

January 2024



South Dakota Services for the Deaf

What's Happening at SDSD?

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SDSD Guest Lecture at DWU

SDSD Outreach Consultants Laura Scholten and Jodi Schnider were guest speakers in the Intro to Exceptional Students course at Dakota Wesleyan University. The pair discussed what services SDSD offers, why SDSD is a valuable resource to school districts, and basic information about varying hearing thresholds, modifications, and accommodations. The class became familiar with the various hearing equipment by engaging in tutorials about how each type is used, when it is appropriate, and who is a candidate to wear specific devices. The students learned how the ear works and where breakdowns may occur. The class shared the equipment they had seen during their practicum and classroom observations. It was discussed how many students SDSD serves and how many deaf educators and interpreters are available in the state. The students were surprised by all three statistics. Laura and Jodi engaged the group with scenarios of multiple students with different hearing levels. The class discussed what classroom accommodations and best practices should be used to aid the student in full access to the school curriculum. The group enjoyed applying the knowledge they had gained to real classroom situations. Students were encouraged to continue their education in specialized instruction and to become as diverse in their teaching strategies as the classrooms they will teach.

Head Start Presentation

Interlakes Communication Action Head Start & Early Head Start requested SDSD to present to their staff about language facilitation and functional sign language. Outreach Consultants Alissa Hutchinson, Erica Mortensen, Angela Bechtold, and Laura Scholten co-presented. The teachers were engaged and learned strategies and skills they could implement with their little ones who are deaf/hard of hearing. The presentation supports SDSD's mission.

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a teacher
CHANGES
the world
ONE STUDENT
AT A TIME





New Earmolds!

Yusely, an SDSD client, was very excited to get new earmolds. The earmolds she was using were hard and starting to crack, which meant they were not giving her all the benefits of a properly fitting earmold. SDSD audiologist, Dr. Miller, was able to help her get new, perfectly fitting earmolds. There were many color options that Yusely could choose from. She went with a glow-in-the-dark earmold. When the earmolds arrived, she was thrilled and immediately tested the glow-in-the-dark feature. They glowed, and they fit perfectly. Yusely is happy to have new, perfectly fitting earmolds to use at home and school.



Partnering with Southeast Technical College

Southeast Technical College offers an Early Childhood Specialist degree. This degree prepares professionals to work with children from birth to age 8, overseeing their emotional, physical, cognitive, and social development. As many children who are deaf/hard of hearing attend daycares and early child programs, Outreach Consultants Jodi Schnider and Laura Scholten seized an invitation from Adjunct Instructor Suzy Jones to present to her students. Jodi and Laura covered how to promote language and functional signs for communication in early childhood settings. SDSD appreciates our ongoing partnership with Southeast Technical College!

Newborn Screenings

SDSD audiologist, Dr. Carly Johnson, collaborated with the SD Department of Health-Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator, Bernadette Boes, and Shelby Jepperson of the SD Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Advisory Board, to get new hearing screening equipment out in western South Dakota. Dr. Johnson delivered the new equipment and trained staff at Cheyenne River IHS on how to use it and follow appropriate Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) protocols. Newborn hearing screenings serve an important 'child find' function and support important early intervention initiatives. SDSD appreciates the inter-agency collaboration to serve this great state!





SDSD's Pilot Direct Services Program

South Dakota Services for the Deaf (SDSD) started a pilot program involving direct services from a Teacher of the Deaf, Shawna Goldhammer, for a limited number of our clients during the 2023-2024 school year. Shawna connects with the child via Zoom for one hour each week (two 30-minute sessions or three 20-minute sessions depending on attention) to work on IEP goals. These services can take place in the school environment or at home.

Meet Shawna:

My name is Shawna Goldhammer and I am a teacher of the deaf that is virtually supporting students and staff with the South Dakota Services for the Deaf. I am passionate about serving families, students and staff regarding the unique needs of students with hearing loss. My career in education has offered me the opportunity to work as a speech language pathologist, classroom teacher, itinerant teacher, early intervention teacher, and program administrator. All of my roles have been supporting deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. I am a SODA (sibling of a Deaf adult) and my personal/family journey has shaped my passion for the work that I do. My sister, Sondra, is my "why," and what an honor it has been. I love collaborating and working with students, families and teams across the state of South Dakota!



