



**GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE™**

Frequently Asked Questions and Guiding Principles

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Section 1: GBYS Program Description

1. What is *Guide By Your Side*?

Guide By Your Side (GBYS)™ is a program from Hands & Voices (H&V) that provides emotional support and unbiased information from trained Parent Guides to other families and to the systems that serve them. GBYS is a trademarked program of H&V that is available to authorized H&V chapters and approved agencies via an application process. GBYS has been created to be a flexible program that will meet the unique family support and outreach needs of your state.

2. How does a GBYS program work?

GBYS programs are grounded in the Hands & Voices values described while being adapted to the particular focus of H&V chapter and state system in which they exist. Your state GBYS program may consist of one or more of the following elements:

- Provide timely parent-to-parent support at the time of confirmation of hearing loss.
- Offer specific support and resource dissemination about deafness/hearing loss in addition to general Part C service coordination system and support.
- Reduce the risk of loss to follow up by timely connection of Parent Guides to families with babies who do not pass the newborn hearing screening.
- Influence and improve the systems designed to serve families and their children who are deaf or hard of hearing by providing a recognized role for GBYS Program Coordinator and/or Guides in early intervention programs and public education at the decision-making levels.
- Assure continuity to families by providing support throughout a child's life, especially at times of transitions; GBYS is not limited to a specific age range.
- Support families through the early intervention years by combining an experienced parent's insight with knowledge of early intervention and educational systems. GBYS programs can also support families with older children and teenagers.
- Provide not only Parent Guides, but trained Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) Guides to families with newly identified babies, young children, or to seasoned parents with teenagers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Exposure to DHH adults can provide families and DHH children/youths with invaluable perspectives that come from personal experience. Emphasis on matching adults with families and kids of like-communication modality is commonly practiced, but not necessarily required.

3. What kind of specialized knowledge and skills will the GBYS Parent Guides have?

- Experiential knowledge of joys and challenges of raising a DHH child
- Sensitivity to the range of emotional responses that families experience
- Information about early intervention and educational program options
- Specialized parenting skills that emphasize meeting the unique needs of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing
- Unbiased information and presentation of modes or methods of communication
- Local, state, national resources specific to DHH child
- Knowledge of the state EHDI (Early hearing, detection, and intervention) system
- Formalized GBYS training from and on-going affiliation with Hands & Voices

Section 2: FAQs about Program Implementation

1. Can we implement GBYS without Hands & Voices?

No, GBYS is a licensed, service-marked, copyright-protected property of Hands & Voices. Hands & Voices National has the sole authority to grant use of GBYS programs to agency partners and state chapters that meet the criteria for its operation including formal affiliation with H&V at the local chapter or national level (see GBYS Operations Manual for details) as appropriate; demonstrated support for H&V/GBYS Guiding Principles and active H&V membership. The name *Guide By Your Side* cannot be used except as authorized, and it cannot be represented separately from Hands & Voices. State H&V chapters working in concert with state agencies to offer GBYS may include reference to their state in the program title, i.e., “Minnesota Hands & Voices/GBYS.” All GBYS programs must complete a formal application and approval process as described in the GBYS Operations Manual.

2. How is H&V /GBYS program model different from other forms of family support?

At the foundation of GBYS is our Hands & Voices value of peer support, and a parent-driven agenda. There is a comfort level that happens very naturally between parents who can relate to each other’s experience of coping with their child’s hearing loss, and facing the challenges of navigating a service system that was created and implemented by professionals. This process can be confusing to the uninitiated, and the benefit of having someone who’s “been there, done that” is inestimable. Assuring that the quality of the interaction upholds our mission of unbiased support is the purpose of required training our Parent Guides and DHH Guides to be appropriate in their GBYS roles.

Traditional forms of parent outreach are often driven by a professional agenda of some sort, and they’re often characterized by low attendance at sponsored events, little investment from the desired audience, and an overall lack of participation from families. As a parent-driven, parent/professional collaborative organization, Hands & Voices has a

proven track record of success with family support, and our GBYS program operationalizes our special brand of support at the systems-level.

