

# I TELLAI The BRIDGE

Volume 23, Issue 2

Guam CEDDERS Newsletter

March 31, 2021

## 27th Annual GSAT Conference Hits the Airwaves



*June De Leon, Interim Director, Guam CEDDERS practices her lines for the filming of the GSAT Conference.*

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The pandemic may have postponed many annual events across the country, but it did not stop the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) from holding its 27th Annual GSAT Conference. Using the power of media and technology, the conference was televised from March 26th thru March 28th on four television stations – KUAM TV 8, KUAM TV 11, DOCOMO TV ONE, and GTA GNN CH 17 – to reach as many people as possible and is currently available on the KUAM News YouTube channel.

Appropriately themed, “Creating MORE Opportunities in a Changing World,” the conference highlighted GSAT’s continued commitment to increasing accessibility to assistive technology and focused this year’s content on the impact of AT devices in the workplace, bridging technology with communities to ensure inclusivity, and AT assessments in education. A session on creating AT devices using readily available material was also featured.

### The Value of Teamwork

Pulling off a conference of this magnitude took incredible collaboration and teamwork. Countless hours of individual rehearsal by speakers followed by professional videography and editing by the University of Guam Integrated Marketing Communications Office, under the direction of Jonas Macapinlac, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, resulted in a broadcast-ready platform for our media partners. The GSAT center was transformed into a makeshift video and audio studio by the dedicated staff. The conference opened with welcoming remarks by UOG President Dr. Thomas Krise and Interim Director June De Leon. Congratulatory remarks were given by Tri-Agency partners, Daniel Somerfleck, Executive Director, Guam Legal Services - Disability Law Center; Jermaine Alerta, Executive Director, Guam Developmental Disabilities Council; as well as Lourdes Ann Mesa, GSAT Advisory Council Chairperson.

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## 27th Annual GSAT Conference (Cont.)

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# DAY 1

## Creating Assistive Technology in Minutes Using Coroplast



**Therese Willkomm, Ph.D.**  
Director  
New Hampshire Statewide  
Assistive Technology

Therese Willkomm is the director of ATinNH, the New Hampshire statewide assistive technology program with the Institute on Disability and is an associate clinical professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of New Hampshire. She holds a Ph.D. in rehabilitation technology from the University of Pittsburgh and has over 25 years experience in providing/managing assistive technology services.

Dr. Willkomm is known nationally and internationally as “The McGyver of AT” for her expertise in creating assistive technology on the fly, and as an expert on “Awesome Apps and Adaptations” to support individuals with disabilities. She has presented in 46 states, seven foreign countries, and three U.S. Territories and authored 22 publications including her most recent book, *Assistive Technology Solutions in Minutes Book 2 – Ordinary Items, Extraordinary Solutions* (available in the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America [RESNA] store).



**Daniel Somerfleck**  
Executive Director  
Guam Legal Services - Disability  
Law Center

Daniel Somerfleck assumed leadership as the Executive Director of Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center (GLSC-DLC) in October 2019. He was previously the Executive Director from 1997 to 2006. He graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1982 with a Bachelor of Social Work and from Antioch School of Law in 1986 with a Juris Doctor Degree.

Mr. Somerfleck is a very experienced attorney who oversees the administration of the Protection & Advocacy Programs. As an attorney, he has spent the better part of his career advocating and protecting the civil and human rights of all people with disabilities. Additionally, Mr. Somerfleck provides direct representation of clients with disabilities, victims of violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking.

# DAY 2

## Disability Law in the Workplace

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## 27th Annual GSAT Conference (Cont.)

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### DAY 2

## AT Assessment in Education: AT For All Students With A Disability

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**Gretchen Cole-Lade, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor  
Oklahoma State University

Gretchen Cole-Lade is a retired special education teacher and spent the majority of her career teaching students with severe disabilities. She is currently an assistant professor preparing early childhood education pre-service teachers to meet the needs of their future young children in inclusive classroom settings. Cole-Lade's research interests include increasing the capacity of educators to meet the needs of all students and their families, collaborative team processes, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices and systems to support communication of young children with Complex Communication Needs in early childhood, inclusive settings. Cole-Lade earned a Bachelor of Science in special education from Old Dominion University, a Master of Education in early childhood education from Boston University, and a Doctor of Philosophy in professional education studies with an emphasis in special education from Oklahoma State University.

### DAY 3

## Building Bridges for a Smoother Transition through Assistive Technology



**Carolyn P. Phillips**

Director and Principal Investigator  
Tools for Life  
Georgia Institute of Technology

Carolyn P. Phillips earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and her master's degree from the University of Kentucky. She is a nationally recognized consultant in the field of assistive technology and disabilities. She has spoken to numerous groups on topics that include assistive technology, advocacy, self-determination, and living with a learning disability. Ms. Phillips serves as Director of Tools for Life, the Georgia Assistive Technology Act Program, and Pass It On Center, the National Assistive Technology Reuse Technical Assistance and Coordination Center. Ms. Phillips has dedicated her time and energy to promoting independence for people with disabilities through advocacy, education, assistive technology, and fundraising.

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# Let's Make a Difference, Join the GSAT Advisory Council

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The Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) is currently recruiting members for the Advisory Council! The Council is open to community members who are interested in assistive technology services in Guam. It is GSAT's mission to enable Guam's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential through improved access and acquisition of assistive technology. The Guam System for Assistive Technology provides assistance to individuals with disabilities, their family members, and service providers in order to make informed decisions and obtain services related to Assistive Technology. Moreover, GSAT offers the following services:

- Device Demonstrations
- Device Lending
- Alternative Financing referred to as the "Akudi Loan Program"
- Device Reutilization
- Information and Assistance
- Public Awareness
- Training
- Technical Assistance

GSAT establishes collaborative partnerships with agency representatives to uphold its goal of increasing access to and acquisition of AT devices and services. The purpose of the Council shall be to provide advice and guidance and assure compliance with the provisions of the ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998, AS AMENDED 2004.

Specifically, the Council will provide advice and guidance on the following:

- Guam's three-year State Plan for Assistive Technology that will be submitted to the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.
- Monitoring of the ongoing progress of the GSAT program according to the three-year State Plan for Assistive Technology,
- Collaboration with other agencies, organizations, and entities providing AT devices and services throughout Guam, and
- Evaluation of the program's success with its mission to increase access and acquisition to assistive technology devices and services on Guam.

