

Vermont: Impact of Family Retreats for Families with a Child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing



[The CARE Project](#) (TCP) provides emotional support for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing through use of counseling tools, family retreats, and advocacy experiences. In fall 2017, The CARE Project collaborated with the [Vermont Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) (VTEHDI) program, families, and community partners to share, learn, and grow together. The retreat was designed for families of children birth to 3 years of age that were Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Families, and all children—ages 6 months to 14 years old—were invited to attend, and volunteers provided childcare to better enable parents the time to learn, share, and connect with other families.

Primary Accomplishments

- The CARE PROJECT provides emotional support for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing through use of counseling tools, family retreats, and advocacy experiences.
- Family engagement was facilitated in a collaborative learning environment where Vermont Early Hearing Detection and Intervention staff, community partners, and families discussed exciting ways to work together, support each other, and offer support to new families as they begin their journey through the EHDI process.

Background Information

- Type of Setting: Burke, Vermont
- Location: Vermont
- Population Served: Vermont families who have a child who is deaf or hard of hearing

Implementation Strategies/Intended Outcomes

- Staff devoted individual time to each participant throughout the weekend in order to provide direct support and education.
- The older children provided supervision and guidance to the younger children as each participated in activities and support programs.
- Parent, professionals, and volunteers were encouraged to interact throughout the weekend as they participated in structured workshops & presentations and throughout unstructured breaks.
- Families received feedback from local audiologists, and audiologists associated with The CARE Project, and had the opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions.
- Parents had the opportunity to interact with other parents through formal and informal means (eg discussion groups, roundtables, free time).
- This retreat was an opportunity for family engagement to take place in a collaborative learning environment where Vermont Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program staff, community partners, and families discussed exciting ways to work together, support each other, and offer support to new families as they begin their journey through the EHDI process.

Challenges

- Typically, a project of this nature is planned over a nine-month period of time. For a variety of reasons the timing for this project was only 3 months.

- The most challenging aspect of the retreat was childcare. It is critical to find volunteers and train them to work effectively with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- The space available for childcare was not ideal.

More Information

- For more information, contact [Linda Hazard](#), Program Director, Vermont EHDI.
- For more information about American Academy of Pediatrics Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) initiatives, visit aap.org/ehdi.