ANNUAL REPORT

EMPOWERING PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING, THROUGH EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

NCBEGIN.ORG
Notes from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Diane Doak
Executive Director
BEGINNINGS

BEGINNINGS continues to GROW! During FY 2023 we had a significant increase in services to families. The largest increase was in our new families served. As compared to last year, our staff met with 94 more families whose children were recently identified with hearing loss to help them understand the diagnosis and navigate through new vocabulary and interventions. We also attended 54 more school meetings than in the previous year. Our most significant increase is that we were able to help 19 more families navigate the transition from the infant/toddler program to preschool services.

We have embraced our new hybrid structure for providing services to families. Overall, we provided 56% of services in person. Seventy-two percent of first-time meetings between parents and our Parent Educators were in person. This is a wonderful option for parents who are learning a tremendous amount of information about their child’s new diagnosis, and it allows Parent Educators to be supportive while parents process their emotions. A slim majority of 51% of all school services were provided virtually. Parents appreciate the opportunity to have these meetings virtually so they can attend without leaving their place of work.

I am proud of the amount of work staff has done to help families mitigate educational losses due to COVID. The Elementary and Secondary Education Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF) has allowed our staff to provide support beyond our traditional service delivery. We offered four one-day workshops for parents to give them an opportunity to learn and connect with other families while their children were supervised by our Parent Educators.

We collaborated with the Council for Children’s Rights to provide instruction on educational law and New Leaf Behavioral Health to help parents understand the impact COVID stress has had on each of us. Additionally, we provided six, weekly virtual American Sign Language (ASL) classes for families whose primary language in the home is Spanish. A trilingual instructor (English, Spanish, and ASL) was able to communicate with these families in Spanish while they learned a new language for their child. We plan to continue this service for these families.

The largest number were in Wake County, followed closely by Mecklenburg County (Charlotte area). Other very active counties included Buncombe, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, and Onslow Counties.

BEGINNINGS developed a new information brochure titled “Helping Your Child with the Effects of the Pandemic” in both English and Spanish. We co-organized a Western NC Transition to adulthood event in April 2023 and a Parent IDEA Advocacy event in May 2023 in Wilmington.

In FY 2023, we served

1,350 FAMILIES:
762 returning families and 588 new families

917 Home visits provided
433 School meetings in 90 counties supported

Age at Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth–3 months</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–12 months</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 months–3 years</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–10 years, 11 months</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–21 years</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All statistics regarding the services we provided to families refer to Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023).
The year 2022–23 saw BEGINNINGS return to pre-COVID levels of activity, thanks to the hard work of the staff and funds from the federal ESSERF grant. We know from learning experts that children and families are still feeling the effects of the pandemic, but we are confident that BEGINNINGS is helping Deaf and Hard of Hearing children catch up to where they need to be.

I give my thanks to my fellow Board members who help us all support BEGINNINGS and the amazing staff of administrators, leaders, and Parent Educators throughout the state. We look forward to more opportunities in 2023–24 to raise funds and awareness of the important work that BEGINNINGS does, along with finishing our two-year ESSERF activities and beginning to see the results of a new two-year grant from the State of North Carolina.

FY 2022–2023
Financial Information (Audited)

**Revenue**
- State Contracts: $1,004,216
- Released Grants (ESSERF): $484,834
- Public Support (Events/Individual Giving):
  - Donors Unrestricted: $28,565
  - Donors GTP restricted: $5,899
- Events: $66,642
- Earned Income: $24,432
- **Total: $1,614,588**

**Expenses**
- Admin/Fundraising: $307,590 (21%)
- Services to Families: $1,143,880 (78%)
- Grants to Parents: $11,484 (1%)
- **Total: $1,462,954**

**Support BEGINNINGS!**

Please go to [www.ncbegin.org](http://www.ncbegin.org) to learn more about the programs and services BEGINNINGS offers, and to make a gift in support of this important work!

**78%:** Amount of income spent DIRECTLY ON NC FAMILIES needing services
GRANTS to PARENTS

During 2022–23, BEGINNINGS awarded 17 grants to parents for a total of $11,483.95. The Sertoma Club of Raleigh, the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), and other supporters make these grants possible; they are intended to cover hearing-related costs for children that are not usually covered by insurance. Our Parent Educators encourage families to complete the application process, and an internal committee decides the amount of the awards. Here are just a few of the grants made during the year:

Isis
The Arden, NC family of Isis Raelynn Marie Mosely-Brown, who is now 2 years old, received a grant to help with the cost of her trips to the audiologist. Isis’s mom wrote, “She has a severe hearing loss in her left ear. One of her achievements is that she is very social and loves people. I think her upcoming cochlear implants will continue to help her develop and learn new things.”

Chase
The Creedmoor, NC family of Chase Lincoln Kastler, age four, received a grant to help with hearing aid maintenance and trips to the audiologist. Chase’s mother wrote, “We do not qualify for other funding sources. Chase is a very smart little boy who thrived with speech therapy. He is now signing and speaking about 200 words and started pre-Kindergarten. The grant would pay for speech therapy bills as well as any upcoming ear molds, batteries, and hearing related appointments.” In 2022, Chase’s little sister was also born with hearing loss, which increased the family’s needs for a grant.

Emma
The family of three-year-old Emma Massey lives in Lenoir, NC. They sought a grant to help her travel to auditory and ENT appointments in Hickory. According to her mother, Emma “has a wonderful speech therapist, but we pay out-of-pocket costs. Emma is thriving under the new techniques we have learned from the therapist, and the grant will help offset the cost.”

2022–23 Events for BEGINNINGS
BEGINNINGS held many fundraising and parent education events, including a Gala at North Raleigh Country Club; an Oyster Roast/BBQ at North Hills Club, Raleigh; and Meet’n’Greets in Wilmington and Asheville.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Attendees at the spring 2023 Gala; Board Member Cayt Kirkman, ED Diane Doak, and Board Members Matt Archer and Denni Haywood enjoying the 2022 Oyster Roast; guests learning more about BEGINNINGS at a gathering at New Belgium Brewery in Asheville.