The Council seeks representation from the following disability groups:

- Blind, low vision
- Deaf and hard of hearing
- Developmental Disabilities
- Physical impairments
- Developmental/ Behavioral Health Conditions
- Speech/ Communication impairments

In addition, the Council will strive for representation from the following populations:

- Representative of people ages 60 and older
- Representative of people ages 16 to 23
- Representative of Veterans

Members should have:

- An interest in/or experience with assistive technology (AT);
- A connection to the community or organization they represent;
- A desire to commit to and serve on the council.
- Familiarity with GSAT services and supports;
- Willingness to assist in the development of council goals and activities; and
- Make recommendations for program activities.

## ADVISORY COUNCIL MISSION:

To provide consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) for planning of, implementation of, and evaluation of the activities carried out through the grant, including setting measurable goals for addressing the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities on Guam.

We welcome the opportunity to talk with you further.

**If you wish to serve on the Council contact GSAT at 735-2490/1 or email [gsat@guamcedders.org](mailto:gsat@guamcedders.org).**



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# GSAT New Inventory

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## **Pocketalker**

This amplification device helps you hear conversations at home, in restaurants, while driving and in many more everyday situations



## **ADA Kit 1000S**

The ADA Kit 1000S hotel guest room kit offers an ADA compliant all-in-one" visual notification system for the hospitality industry. It includes everything needed to accommodate hard of hearing and deaf guests in one room, with a multi-function alerting system for phone, door knock, alarm clock and sound alerting; smoke detector; in-line telephone amplifier; TTY; soft carry case and sign



## **Focus 14 Blue 5th Generation Braille Display**

The Focus 14 Blue 5th Generation is a 14-cell Braille Display that features an 8-dot keyboard and Bluetooth 4.1 and USB-C connectivity so that you can switch between five connected devices. It is compatible with Apple iOS 11 and Android devices and works with JAWS BrailleIn for contracted Braille input and full control in Windows.



## **RUBY Video Magnifier**

The RUBY handheld video magnifiers are small and lightweight enough to fit into a pocket or purse. They provide the magnification needed to help users read or see details. The 4.3", full color, bright screen makes them outstanding for reading bills, letters, checks, and receipts.

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# Delivering Opportunities on Wheels

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Driven by the need to deliver continued services to the community, despite the impact of COVID-19, the Delivering Opportunities on Wheels Project through the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) and Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP), is a formidable solution to bridge the gap that has been widened even further by the pandemic. This is made possible by bringing a mobile modular unit retrofitted to accommodate a wide range of devices and allow for hearing screenings, that will be staged, on a rotation basis, at designated community centers around the island. While GSAT has provided alternatives for delivery

of service, such as curbside pickup and return of devices and virtual demonstrations, access to transportation and online capabilities remain as issues to many who depend on their services. The Delivering Opportunities on Wheels project addresses these issues by bringing AT and Hearing screening devices closer to clients and allowing safe interaction with GSAT staff for inquiries, education, demonstrations, and reutilization services. On December 2020, Guam CEDDERS Staff: Michelle Aguigui, Leah Abelon, and UOG Social Work Interns: Reuel Drilon and Candice Libria presented to various village mayors on the proposed project.

*Right Photo: On January 28, Dededo Mayor Melissa Savares explains community needs to GSAT student intern Reuel Drilon.*



*Left Photo: On February 22, GSAT Coordinator, Leah Abelon, and GSAT student interns, Candice Libria and Reuel Drilon, meet with Yoña Mayor Bill Quenga and staff to discuss the upcoming community project-Delivering Opportunities on Wheels.*



# Three More EPICS Scholars Graduate



Above Photo: Camille Onglao Gonzalez and her happy cheerleader, Mavie.

**BIBA EPICS  
SCHOLARS!**

Although the COVID-19 pandemic threw a proverbial wrench into planned grant activities, significant progress was made in meeting targeted outcomes under the "Educating Pacific Island Clinicians in Speech Pathology (EPICS)" Project, a U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs-funded personnel preparation awarded to San José State University (SJSU), in partnership with Guam CEDDERS.

Camille Onglao Gonzales, Joseph John Mendiola, and Gabriela Duenas Yasuhiro, three EPICS scholars, completed their Externship requirements at the Guam Department of Education in December 2020 and recently received a Master of Arts degree in Speech Language Pathology from SJSU.

Two more scholars are on track to complete their on-site Externship at the Los Angeles Speech and Language Clinic in late May, while the last four scholars will be finishing all requirements for their degrees by late July/early August.

"Closing Ceremonies" for the EPICS Project are scheduled to take place in early August. Stay tuned for the final project update in September.



Right Photo: Joseph John Mendiola;  
Not Shown, Gabriela Duenas Yasuhiro.