SDSD's Pilot Counseling Program

SDSD started a pilot program involving direct services from a Counselor via technology for a limited number of our clients during the 2023-2024 school year. SDSD partners with the American School for the Deaf Online Academy. The counselors have experience and knowledge related to working with children who are deaf and hard of hearing and are fluent in ASL. This pilot program has a limited number of spots available, so students are selected based on need. The counselors connect with the student weekly for half an hour each session.



**ONLINE
ACADEMY**
AMERICAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

ALL ways able.

SDSD Guest Lecture USD

Dr. Kyle Brouwer from the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of South Dakota invited Outreach Consultant Laura Scholten to share information about working with students who are deaf/hard of hearing with students taking his Language Disorders of Children class. Dr. Brouwer and Laura tackled real-world cases and engaged in discussions to broaden students' understanding of the challenges and strategies in managing varying hearing levels in the pediatric population.





Communication Matrix Workshop

On January 15, 2024, Nina Ringstmeyer and Kerry Ruth, Outreach Consultants with South Dakota Services for the Deaf, hosted a workshop for professionals who braved the bitter cold to attend. Candice Mohn, SDSD Outreach Consultant, traveled from Aberdeen to present on the Communication Matrix at Black Hills State University - Rapid City. SDSD Outreach Consultants Sharon Jones and Denika Boomsma were also in attendance. The Communication Matrix is a communication skills assessment designed to evaluate communication in individuals with disabilities. This assessment tool helps professionals easily understand the communication status, progress, and unique needs of anyone functioning at the early stages of communication or using forms of communication other than speaking or writing. A special thanks to Black Hills State University - Rapid City for the use of their facility.



Augustana University Presentation - DeafBlind

Amy Scepaniak, Center for Disabilities DeafBlind Project Director, and Sharon Jones, SDSD Outreach Consultant, had the privilege to present on November 15th to Augustana University's INTR 344-ASL to English II class of future interpreters taught by Christa Gunderson. Students learned about children with dual sensory loss: vision and hearing differences. Information presented: DeafBlindness defined, degrees of vision and hearing loss, common causes, the various ways DeafBlind people communicate, intervener defined, and orientation and mobility. Students had hearing loss and vision loss simulation experiences using special vision loss glasses and headphones. They experienced having a human guide and hand-under-hand tactile signing. The students had many insightful questions and stayed after class, asking more questions.



Way to go Nora!

Nora's 1st grade class received a letter from Mrs. Claus asking them for help in designing Santa a new suit as his shrunk in the dryer. Nora was one of three in her class selected by Mrs. Claus as having the best new Santa suit design! Nora submitted both her design and a description as to why her design would be best:

"Dear Mrs. Claus, My Santa Suit is the best! He has hearing aids so that he can hear what the kids want for Christmas. He has yellow so the birds can see him. He has a rope so he can climb down the chimney. This is why my suit is the best."

Nora, just like Mrs. Claus, we love your design and love how proud you are of your hearing aids!



SDSD Numbers

Audiology Numbers

of children screened by SDSD's Mobile Lab = 15,769

of sites visited by SDSD's Mobile Lab and audiology outreach services = 132

of SDSD appointments in Sioux Falls and Rapid City Clinics = 583

The table to the right details audiology services provided to South Dakota children from July 1, 2023, through January 12, 2024, at SDSD's Sioux Falls Clinic, Rapid City Clinic, and via the mobile lab.

OUTREACH NUMBERS

of Children Currently Being Served by SDSD Outreach Consultants:

650

In-services and guest lectures are provided by members of the SDSD Outreach and Audiology teams as an extension of support for children with varied hearing levels. These in-services relate to varied hearing status and its educational impact, technical assistance and orientation with hearing aids, cochlear implants, FM/DM systems, sound field systems, and/or interpreters, or educational strategies and materials that may benefit SDSD clients. The information to the right details trainings provided by SDSD staff August 2023 through December 31, 2023.

OF INSERVICES AND TRAININGS:

113

OF SOUTH DAKOTANS EDUCATED:

1057