3. How do we start a GBYS program in our state?

The GBYS Operations Manual provides specific, comprehensive direction program application and start up. However, the following provides a brief and broad description of the program and what is entailed in the start up process.

4. CONSIDERATIONS: The following are questions to consider when thinking about the implementation of your state's Guide By Your Side Program and the necessary capacity to support it.

1. **Funding:** Do you have funds to pay the GBYS Program staff?
2. **Sustainability:** Do you have the infrastructure to hire program staff and sustain this program over time?
3. **Collaboration:** Do you have formal ties between your H&V state chapter, state agencies, and other stakeholders needed to facilitate trainings, referrals?
4. **Parent Leadership:** The GBYS Coordinator (must be an H&V affiliated parent of a DHH child) must demonstrate leadership capacity; this is also true for the Parent Guides. The H&V chapter may have people like this within its ranks, or recruitment of same may also be necessary.
5. **Quality Control:** Do you have a way to continuously monitor and evaluate the state GBYS program? All Guides must be held to the Hands & Voices mission and philosophy. A formal relationship must be built into the system if it doesn't already exist.

5. START UP STEPS

1. Bring your stakeholders together to review and discuss Hands & Voices/GBYS Guiding Principles.
2. Prioritize parent support goals and objectives for your state.
3. Review potential GBYS components and discuss which may be applicable for your state
4. Identify a GBYS Program Coordinator who is a trained H&V parent, or a parent who will become trained and join Hands & Voices. This person is the GBYS liaison between the local H&V chapter, and/or H&V National, and your agency.
5. Decide from where/how the program will administered; who will be fiscal agent?
6. Identify budgetary issues and project sustainable funding.
7. Contact H&V national offices to establish a bonafide effort for GBYS start up in your state; request GBYS Operating Manual and application:

States will be required to submit an application to implement the GBYS Program. Applications may be obtained by contacting the H&V national office or emailing gbys@handsandvoices.org .

After application approval, H&V/GBYS will provide required training and technical assistance to your state as you move forward with implementation. Fees apply.

6. What are the benefits of being part of a national program?

The benefits to starting GBYS are that you will be training parent leaders, incorporating DHH perspectives, and embedding parent/professional collaboration into your EHDI and family support systems. This will increase both the effectiveness of state EHDI Systems and their capacity to serve families. Research acknowledges the role of parent-peer connections, and exposure to adult role models who are deaf or hard of hearing to increase overall parent involvement which has been shown to lead to positive child outcomes. (*Eleweke & Rodda, 2000; Jackson, Becker, & Schmitendorf, 2002; Hintermair, 2000; Bodner-Johnson, 2001*).

Why re-invent the wheel? Hands & Voices has a strong, credible reputation for balanced, sensitive, and meaningful family support. Implementing a program like H&V/GBYS gives your state the advantage of replicating a successful proven model. Plus, when GBYS Parent Guides or DHH Guides fulfill their budget-allotted contact with families, the local Hands & Voices chapter or H&V National remain as a source to refer families for networking, information and on-going support that upholds the values of Hands & Voices GBYS.

7. What will Hands & Voices provide to states?

- a.** Access to nationally recognized trainers (both parent and professional) and curriculums.
- b.** Web-based and on-site training:
 - Technical assistance for program planning, implementation and administration
 - On-site GBYS training and presentation materials for GBYS Coordinator and Parent Guides
- c.** GBYS Operations Manual, which will include information about:
 - State requirements to H&V's national office
 - Memorandum of Understanding
 - State expectations for H&V
 - Overview of essential GBYS training requirements
 - Curriculum Overview
 - Administrative recommendations & models
 - Program Goals & Objectives
 - Hiring guidelines and qualification requirements for guides
 - Ongoing training & meeting forum suggestions
 - Potential program activities
 - Program policies, procedures and paperwork
 - GBYS Program Coordinator job description
 - Examples of Parent Guide interview questions
 - Parent Guide position descriptions

- List of specialized skills
- Applications
- Sample referral forms and other templates
- Sample confidentiality guidelines and consent forms

8. What if we don't have a local Hands & Voices chapter in our state?

If there is no local H&V chapter, Hands & Voices national offices will become your initial point of contact. We'll provide you with local parent contacts that we may have available from our database, or work with you to locate a parent leader in your area. All Parent Guides are required to be members in good standing with their local H&V chapter, or if there is no local chapter, with Hands & Voices National. No GBYS program can be implemented without H&V's direct leadership participation, and approval through the formal application process.