# GEIS Staff Participates in Phase-In In-Person Home Visiting Training



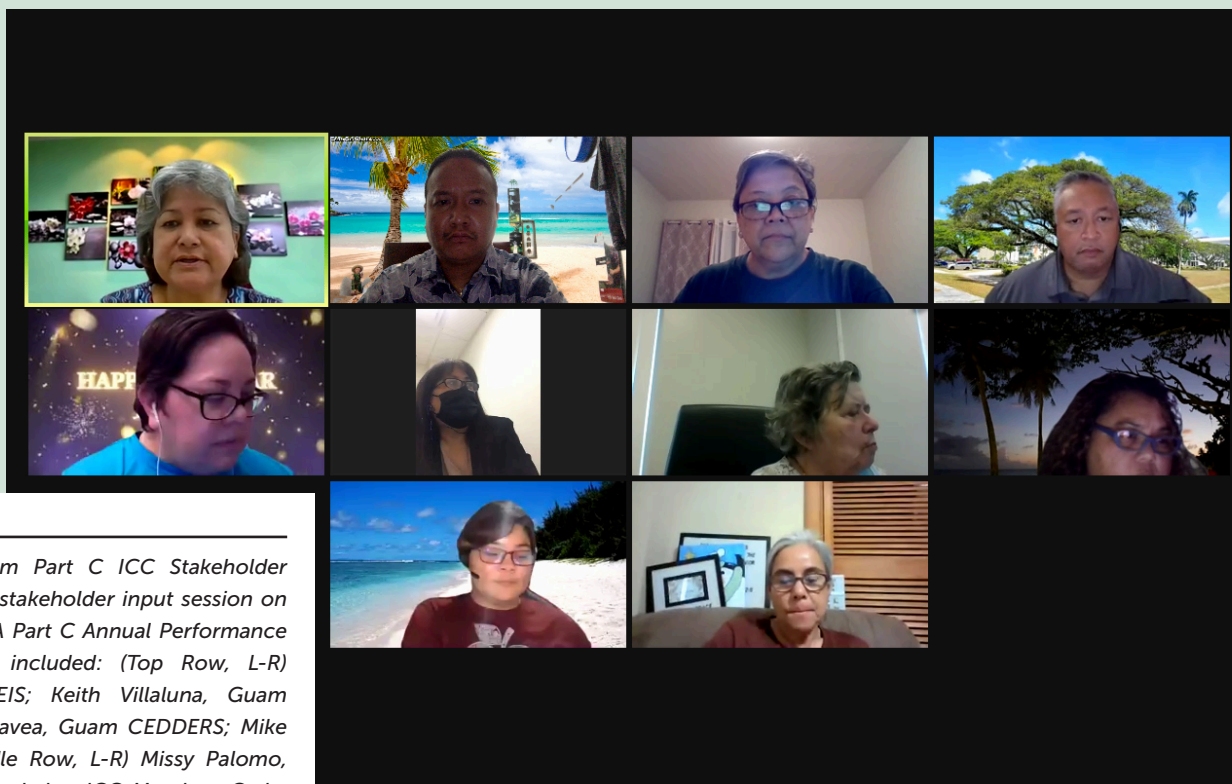
On January 8, GEIS staff took a photo during their training. Participants included: Pictured: (Top Row, L-R): Mike Cepeda, GEIS; Keith Villaluna, Guam CEDDERS; Sherry Cruz, GEIS; Therese Sanchez, GEIS; (2nd Row, L-R) Grace Loyola, GEIS; Sangi Susuico, GEIS; Elaine Eclavea, Guam CEDDERS; Rita-Rose Hualde, GEIS; (3rd Row, L-R) R-Leen Mario, GEIS; Liz Blas, GEIS; Ramon Castro, GEIS; Francine Camacho, GEIS; (Bottom Row) Gajee Parsons, GEIS.

On January 8, Elaine Eclavea, Guam CEDDERS Early Childhood Consultant with technical support from Keith Villaluna, Guam CEDDERS Data Specialist, facilitated a presentation to introduce the Phase-In In-Person Home Visiting Protocol to the Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS) Service Coordinators and Providers. Since May 2020, GEIS has been providing early intervention services via virtual home visits using the phone or internet and have found this successful during these uncertain times due to the Public Health emergency and the global pandemic. As part of the Phase In Plan for In-Person Home Visiting, GEIS will continue to provide services via tele-intervention as indicated in the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and if parents would like to receive a combination of in-person home visiting services, the Program has developed the Phase-In In-Person Home Visiting Protocol with the help of Guam CEDDERS.

In addition, on January 13, Elaine Eclavea with technical support from Keith Villaluna facilitated the Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS) Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) Stakeholder Input Session on Guam's FFY 2019 IDEA Part C Annual Performance Report (APR) due on February 1, 2021 via Zoom. ICC Members provided input and recommendations on Indicators 1, 3A, 3B, 4B, 4C, 5, and 6. The recommendations were reviewed with the GEIS Core Team and included into the Guam's FFY 2019 IDEA Part C APR. (See pictures on Page 9).



# Guam Part C ICC Meeting Held



On January 8, Guam Part C ICC Stakeholder Input Session held a stakeholder input session on Gum's FFY 2019 IDEA Part C Annual Performance Report. Participants included: (Top Row, L-R) Cathy Tydingco, GEIS; Keith Villaluna, Guam CEDDERS; Elaine Eclavea, Guam CEDDERS; Mike Cepeda, GEIS; (Middle Row, L-R) Missy Palomo, ICC Member; Brigitte Lobo, ICC Member; Cathy Schroeder, Head Start; Francine Camacho, GEIS; (Bottom Row, L-R) Rita-Rose Hualde, GEIS; and Sherry Cruz, GEIS.



Participants during the ICC Stakeholder Input session on January 13 included: (Top Row, L-R) Mike Cepeda, GEIS; Keith Villaluna, Guam CEDDERS; Elaine Eclavea, Guam CEDDERS; Cathy Tydingco, GEIS; (Middle Row, L-R) Missy Palomo, ICC Member; Cathy Schroeder, Head Start; Sherry Cruz, GEIS; Rita-Rose Hualde, GEIS; (Bottom Row, L-R) Francine Camacho, GEIS; Marie Wusstig, Guam CEDDERS; and Renee Manglona, GEIS; (not pictured).

# GDOE Provides Paraeducators and Teachers with Additional Support

On January 29, February 12 & 19, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE), in a collaborative effort with Guam CEDDERS, provided a three-part training series for GDOE's 11 paraeducators with off island consultant, Donna McNear. The sessions provided participants with knowledge of the important role that paraeducators play in the education of students who have visual impairments (VI). The VI topics covered during the sessions delved into the roles and responsibilities, the understanding of purpose, importance of communication, and the need to strengthen the student's independence throughout the process. Participants were guided to be conscious of unnecessary dependence. Understanding that sighted students view the whole, and then its parts, whereas students with visual impairments learn from its parts, and then put the parts together to understand the whole was emphasized in the training series.

Additionally, the role of paraeducators working with students with VI was renamed by the Guam Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) team as an Access Assistant (AA). The roles of an AA when working with students with visual impairments centered on these themes:

- Increasing access to Information: Braille technology, audio support, real-time instruction.
- Participation and Engagement: Providing reteaching support.
- Supporting Individualized Instruction: Supplementary, increasing variety and frequency while fostering independence.
- Communication/Behavior: Developing skills in communication.
- Daily Living skills and Expanding core-curriculum content learning.

The three-part VI series will be followed by individualized sessions with each AA to provide continued support during the in-person, distance, or blended learning formats. This individualized format will provide an opportunity to discuss next steps, victories & hurdles, and takeaways learned from the three-part training series. All individualized AA sessions will run from March through April.

## What's working? Communication & Collaboration

### Donna's reflective practice

When paras understand...

- Purpose focusing on independence & student success
- Mindsets regarding disability/ability
- Need for change



On February 12, Pictured on the right, from top to bottom: Elba Iris Gonzales FBLG, Access Assistant; Debra Whitt, Guam CEDDERS Training Associate; Vivian Esteves, PCLES, Access Assistant; Darlene Taimanglo, GDOE, Teacher of Students with VI (TVI); Donna McNear, TVI Consultant; Kalene Faisao, CHBPES, Access Assistant; Chelce Calvo, WES, Access Assistant.

