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PRESS RELEASE

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Re-imagining Services and Supports for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Families During a Time of Distance

Berkeley, CA – Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Center for Early Intervention on Deafness (CEID) lost no time in re-inventing how to adjust and deliver services to provide continuity in education for their young students and administer care. This year, 2020, marks CEID’s 40th anniversary and while the agency may be celebrating this milestone differently than expected, their commitment to the community remains as strong as it has since their inception in 1980.

40 years of innovation has prepared CEID for this moment. As CEID Executive Director, Cindy Dickeson shares, “We have always spent our days figuring out how to adjust to systems and structures that don’t quite fit the needs of our participants. As a result, our staff, families and patients are creative, agile and resourceful. Our CEID community is putting these skills to excellent use as we navigate unchartered territory that requires daily, even hourly resetting of our intents, actions and expectations.”

Working together through difficult times is something the CEID staff has done every week, every year, and every decade. But their core work of making connections and building communities to reduce social isolation has now taken on a new meaning during the shelter-in-place order. The success of CEID relies, as it always has, on a remarkable team of committed professionals, parents, patients, students and supporters.

At CEID, Speech and Language Therapists and Teachers of the Deaf and Early Childhood Educators are drawing on their specialized training to create innovative methods to support
young students and their families in new “virtual” ways. Teachers are redesigning curriculum, creating new individual home learning plans to ensure all students and families have resources and guidance to support continued language and social development.

CEID classrooms, home visits and therapies have transitioned to virtual meetings to support a variety of distance learning opportunities, including the parent sign language class. Families can watch recorded circle times as well as join “live” to participate with teachers leading activities and give students a chance to say “hi” to their friends. These sessions provide the preschoolers a chance to practice early education concepts and skills.

A recipient family shares “The original approach of CEID in 1980 to accept no limits remains evident today as the CEID team and families respond to this unique time with new services and remarkable support. As a parent of a D/HH Toddler (Frankie!) I am proud and grateful to be a part of the CEID Community. CEID has supported Frankie and his family on his journey as a Deaf person. Teacher Jessica told me yesterday "The Sky is the Limit for Frankie" and I will be forever grateful for her and CEID's enthusiasm for finding ways for each child to be their very best. Especially in this unique situation!"

CEID’s Audiology Clinics serve patients of all ages and is adapting to supporting them remotely by troubleshooting devices and responding to questions via phone or video calls. The team is also offering “curbside” drop off and repair for urgent hearing aid problems.

Like their programs and classrooms, CEID’s fundraising efforts are strained but are being re-imagined to reach supporters in new ways. CEID recently held its first ever “Virtual” Walk-a-Thon to raise funds critical to continuing CEID’s life-changing services. To support CEID’s work, donate here: www.ceid.org/donate.

CEID is eager to continue their work in the community and relies on support from individual donations to survive. You can make a donation anytime. As Dickeson shares, “CEID has existed to reduce social isolation for 40 years by providing language access and connection for individuals to our community — and we do not intend to stop this important work now. The support from the community will make sure CEID has no limitations!”

The Center for Early Intervention on Deafness provides education and audiology services to over 1,200 individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families from eight Northern California counties. Our specialized early childhood education emphasizes “total communication” and extensive therapies (including speech, occupational, and physical); home visits; and parent education and support. At our two Audiology Clinics, one in Berkeley, the other in Oakland, we offer friendly, patient oriented services including comprehensive hearing evaluations and fittings of hearing aids and other amplification devices.

To learn more about us, visit our website www.CEID.org