

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