# GDOE Provides Continuous Support to Families



Pictured from the February 10th session above, top row (L-R): Nieves Flores, Ed.D, Guam CEDDERS consultant; Ryan Cueto, Guam CEDDERS; Debra Whitt, Guam CEDDERS; Frank Limtiaco, parent; middle row (L-R) Jung and Joanne Kim, parent; Jamie Salas, parent; Evelyn Claros, parent; Evelyn Caraig, parent; bottom row (L-R): Sherry Tizon, parent; and Alma Rayo, parent.

On February 10, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE), in a collaborative effort with Guam CEDDERS, provided a series of parent sessions titled, *Understanding Your Child's IEP*. The informative parent sessions were facilitated by Guam CEDDERS consultant, Nieves Flores, Ed.D. The sessions presented information on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) document developed for identified students with disabilities, by a team, that includes parents. The presentation allowed parents the opportunity to interact with the facilitator through virtual polling, the use of the chat, and a question-and-answer period at the end of each session. Another parent training conducted by Nieves Flores, Ed.D, was held on February 24, titled, *Ready, Set, Go! Preparing for your Child's IEP Meeting*. These sessions continued through March and offered information on the IEP process, including important tips on how to prepare for your child's IEP meeting, what questions to ask, encouraging communication and clarification with the school, what to do if parents may not agree with the IEP and steps to take, and how to ultimately prepare your child as they advance into post-secondary life. All virtual presentations offered parents an opportunity for interactive participation as well as access to resources and persons to contact via email and or phone.

## Information presented included:

- Monitoring of the Individual Education Program (critical now, more than ever before);
- The components of the IEP (documentation—the forms and their descriptions);
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) definition—it is instruction uniquely designed for your child based on needs and a service that is in addition to the CORE curriculum;
- General Education is the CORE curriculum and provides access to peers;
- Supports must help child achieve annual goals;
- Training for parents should be included in the IEP (have it included and described, i.e., using or accessing digital books/materials for 30 minutes/month); and
- Accommodations (i.e., levels the playing field or removes the barriers) vs. Modifications (i.e., changes what the child learns or changes the playing field).



# GDOE Supports Early Intervention Providers in the Implementation of P-ESDM



On January 21, a P-ESDM follow-up session was conducted with GEIS providers. Top row, L-R: Sangi Susuico, GEIS, GDOE; Josephine Cruz, Associate Director, Guam CEDDERS; Grace Loyola, GEIS; Middle row, L-R: Sherry Cruz, GEIS, GDOE; Rita-Rose Hualde, GEIS, GDOE; Gajee Parsons, GEIS, GDOE; Bottom row, L-R: Elaine Eclavea, Guam CEDDERS consultant; Liz Blas, GEIS Speech and Language Pathologist.

The Guam Department of Education (GDOE) and Guam CEDDERS continue their work with consultant, Dr. Laurie Vismara. Dr. Vismara has continued to provide training to Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS) providers on the implementation of the Parent-based Early Start Denver Model (P-ESDM) framework. P-ESDM is an approach which focuses on coaching parents and caregivers to develop their skills and strategies in using the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM). The January and February sessions with Dr. Vismara focused on developing the coaching skills of GEIS providers in supporting

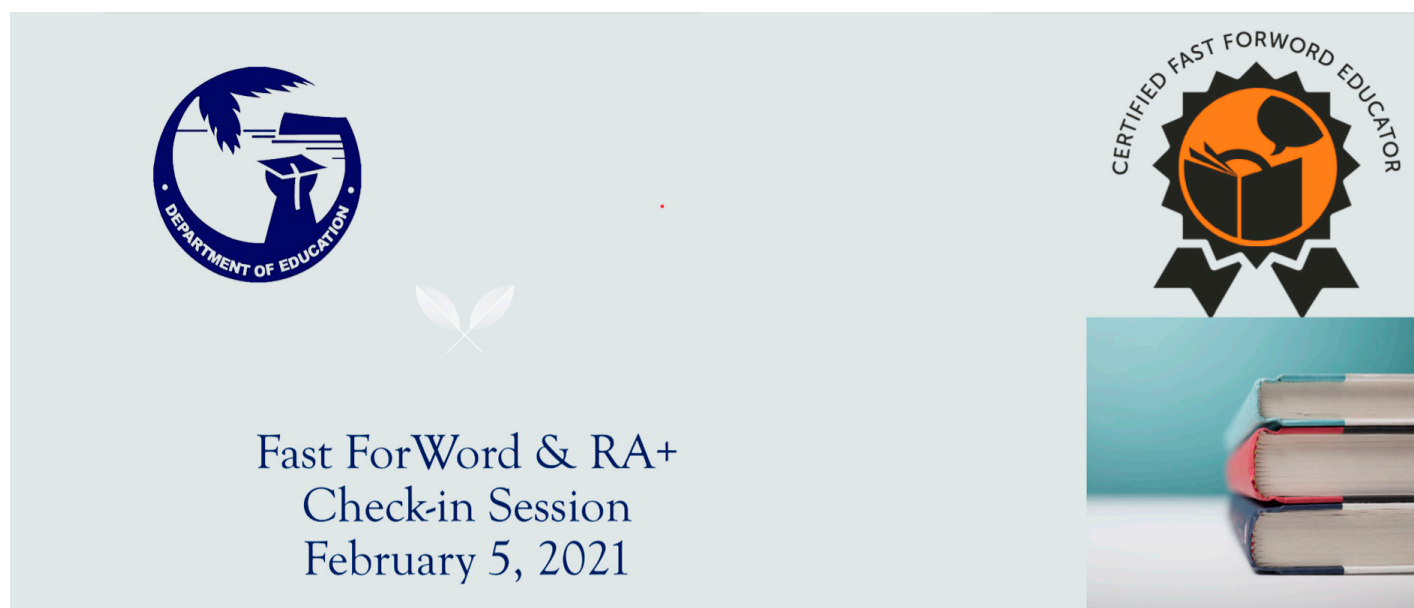
parents in increasing their child's communication. This process includes helping parents increase their use and understanding of children's "talking bodies". The training also included helping providers problem-solve their potential needs or barriers to support families increase their child's communication. Follow-up sessions were facilitated by on-island consultant Elaine Eclavea and Guam CEDDERS Josephine Cruz to support GEIS providers as they applied the P-ESDM strategies in their coaching practices.



