



Helping Hands (Birth to Two) Newsletter

The American Samoa Early Intervention Program



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Did you know...

developing language is the first step in learning to read? When an infant shows excitement over pictures in the newspaper or in a book, or a preschooler recognizes the first letter of his name on a cereal box, each is demonstrating early literacy skills. Reading to your child from birth is the best way to make him/her a successful reader.



Who is Helping Hands?

The Helping Hands Early Intervention Program is very excited to issue our first newsletter. For the past several years, we have been working hard to develop a program for families in our community that we can be proud of.

The Helping Hands Program provides therapeutic and support services to families with children *under the age of three who have disabilities or developmental delays*. We find children eligible for services if a delay is established in hearing, vision, fine/gross motor, sensory, language, or cognition.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the types of services Helping Hands provides, here is a break-

down of some of the services we provide for children and families in American Samoa:

- Physical Therapy/ Feeding services
- Speech-Language Therapy
- Case management
- Referral services to community/medical services
- Hearing and Vision services
- Community Education

If you have questions about Helping Hands or you would like to refer a child for services, please call us at (684) 699-4990 or visit us online at www.helpinghands-as.org.



Employee Highlight: Welcome, LouEllen!

We have had an exciting 2nd quarter of 2008. We welcomed aboard our new Speech-Language Pathologist, LouEllen Blankenship.

Lou Ellen comes to us from Minnesota and has been very busy meeting our Helping Hands families and providing speech therapy to our kids in need.



Lou Ellen Blankenship

Helping Hands is always recruiting for early childhood professionals. If you know someone, please give us a call!

Audiologists visit American Samoa

In May, Jill Craig and Wendy Switlaski visited American Samoa from Portland, Oregon and Detroit, Michigan. Jill and Wendy are Audiologists and Helping Hands has recruited them to visit several times a year to administer hearing evaluations on children referred to Helping Hands with hearing concerns.

Helping Hands performs hearing screenings on all children referred for services. When a child fails a hearing screening, Helping Hands puts the child on the waiting list for an evaluation with Jill and Wendy.

When Jill and Wendy visit, they bring donated equipment, even a limited amount of hearing aides for children. This is an amaz-

ing contribution, as American Samoa does not currently provide comprehensive hearing evaluations and treatment for children or adults.

Helping Hands, in partnership with other medical, educational, and governmental programs, is in the process of seeking funds to help bring improved hearing services to the island.

Helping Hands Fun Facts:

- * All services are provided in family homes
- * We are 100% federally funded
- * We regularly collaborate with other local programs
- * Each year we throw a "Truck or Treat" party on Halloween
- * We love the work we do!