9. Who provides initial training for the GBYS Program Coordinator and Parent Guide positions?

An initial onsite and web-based training is required and provided by Hands & Voices training team (fees apply). This ensures program integrity and standardization across the country. It also facilitates essential relationship building between local programs and national staff. GBYS-related training is also offered annually at the H&V Leadership Conference. Trainings to states will include customized sessions based on the priorities of the state program. After your GBYS staff is trained, subsequent trainings may be accomplished locally (see GBYS Operations Manual for more information) as needed by each program.

10. How much does it cost to have H&V facilitators do on-site training?

The GBYS Basic-Training Package (which includes required courses) features two to three H&V professional trainers, all materials, and nationally recognized curriculums. Cost is based on number of days (two/three generally required) and customized training needs as identified. Sample agendas, price packages, and basic training recommendations are available upon request, but budgets usually range from \$2000 to \$5000 (not including travel and expenses).

11. How do we recruit Parent Guides, and what are their qualifications?

States can approach this in different ways, but usually the local H&V chapter is key in accessing a parent resource pool. Existing EHDI systems may also have access to potential Parent Guides. Regardless, the first hire is the GBYS Program Coordinator (a parent), and s/he should be part of the interview team that hires the rest of the Parent Guides and DHH Guides (if this component is to be featured in your GBYS program). As mentioned previously, your GBYS Program Coordinator must have a formal affiliation with Hands & Voices, and be a member in good standing.

The qualifications of your Parent Guides can reflect your program goals and applications. H&V can provide recommendations for interview questions and structures to help you pick the right Guides. It is essential that the parents you hire are in touch with the world of newly identified children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

A good Parent Guide is one that can be sensitive and accepting of all families. This requires emotional intelligence, and an internal awareness of their personal belief systems relative to deafness related issues as well as personal lifestyle choices. It requires the ability to be unbiased and supportive of the difference choices families make. In general, you're looking for a pool of parents who can support the GBYS Guiding Principles (discussed on the next page) and who exemplify the variety and diversity of the communities in your state and include knowledge of the spectrum of deaf/hard of hearing considerations relative to:

- Communication modes & methods
- Gender and ethnicity
- Unique perspectives including unilateral hearing loss, deaf-plus, multi-cultural/bi- or tri-lingual, auditory-neuropathy, deaf plus, mild/mod/hh, etc...
- current knowledge and systems savvy,
- Their potential for supporting choices that are different from the ones they made for their own child.
- Positive attitudes towards parents, professionals and providers

10. How much flexibility is there for a group to add/change the job description and duties of a GBYS Parent Guide?

There is some flexibility within the job description of a Parent Guide, but the foundational philosophy and attitude of family support should be constant. To be confident that your vision still fits within the GBYS Guiding Principles, any differing program goals and objectives will need to be shared with Hands & Voices via the application process, or even before.

11. Does H&V have any seed funding to help start a GBYS program?

No, but we've created cost efficiencies and technical support to facilitate the implementation of GBYS programs. Selected GBYS training courses are offered annually at our annual H&V National Leadership Conference, as well as funding to help underwrite the cost of conference attendance by H&V GBYS program leaders.

Also, our H&V training modules, materials, knowledge of current trends, extensive national network, national parent database, and comprehensive website are just a few of the many resources that can be accessed by state GBYS programs. We consider reading H & V's quarterly newspaper, *The Communicator*, as a form of continuing education for Parent Guides. Required H&V membership (local or national) demonstrates a commitment to the philosophy of our unbiased, parent-driven organization. Hands & Voices is the mechanism for GBYS programs nationwide to view models and applications in other states/places that may prove replicable in your locale.