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# GDOE Offers Support to Resource Room Teachers in Providing Brain-Based Adaptive Reading Technology—Fast ForWord® to their Students

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On February 5, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE), in a collaborative effort with Guam CEDDERS, provided principals and resource room teachers of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) continuous support offering a check-in session for the pilot project, Fast ForWord®, a brain-based adaptive reading program.

During the first phase of the pilot project, back in December when it was launched, students who were receiving online instruction or had online access at home were able to utilize the program. In mid-January, the second phase allowed face-to-face students returning to school access to Fast ForWord's brain training exercises.

The one-hour check-in session in February provided an opportunity to virtually meet with all schools and give feedback on the implementation process thus far. Feedback was shared on the progress across the district's five pilot schools. There were two outcomes for the participants attending the session: 1) To increase knowledge in accessing Fast ForWord® accounts and 2) To increase the number of students using Fast ForWord®. Additionally, the session gave participants an overview of the initial adaptive placement test results for all schools and information on Reading Assistant Plus (RA+)—the online

reading coach component. Conversations centered on ways to include face-to-face and hardcopy students with IEPs access to technology through GDOE's application process for technology devices and mobile Wi-Fi units (MiFi). This conversation offered encouragement in the hopes of providing pilot school students ease of access across two learning environments—home and school. On February 11, 12, and 19, individual school sessions were offered, where each pilot school was given their own time slot and an opportunity for more personalized support regarding their school's data.

Currently, Fast ForWord is being implemented in five GDOE elementary schools: M.U. Lujan Elementary School, Capt. H. B. Price Elementary School, C.L. Taitano Elementary School, D.L. Perez Elementary School, and Merizo Martyrs Memorial School. These schools have pledged their continuous commitment to the implementation of the brain-based technology with fidelity. As of now, 80% or 4 out of the 5 pilot schools, have met the outcome goal of increasing the number of students using Fast ForWord®. During the summer months, this pilot program will continue allowing students with IEPs to receive access to these Fast ForWord exercises from their home or at school. Guam CEDDERS will also continue to provide ongoing technical support and assistance for schools and families.

# Guam EHDI Continues to Provide Services

## **EHDI HRSA & AMCHP Guam CARES Telehealth Project**

In the December I'Tellai issue, Guam Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) announced it would provide hearing screening to infants born at Guam Memorial Hospital Authority (GMHA), who were referred at the initial hearing screening dating back to the March 16, 2020 closure of the local government services of non-essential workers due to the COVID 19 pandemic. As a result of the government closures, a backlog of much-needed hearing rescreening needed to be addressed. With the reallocation of EHDI funding approved by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) project officer, a fully executed contract with Guam Hearing Doctors allowed 130 babies to be screened by the end of March. Additional funding from Guam Cares Telehealth (GCT) Project, provided by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) allowed for 14 babies to receive a Diagnostic Audiological Evaluation (DAE). Guam EHDI staff worked diligently to connect with families dating back to March 2020 to have all babies referred at the initial hearing screening seen. The GCT Project connected with families whose child was identified with a hearing loss and those waiting to receive a DAE to receive telehealth services. Guam EHDI staff provided training and support to families on the use of iPads, MiFi devices, and educational materials to support the telehealth sessions with the audiologist, speech pathologist, and the parent support group upon distribution. Additionally, Guam EHDI provided support to the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) students by

providing five iPads and five Mi-Fi devices to the department to be used with families and students receiving services using a virtual platform.

## **EHDI Outreach**

EHDI outreach activities were focused on delivering hearing screening information in the form of newspaper announcements, EHDI banners placed at the COVID-19 Immunization Outreach Clinic held at the University of Guam Field House, a Public Service Announcement facilitated by Guam CEDDERS and the EHDI consultant audiologist, and a video workshop featuring the Guam EHDI Program goals and partners provided to the Guam Early Intervention System, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) partners to share with their respective program staff.

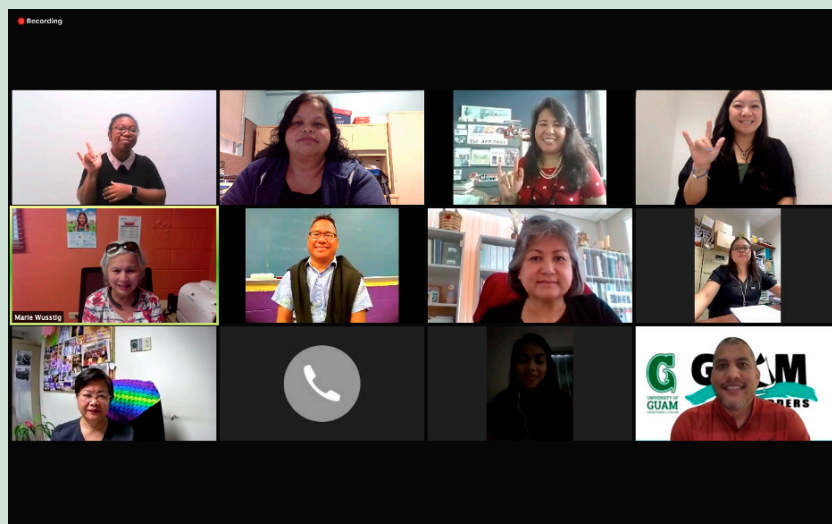
## **Sustainability Meeting**

Guam EHDI held two EHDI Sustainability Meetings in February. The first was held with the GEIS Coordinator and the DPHSS Administrator of Community Health and Nursing Services to provide an overview of the roles of the EHDI partners in meeting the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) goals, also known as the 1-3-6 Plan:

- Initial newborn hearing screening by 1 month of age
- Diagnostic Audiological Evaluation (DAE) completed by 3 months of age; and

*Continued on page 15*

*On February 12, Guam EHDI and its partners held a Sustainability meeting to discuss the role each partner contributes to the Initial hearing process and the challenges that are currently being faced within each partner in providing hearing screening services across the hearing screening continuum. Members present at the virtual meeting included representatives from GMHA, Sagua Mañagu, Guam's Positive Parents Together (GPPT), the Deaf Adult community and Guam EHDI staff.*



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# Guam EHDI Continues to Provide Services (Cont.)

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- Enrollment in Early Intervention services by 6 months of age - and to discuss the current state of audiological services provided by the GDOE.

