



Language Starts with Me

31st Annual Family Conference

American Society for Deaf Children

July 12-14, 2023 • Great Wolf Lodge - Williamsburg, VA

2023 ROY HOLCOMB DISTINGUISHED LECTURERS

Keynote Presentation Descriptions:



Dr. Leala Holcomb

Researcher of Deaf Education

Dr. Leala Holcomb is deaf and grew up receiving American Sign Language/English bilingual education at the California School for the Deaf in Fremont.

Leala works as a post-doctoral researcher focusing on language and literacy in deaf children. Leala has conducted qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research that resulted in peer-reviewed publications in various academic journals. Leala is also the co-founder of Hands Land: a non-profit organization that promotes sign language rhyme and rhythm with deaf children.



Damon Timm

Damon Timm is hearing and learned American Sign Language in high school. Damon graduated from Northeastern University with a degree in American Sign Language and Theatre.

Damon formerly was an American Sign Language/English interpreter and now works as a software engineer for Linguabee, a deaf-owned company that provides interpreting services.

Damon and Leala live together in Maryland and are busy co-parenting two children (one deaf and one hearing). They enjoy exploring the dynamics of deaf-hearing interactions within their own relationship, families, and professions.

NAVIGATING THE DYNAMICS OF DEAF-HEARING INTERACTIONS

The presenters will introduce the metainclusion framework—the act of reflecting on how individuals may or may not be included in the experience and proactively communicating about potential solutions.

It is an attempt to shift attention from ignoring differences or simply providing "accessibility" to some individuals to raising collective awareness and open dialogue about creating equitable experiences, even in challenging circumstances. The presenters will share stories on how the metainclusion framework has been applied in their own lives as a deaf-hearing couple navigating life at home, with relatives, and in workplaces. In some situations, there is clarity in how deaf and hearing individuals can interact in ways that feel productive, equitable, and empowering. In other situations, however, the solutions are not quite as black and white, and individuals may find themselves feeling stuck.

The presenters candidly explore these grey areas to shed light on the complexities that arise even when everyone is putting their best feet forward. Ultimately, the metainclusion framework can be used to honor the humanity in every person and strengthen friendships, familial connections, and/or professional relationships.

PLAYING WITH HANDS: SIGN LANGUAGE RHYME & RHYTHM

Rhyming and rhythmic spoken language is widespread in familial practices at home, children television programs, and early childhood education. It is well documented that rhyme and rhythm increase young children's engagement, executive functions, language awareness, vocabulary, and emergent literacy.

This presentation will introduce deaf ways of providing children access to rhyme and rhythm that capitalize on the linguistic and cultural benefits of sign language and deaf culture. At first glance, sign language rhyme and rhythm seem cute, simple, and fun, but they are packed with patterns that can be appreciated by children and adults alike.

The presenter will discuss the history of sign language rhyme and rhythm, linguistic patterns in visual rhymes, musical patterns in visual rhythms, research on the benefits of sign language rhyme and rhythm, and creative ways to engage children in language play at home.

Come and join in the fun!