

**TITLE: BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING: NO LIMITS BASED ON EDUCATION, CULTURAL LINGUISTIC, DIVERSITY, ADDITIONAL DISABILITIES, AGE OF IDENTIFICATION**

**ABSTRACT:**

This presentation will provide data and theoretical rationale that seeks to “break the glass ceiling”, an invisible barrier to success, and refute limit setting for children who are deaf or hard of hearing regardless of risk. Greater risk may require the need for modifications in the type and intensity of service provided to families and children who are deaf or hard of hearing in order to overcome challenges and achieve optimal developmental outcomes. This presentation is a cautionary tale against setting limitations on families and children who are deaf or hard of hearing because of greater obstacles (lower levels of parent education, cultural differences from majority culture, linguistic differences, additional disabilities, later age of diagnosis and early intervention services) through fortune-telling of a bleak or difficult future. While earlier diagnosis and earlier intervention services play a dramatic role in overcoming challenges, there are other pathways to successful outcomes. The greater the number of variables that are positive (greater cognitive skills, better hearing levels, higher levels of education, earlier identification and intervention, hearing loss only, linguistic differences), the easier the developmental pathway. However, a growing number of children and their families with greater challenges are overcoming these obstacles and achieving remarkable outcomes. There are increasing examples of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and who are bilingual and multi-lingual, musically talented, successful in theatre, mainstreamed with autism and deafness, children diagnosed with cognitive disability or borderline cognitive potential achieving age appropriate, independent living, and sometimes post-secondary success, and late-identified children attending university.