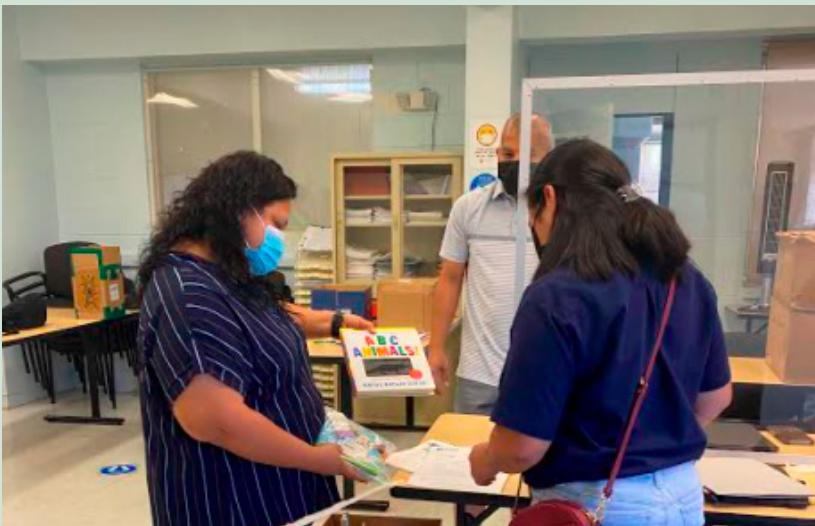
The second meeting included EHDI partners from GEIS, DPHSS, GMHA, Sagua Mañagu Birthing Center (SMBC), Guam's Positive Parents Together (GPPT), and a DHH adult representative. Guam EHDI provided an overview of Public Law 27-150, also known as the "Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention Act of 2004". This law mandated initial newborn hearing screening for all infants born on Guam; provided guidance for Newborn and Infant Hearing Programs at the birthing sites; included language for coverage and reimbursement by insurance companies to charge for the initial hearing screening services as outlined in the policy; and outlined the duties and responsibilities of Guam CEDDERS, DPHSS, Health Care Facilities, the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) Subcommittee, and GDOE in the facilitation of initial newborn hearing screening on Guam. Guam EHDI continues to work with its partners to develop and implement a sustainability plan for the EHDI system. We are proud to report to the community that initial newborn hearing screening is a standard of care in all of Guam's birthing facilities! Guam EHDI also has a robust database, Guam ChildLink-EHDI, which houses newborn infant hearing screening results, diagnostic audiological evaluation results, early intervention enrollment data, and demographic data of infants born in a civilian birthing site.

## **EHDI Virtual Conference**

On March 2 – 6, three Guam EHDI staff and GPPT Board President, Ann Marie Cruz attended the 2021 EHDI Virtual Conference. The goal of the annual EHDI Conference is to enhance the implementation of comprehensive state-based EHDI programs. One of the highlights of this year's EHDI Conference was the nomination of GPPT's Board President, Ann Marie Cruz for the EHDI Family Leadership Award. This award was first given in 2017. The award honors a parent or family member of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing for providing exemplary leadership in their state EHDI system and whose leadership has led to improved outcomes. The recipient of this award is selected by National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management's (NCHAM) Family Advisory Committee. Please join us in congratulating Ann Marie for her nomination for the 2021 EHDI Family Leadership Award!

## **Guam EHDI Virtual Meeting**

Guam EHDI held its last Virtual Learning Community Meeting and Advisory Committee Meeting for the grant year on March 26. The March Learning Community meeting featured GEIS' program and services. The program representative provided an overview of who can make a referral, what factors constitute a referral to early intervention, what services are provided, how these services are provided, followed by a Question and Answer segment. The EHDI Advisory Committee then convened and provided project updates to the members present.



*On February 4, Guam CEDDERS/EHDI distributed the "Guam Cares Telehealth Project Activity Resource Tool Kit" and iPad to families to be used during services provided by collaborating partners. The tool kit consists of educational books and toys to be used during speech services. An iPad was provided to conduct teletherapy with the speech pathologist, Guam Hearing Doctors, and Guam Early Intervention System. Pictured from L-R: Tanya Simer, Guam CEDDERS Research Associate; JJ Mendiola, Guam CEDDERS Interoperability Data Manager; and Pamela Avelino, Parent.*



# Project Minetgot Moves Forward with Virtual Meetings and Trainings

In September 2020, Guam CEDDERS was awarded funding for Project Minetgot by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide support to early childhood state/territorial programs and systems through the Act Early Network to support COVID-19 recovery and strengthen resilience skills, behaviors, and resources for children, families, and communities. The Project worked in collaboration with the Guam Early Learning Council (GELC) to actively engage in the Project Minetgot activities to ensure meaningful application of the Learn the Signs. Act Early. (LTSAE) tools, materials, and resources in support of Guam's COVID-19 response and mitigation efforts for Guam's early childhood system. These members represent Guam's non-profit organization for individuals with autism and early childhood programs and services. The Team also works in collaboration with Elaine Eclavea, Guam Act Early Ambassador and GELC Chairperson.

