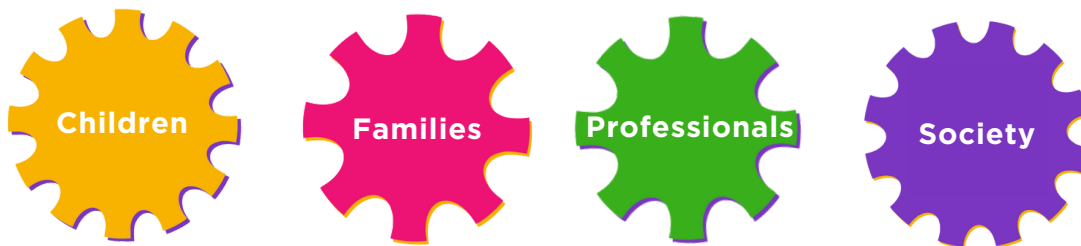


**At The Institute, our mission is to
generate and disseminate
transformational ideas and practices.**



The Institute has been busy engaging with scholarly partners, designing professional learning opportunities, and pursuing grants in support of our work. Our efforts are focused on four key partners:



Enjoy this issue of **The Gear Up** as a snapshot of our ongoing work!

Dr. Amy Szarkowski (Director) & Dr. Sarah Brandt (Associate)

For & With Children

At The Institute, our work for and with children explores the strengths and needs of children by engaging in projects focused on the brain, learning, communication, and social-emotional wellbeing.

At the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Conference in March, Dr. Szarkowski presented **Pragmatics in the Early Years** alongside Dr. Karen Hopkins (Executive Director of the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Deaf adult), Dr. Debbie Mood (University of Colorado; Psychologist), and Sara Kennedy (Hands & Voices HQ; Parent of a deaf child).



Congratulations to Dr. Karen Hopkins on earning her doctorate in Educational Leadership!



For & With Families

At The Institute, our work for and with families aims to impact caregiving and family interaction through projects focusing on family systems and dynamics, and family capacity building.

Initiated in January 2023 through support from the Tower Foundation, the **Pathways Program** brings together families, professionals, and community members for a deep exploration of diversity, equity, and belonging. Guided by facilitator Djenne-amal Morris, participants report having a powerful and transformative experience. Following the end of the program in June, we will engage in scholarly work to capture, scale, and share outputs from this work.



I learn so much about myself and what parts of myself I am willing to share with others.

Read what some of our participants shared about the Pathways Program

This program is an opportunity to workshop with open-minded individuals with various backgrounds, experiences, and stories. It provides a safe space to teach, learn, and grow as a leader and an advocate for our children and others.

In late spring, The Institute welcomed Martina Curtin, a visiting scholar from the UK. Martina, a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT), is currently pursuing her doctorate in Deafness & Communication with an emphasis on clinical research. She is co-creating a new tool to observe parents as they interact with their deaf children, ages 0-3.

Of her time at The Institute and the Children's Center for Communication/Beverly School for the Deaf (CCCBSD), Martina reflected,



Martina Curtin, Visiting Scholar to The Institute

“I was fortunate to spend time both in the Parent Infant Program (PIP) and CCCBSD classrooms, and see how passionate the specialised teachers and support staff are with the children. It was a joy to see wonderful multi-disciplinary work between therapy and education staff. As an SLT myself, I was delighted to see such respect given to each student's preferred methods of communication.

I've really enjoyed getting to know Dr. Brandt and Dr. Szarkowski at The Institute. Thank you for being so welcoming and providing me with great learning opportunities and discussion! The Institute is an innovative component to CCCBSD - we need more organisations in the UK and globally that bridge research and practice! I'll be following the impact of The Institute closely. ”

During her stay, Martina & Dr. Szarkowski worked on a project on parent-child interaction in everyday routines. Check out future editions of The Gear Up for more information! You can follow Martina's research journey on Twitter @martina_SLT



For & With Professionals

At The Institute, our work for and with professionals aims to impact research-informed practice through programming that enhances professionals' knowledge and skills, and promotes growth and leadership.

At CCCBSD, a **Deep Dive** is a professional development program that offers faculty an opportunity to ask big questions and explore big topics. This spring, the final Deep Dive of the school year focused on **family engagement**. Over the course of several months, faculty explored the benefits and barriers to authentic engagement with families. Additionally, faculty learned from experts, engaged in individual and team reflection, and attended panel presentations from the Pathway Program members.



Kathy Manfield, MSW, LISCW, a social worker and parent of a deaf young adult, presenting at CCCBSD



Drs. Szarkowski and Brandt are excited about their book chapter!

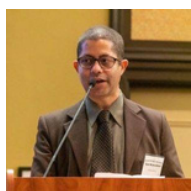
At The Institute, we are interested in tools—such as the universal design for learning (UDL) framework—that foster the design of impactful learning experiences. To this end, Drs. Brandt and Szarkowski published a chapter on UDL in the book, ***Strategies for Promoting Independence and Literacy for Deaf Learners With Disabilities***. This practitioner-focused text will be useful to practicing teachers and higher education faculty who are preparing the next generation of Teachers of the Deaf.

Additionally, in March, Dr. Brandt presented **Harnessing All of UDL to Promote Independence in Learners with Complex Special Needs** at the UDL-Implementation & Research Network International Summit.

For & With Society

At The Institute, our work for and with society aims to center individuals with valuable lived experience through programming that focuses on diversity, equity, and belonging, and all-abilities advocacy.

This spring, four individuals presented to CCCBSD faculty as part of the **Deafness, Disability, & Diversity Representation** series. This program centers those with valuable lived experiences reflective of the students and families we serve.



Gyasi Burks-Abbott, MS

Faculty, LEND Program
Person of Color and
Autistic Self-Advocate



Raquel Quezada

Founder, Changing the World for
People with Disabilities Foundation
Parent to a child with complex needs



Cynthia Laine

Founder, Black Autism Coalition
Parent to two children with autism



Shilpa Hanumantha Lacy, PhD

Associate Professor, Gallaudet University
Deaf Indian Woman

As a part of their advocacy, Drs. Szarkowski and Brandt attended the 2023 **Massachusetts Deaf/Hard of Hearing Constituents' Day** at the State House in Boston. This event celebrates the hard work of many individuals in support of the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities!



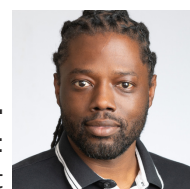
Drs. Brandt and Szarkowski at
the Massachusetts State House

The Institute offered two **Distinguished Speaker Series** presentations. These free, virtual events are intended for those in the community—such as caregivers, professionals, faculty, and college students—who support children who are deaf, deaf with disabilities, or have complex needs.



Djenne-amal Morris

Who is Leading Whom? Strategies for
Positive Family/Professional Collaboration



Franklin Jones, Jr.

Black American Sign Language:
Past and Present