12. What are the logo requirements for GBYS?

All GBYS programs must use the H&V authorized, trademarked GBYS logo (which is downloadable from our website, see below), and graphic standards. They are:

- The GBYS logo is black and white; it cannot appear smaller than any other logo on a business card or letterhead except (when used jointly) the H&V national logo.
- An authorized GBYS state may include their state name beneath the GBYS logo text, or as a state map outline around the logo, or both. Template examples are provided on our website.
- GBYS business cards and letterhead must include the name Hands & Voices in text, as well as the GBYS logo; template provided on our website.
- The logo's text (font: Trajan) and insignia may not be used separately nor be reconfigured except as indicated on our website model. The logo's text may not be retyped in a different typestyle.

The official GBYS logo is downloadable to approved users from the H&V Graphic Standards website model at:

www.handsandvoices.org/gbys

Section 3: Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side Program Guiding Principles

GBYS programs are grounded with Guiding Principles while being adapted to the priorities and administrative structures of the Hands & Voices chapter and the state/provincial system in which they exist. GBYS is a deaf and hard of hearing categorically specific program. The following Guiding Principles were developed in order to create a consistent set of standards by which every GBYS program should adhere:

Principle 1. Parent Leadership is required; Deaf/hard of hearing specific focus is maintained.

- The GBYS Program Coordinator must be a qualified parent of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- All Parent Guides are parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- All GBYS Guides include diverse communicators with unbiased attitudes.
- All GBYS Program Coordinators, Parent Guides, and DHH Guides are members of Hands & Voices local chapter or national organization (if there is no local chapter).

Principle 2. Collaboration is essential.

- GBYS parent leaders and professional partners share peer-level status as collaborators in this family support endeavor.

- Strong, formal relationships exist between GBYS agency/program partners and Hand & Voices.
- For states that do not currently have H&V chapters, all Guides are required to take part in parent leadership and development opportunities offered by Hands & Voices.

Principle 3. All GBYS programs will abide by the values of the H&V organization.

- Parent leadership
- Professional collaboration
- Full range of communication & service options are equitably presented
- Exposure to Guides who represent diverse models of communication that exemplify the Hands & Voices slogan, *What works for your child is what makes the choice right*
- Flexible program administration designed to meet individual state/provincial needs
- Full and effective communication access (*See Communication Ground Rules in Appendix*)

Principle 4. Cultural representation and sensitivity included as core program values.

- Trainings are not held on days of cultural, religious, or ethnic holidays.
- Program works in collaboration with existing state cultural advocates and organizations.
- Materials strive to be available in the language of the GBYS Guides and families whom they serve.
- The GBYS Program seeks to institutionalize cultural and linguistic competence in policies, structures, practices, procedures and dedicated resources.
- Deaf Cultural values are acknowledged and respected. Sensitivity to hard of hearing perspectives is reflected.

Principle 5. Uncompromised commitment to supporting families according to their unique needs, priorities and values.

- Regardless of geographical location, communication method or mode, educational choices, or life choices
- Consistent with Hands & Voices mission and philosophy
- Flexible and family driven

Principle 6. Cohesion and Commonality benefit GBYS programs nationwide.

GBYS programs in each state will share a common mission, vision, culture, and stake in each other's success that:

- Is consistent with Hands & Voices values

- Shares in a relationship and in communication with one another
- Offers continuous training and quality improvement
- Is accountable for evaluation of family satisfaction

Principle 7. GBYS Parent Coordinator, Parent Guides and/or DHH Guides are paid.

- State agencies and program partners have a responsibility for committed and sustainable funding
- Flexibility for rate and type of compensation consistent with standard business practices

Principle 8. GBYS Guides are provided on-going training plus support for their participation in Hands & Voices activities as designated and appropriate.

- H&V basic training on supporting families without bias and how to share personal stories in unbiased ways
- A model for sharing a full continuum of communication and educational options and resources that clearly explain these options
- Preparation for providing appropriate emotional support and acceptance of every family's choices around communication options and other life choices
- Confidentiality standards will be strictly adhered to as applicable in each locale
- Regular and on-going communication within the GBYS program for Guides to exchange information, insights and inspiration
- Payment for their time for training
- Payment of H&V dues covered by the program budget

For information about the *Guide By Your Side* Program, contact:

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