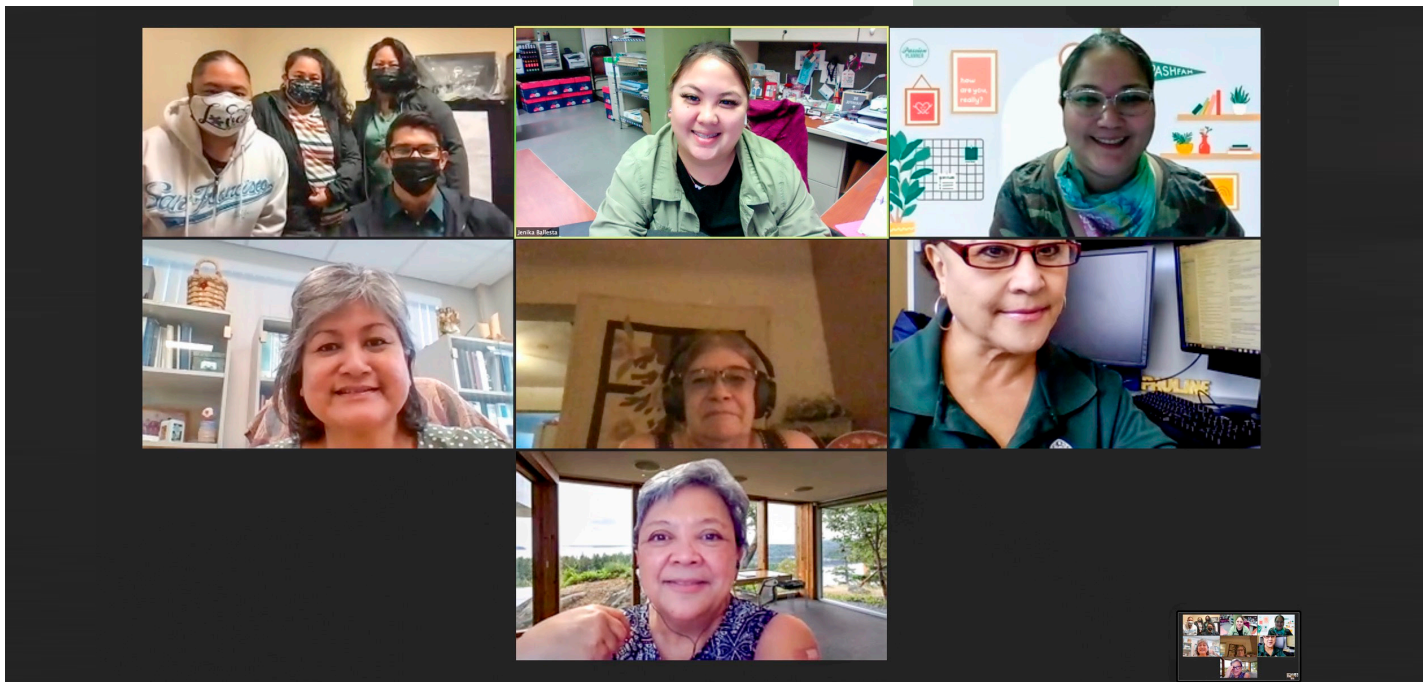
The Team strives to stress the importance of the 4 key steps for

early identification, which include:

- Parent-engaged Developmental Monitoring;
- General Developmental and Autism Screening;
- Referral for Early Intervention Services; and
- Receipt of Early Intervention Services for Children Birth to 5.

Ms. Eclavea in partnership with Guam Department of Education (GDOE), Guam Early Intervention Services (GEIS), and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Preschool, facilitated training on the 4 key steps to early childhood programs, foster parents, and other interested community members.

The Team meets monthly to discuss its collaborative efforts as well as plans to facilitate activities outlined in the grant work plan. The GELC Early Promotion and Identification Workgroup through the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Birth to 5 will sustain the activities that the grant has begun.



On March 17, the Project Minetgot Guam Act Early Territorial Team/GELC Early Promotion and Intervention Workgroup held its monthly meeting facilitated by Vera Blaz, Guam CEDDERS Training Associate, and Elaine Eclavea, Guam Act Early Ambassador, with support from Jenika Ballesta, Guam CEDDERS Research Associate. Pictured top row (L-R): Elizabeth Calvo, DPHSS PDG Project Director, with PDG staff Bianca Leon Geurrero, Doris Calvo, and Mathew Wong; Jenika Ballesta; Vera Blaz; middle row (L-R): Cathy Tydingco, GEIS/ECSE Program Coordinator; Maggie Bell, DPHSS MCH Program Coordinator; Pauline Camacho, DPHSS Family Health Information Resource Center (FHIRC) Program Coordinator; and bottom row; Elaine Eclavea.



# Project Minetgot Moves Forward with Virtual Meetings and Trainings



On February 8, Elaine Eclavea, Guam Act Early Ambassador, in partnership with GDOE GEIS and ECSE Preschool, facilitated training on the 4 Key Steps for Early Intervention to foster parents via ZOOM.

On February 22, Elaine Eclavea, Guam CEDDERS Consultant, facilitated a training sharing the importance of developmental monitoring and ensuring children are developing on track, developmental screening, and should there be concerns. The process for referral to Guam Early Intervention Services (GEIS) or DOE Early Childhood Special Education Services (ECSE) for preschoolers 3 to 5 years of age were shared. This training is in partnership with GEIS and ECSE.



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## GPPT Presents “ASL Under 60”

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Guam's Positive Parents Together (GPPT) rang in the New Year with weekly releases of locally produced American Sign Language (ASL) lessons for families of children identified with a hearing loss who chose to learn or improve their ASL skills to communicate with their Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) child. The “ASL Under 60” are short ASL lessons designed to fit the busy lifestyle of today's families. The lessons are sixty seconds or shorter, providing families the basics to communicate with their child. To date, GPPT has released 11 ASL lessons that can be accessed by families or the community at large who would like to learn ASL at the organization's website (<https://guamparents.org>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/guamparents>). The GPPT Parent Support Group for families of DHH children continued to meet virtually twice a month to practice ASL skills learned, meet with DHH adult mentors, and discuss parent-driven topics concerning education, language development, and social-emotional health of the family and child, to name a few.

GPPT and Guam EHDI also met virtually with Candace Lindow-Davies, Director of Outreach, Family, Language, Learning (FL3), Hands & Voices to discuss successes and challenges for providing services to families under the current COVID 19 restrictions. With limitations on face-to-face outreach,

GPPT pivoted to promote the GPPT Parent Support Group for families of DHH children using the locally run newspaper to provide families with contact information for the organization via print, text messaging, and YouTube. The organization also connected with the local television company to air a Public Service Announcement to DHH children's families. Banners were strategically placed in Yigo, with the mayor's assistance with information for families to connect with the organization. They also utilized the electronic billboard located in Tamuning to promote the GPPT Parent Support Group for families of DHH children.

GPPT is a strong supporter of Guam EHDI Project Na' Mas Fitme! Their commitment to ensuring families of DHH children are provided the best services is evident in their continued involvement and active participation in the EHDI Advisory Committee, Learning Community, Sustainability meetings, attendance at the 2021 Virtual EHDI, bi-monthly EHDI consultations and quarterly Family Leadership in Language and Learning (FL3) meetings, not including the meetings with other stakeholders in the community to advance DHH issues. Guam EHDI looks forward to working with GPPT in empowering families to advocate for their DHH child!

