



KARLA GIESE, M.ED

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

For Karla, deaf education has been a way of life. Born hearing, Karla began losing her hearing as an infant and became profoundly deaf by the time she was nine years old. Her parents chose to raise her with an emphasis on spoken language, using speech therapy, hearing aids, and FM systems while being educated in the mainstream setting. By middle school, Karla began learning sign language and used an interpreter through high school and college. In the spring of 1996, Karla graduated from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota with a BA in Deaf Education, Elementary Education, and Special Education. In 2003, she obtained her Masters in Early Childhood Special Education from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.

Karla began her teaching career at the Center on Deafness in Northbrook, IL in 1997, working with deaf students who also had emotional & behavioral disorders and learned a LOT about behavior management. At that time Karla also got her Early Intervention credential as a Developmental Therapist-Hearing (DTH) and began working in the Center on Deafness Early Intervention program in the evenings. Karla has also worked in the Waukegan Public Schools in their self-contained deaf education program as well as at John Powers Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Vernon Hills, IL as a classroom teacher. Karla spent some time as Curriculum Coordinator and Assistant to the Principal at the Center on Deafness. In the fall of 2011, Karla had the great opportunity to learn Cued Speech and see how it was used in the classrooms at AGBMS-AEHI.

Karla has worked with deaf and hard of hearing children of all ages, from birth to age 21, across all educational settings, utilizing all modes of communication. It's been a great learning experience, both personally and professionally! Throughout her career, Karla has been an active participant in a variety of organizations, including Illinois Teachers of Hard of Hearing Deaf and Individuals (ITHI), Deaf Social Services Providers (DSSP), and CHOICES for Parents. Karla was also on the Illinois Service Resource Center (ISRC) Advisory Board for several years. Karla has attended numerous trainings, conferences, and workshops on a variety of topics including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), early intervention, technology, and assessments. In addition, Karla has given several presentations on various topics including Cued Speech, language acquisition, hearing loss, parent advocacy, and service dogs for the deaf. Also, Karla is a certified instructor of Cued Speech and conducts regular workshops. Currently, Karla is on the Illinois Hands and Voices Board of Directors and the Illinois Service Resource Center (ISRC) Leadership Team. She also has served on the National Cued Speech Association (NCSA) Board of Directors as the Regional Director of the Great Lakes Region. In the summer of 2015, Karla became the Coordinator of CHOICES for Parents, a statewide coalition of parents and professionals ensuring that children with identified hearing loss and their families receive the necessary resources, advocacy, information, services and support that is committed to providing unbiased information.

As a student of deaf education programs, as a teacher in deaf education programs, and as an administrator of deaf education programs, Karla has come full circle. She is very excited to begin this next chapter of her journey in the field of deaf education at AGBMS-AEHI, working with a great team!