

# Connections

A publication of the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

Volume 9, Issue 7

Language and Communication

## Language evaluations and DHH eligibility

According to [Indiana's Special Education Rules](#) (Title 511 Article 7 Rules 32-50), determination of deaf and hard of hearing for special education eligibility is based on a multidisciplinary report provided to the case conference committee (CCC). The following specifies what is necessary in that report (IAC 7-41-4):

An assessment of the following:

- Current academic achievement as defined at 511 IAC 7-32-2

- Functional skills or adaptive behavior across various environments from multiple sources

- Communication conducted in the:

- (i) language or system utilized for the student's instruction; or

- (ii) student's preferred mode of communication; that assesses the student's receptive and expressive language skills.

A social and developmental history that may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Communication skills

- Social interaction skills

- Motor skills

- Responses to sensory experiences.

- Relevant family and environmental information

A written report from an educational or clinical audiologist, otologist or otolaryngologist with information regarding the:

- Etiology of the hearing loss; and

- Student's potential requirement for amplification, if appropriate

Any other assessments and information, collected prior to referral or during the educational evaluation, necessary to:

- Determine eligibility for special education and related services; and

- Inform the student's CCC of the student's special education and related services needs

The Center strives to inform families and professionals of the importance of evaluations to help drive educational planning and to give insight into the needs of the DHH student as a whole child. The communication portion of these multidisciplinary evaluations are facilitated by our language team. We find this team approach is best to consider the child's mode of communication and access to language. The Center Language Team works as a unit to evaluate a child based on that child's individual needs to optimize outcomes following the latest [guidelines](#) from the American Speech Language and Hearing Association. Each evaluation is unique and tailored to the needs of the child, family, and school.

## Meet the Center Language Team

Jackie Katter is a speech-language pathologist and [board-certified specialist in child language](#). She has a certification in cultural and linguistic diversity. Jackie has 30 years of diagnostic experience and has specialized in working with and evaluating deaf and hard of hearing children since 1997. Jackie is a bilingual (ASL / English) speech-language pathologist. She has advanced training in literacy and academic evaluations, spoken language evaluations, narrative and discourse evaluations, understanding and interpreting evaluation tools and their psychometric properties, and evaluations for children with additional needs. She is involved with the Center's language tracking initiatives and feels strongly that tracking language growth is essential to optimize a DHH child's outcomes.



**Jacqueline D. Hall-Katter**



**Kelsey Large**

Welcome to Kelsey Large as the assessment team's educational diagnostician. Kelsey is a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing (ToDHH) and a certified [listening and spoken language specialist](#). She has a bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders, a master's degree in deaf education, and is currently finalizing her PhD in special education. Kelsey worked as an itinerant teacher of the deaf for seven years, in both public and private schools before joining the assessment team in August 2024. The Center is excited to have Kelsey's perspective on every spoken language evaluation and looks forward to collaborating with her to optimize outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children. Kelsey will also be assisting the assessment team to gather functional listening information to assist ToDHHs in the schools and ensuring families understand the special education process after an evaluation.

Laura Leffler started her professional journey as a teacher of the deaf in the early 1990's. She has worked in educational environments that utilize ASL, Cued American English, and spoken English. She worked with the Chapel Hill implant rehabilitation team in North Carolina prior to her taking some time out of the classroom to start a family. During her stay-at-home parenting days Laura attained her [Certificate of Interpreting and Certificate of Transliteration from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, RID](#). She was a freelance interpreter for 20 years including 10 working in video relay services. Her varied work experiences provide her with an appreciation of the specialized supports needed for deaf and hard of hearing children to function without barriers in educational settings. She has a passion for optimizing outcomes as they directly translate into better futures for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Her vast experiences also bring a unique perspective to the language team with her focus on access to language and how a child is learning language.



**Laura Leffler**



**Justin Perez**

Justin Perez received his Bachelor's at Rochester Institute of technology with three majors (Deaf Studies, Media Technology and Media Communication) He joined the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as a visual language specialist in 2019. He conducts evaluations and consultations. Justin works closely with Jackie, the speech-language pathologist. They developed several ASL skills tests that focus on receptive and expressive ASL skills. He is fifth generation in a Deaf family and his sons are the sixth generation. Justin brings beautiful insight into the language team about a child's visual skills and visual access needs. His jovial demeanor immediately connects with children coming to the center. He has engaged in continuing education learning about deaf and hard of hearing children with additional needs. You can also find Justin online sharing [his Visual Vernacular art](#).

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