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## Kudos to EHDI Consultant for Producing Advocacy Video

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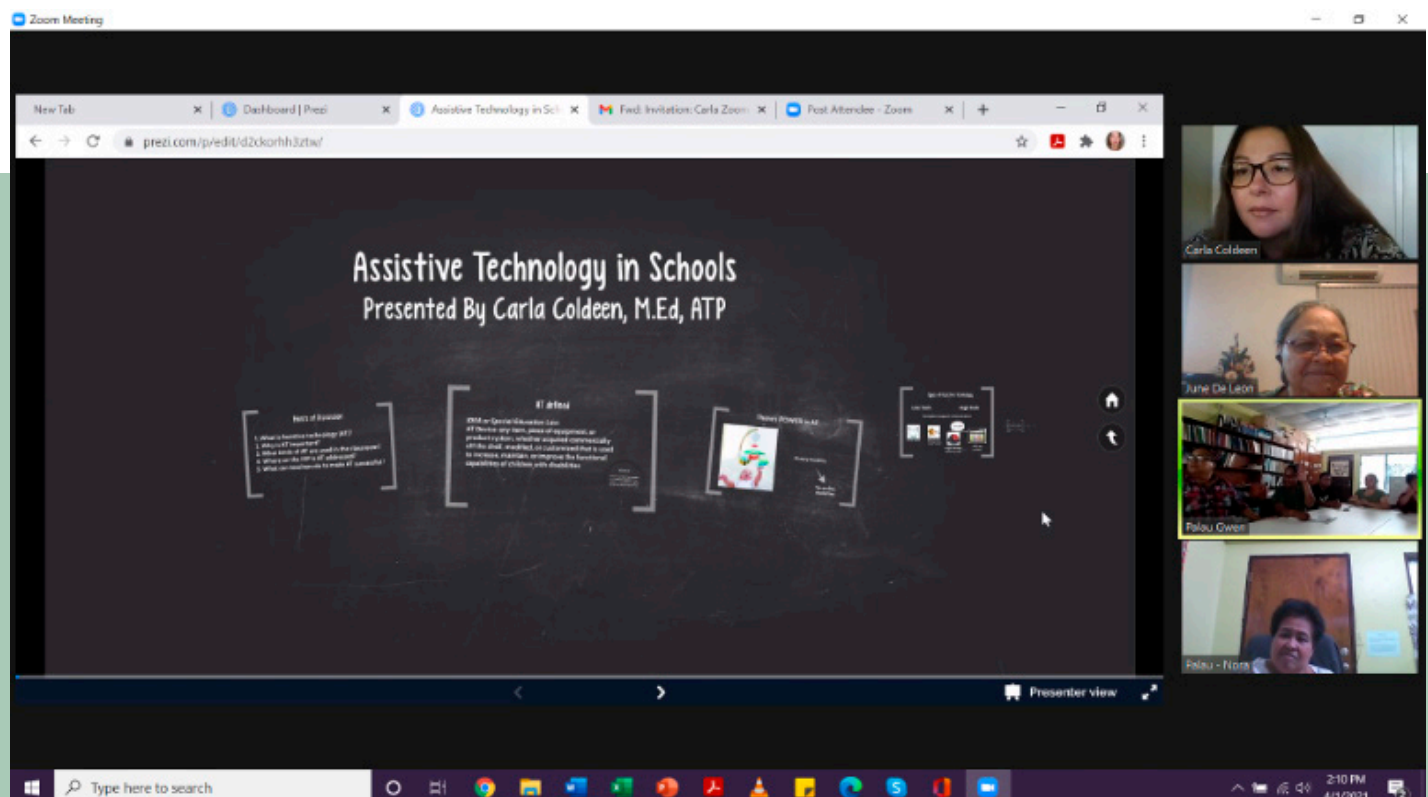
*On January 14, Dr. Renee Koffend, Guam CEDDERS Consultant, explains the early hearing screening process to Rochelle Iglesias and Mike Borja while baby Midas waits patiently. Dr. Koffend and the family were filming a video production that advocates early hearing intervention services. Video production made possible by Dr. Renee Koffend.*

# Palau Continues Technical Assistance During the Pandemic

The public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic did not prevent the Republic of Palau (ROP) Special Education Program from continuing its priority to increase personnel capacity for improving educational results for students with disabilities. The ROP Special Education Coordinator, in consultation with Guam CEDDERS June De Leon, continued the technical assistance and training activities to address ROP's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B grants management and program improvement priorities. From January – May, Guam CEDDERS facilitated virtual technical assistance and training sessions by the following Guam CEDDERS consultants:

- May Camacho continued consultation with the speech teachers on assessments and service provisions for students with disabilities requiring speech-language related services.
- Pia Watson conducted group and individual training sessions with special education specialists on the administration of assessments for IDEA eligibility determination.
- Rene Ranola worked with the physical therapist assistant on the provisions for physical therapy related services.
- Irina Quebles, Psy.D. continued consultation with special education specialists and school personnel on providing supports for children with autism spectrum disorder as a follow-up to her September 2019 on-site visit.
- Elaine Eclavea supported preschool special education personnel on the assessment and service provisions for preschoolers with disabilities.
- Carla Coldeen facilitated a session with special education specialists on assistive technology assessments and supports.

*On April 1, Carla Coldeen, consultant, Guam CEDDERS, conducted a virtual overview session on "Assistive Technology in Schools" with ROP special education personnel. Pictured top to bottom: Carla Coldeen; June De Leon, Guam CEDDERS; ROP special education specialists; and the ROP special education coordinator.*





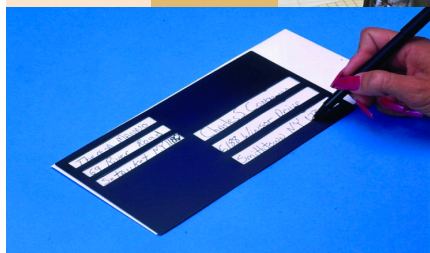


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For more information, please contact  
Guam's Positive Parents Together, Inc. at 688-4YOU (4968)  
projectfitmedhh@gmail.com



## NEED ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

To schedule an appointment for the demonstration of the devices, please contact the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) at 735-2490/1.

Email address: [gsat@guamcedders.org](mailto:gsat@guamcedders.org)

Visit the GSAT website: [www.gsatcedders.org](http://www.gsatcedders.org)

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**University of Guam  
Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities  
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Alternative formats (e.g. Braille or large print) of *I Tellai* will be made available upon request.

Please contact Zachary Hecita at (671) 735-2455 (v), (671) 735-6531 (TTY), or (671) 734-5709 (fax) for more information.

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**For more information on any of these events,  
please call 735-2479 or visit [www.guamcedders.org](http://www.guamcedders.org)**

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