

Outreach Program

Wisconsin Educational Services Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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Serving Young Children with Hearing Loss: A Self-Reflection Tool for Early Intervention Programs & Providers

History and Overview:

This tool was initially developed as a discussion/working document to support Early Intervention Programs & Providers in increasing their knowledge of evidence-based practices that successfully support a deaf or hard of hearing infant's or toddler's development. The tool evolved as a result of the WESP-DHH Outreach Consultation support provided to Birth to 3 Programs within the state of Wisconsin.

During the Wisconsin Western Region Birth to 6 Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind Pilot Redesign ARRA Project, a collaborative project between Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program, WESP-DHH Outreach and The Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project (WDBTAP), the tool was formally used with Birth to 3 County providers to support the primary outcome of the pilot:

To develop and implement a pilot system of supports to address the specific needs of infants and children who are deaf, hard of hearing, and have a combined vision and hearing loss.

Upon completion of the pilot, the Western Region Birth to 3 D/HH Cadre was formed to carry on the work of the pilot within counties in the Western region of WI. The Cadre continued to use the tool to support their work with Birth to 3 County programs. The tool was also shared as a resource via the Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program statewide Data Discussion in February of 2104, and has been used as a resource for other states in supporting their Early Intervention programming for deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers.

Previously, this tool was named the "Birth to 3 Self-Reflection Tool". The tool, however, has been renamed to include the term "Early Intervention." This term better reflects the purpose of the tool and aligns with the 2013 "Supplement to the JCIH 2007 Position Statement: Principles and Guidelines for Early Intervention After Confirmation That a Child Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing". More information about the JCIH Supplement Statement can be found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/m8uhunk>

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*“Infants identified and enrolled in **quality** early intervention programs during their first year of life demonstrate language skills similar to their hearing peers by three to five years of age (Yoshinaga-Itano, Sedy, Coulter, & Mehl, 1998).”*

Numerous research studies have documented the benefits children and families receive when provided with **effective** early intervention services upon diagnosis of a hearing loss. Quality services result in better language (spoken and/or signed) cognitive and social outcomes; increased understanding of the impact of hearing loss on development, technology and communication options, intervention and educational system philosophies; and increased parent to parent support. Yet, many early intervention programs are unsure of what defines “effective”. What does “effective” mean? What skills should providers possess to be described as “quality” providers?

To help answer these questions, read through the following “Self-Reflection” tool. This tool was developed to assist in identifying the strengths within your IFSP team/programs, and to highlight areas or professionals that should be added to your “team” to provide effective early intervention services for young children who are deaf, hard of hearing.

1. Can someone on your team explain the roles of the following individuals and how they may work with a child who has a hearing loss and their family?

Pediatric Audiologist

Otolaryngologist

Early Educator

Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Speech/Language Pathologist

WESP-DHH Outreach Deaf Mentor

WESP-DHH Outreach Guide By Your Side Parent Guide

2. Do you/your program have a system in place to communicate with a child’s audiologist and ophthalmologist (for a child who is deafblind)? If so, what is it? Can someone on your team interpret an audiogram? Can they interpret an Ophthalmology/Ocular Report (for a child who is deafblind)?
3. Do you have someone on your team who can identify if a child meets the federal criteria for deaf-blindness?

"...concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination that creates such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education in programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness." FR Dept. of Education, 34 CFR Parts 300 & 303. Vol. 64, No. 48.

4. Can someone on the team share with families how hearing loss may have an impact on at least three areas of development?

5. Can someone on your team explain, in an unbiased manner, the communication options that families need to be informed about when making decisions regarding their child's communication and language development?

American Sign Language

Listening and Spoken Language Skills:

Auditory Oral

Auditory Verbal Therapy

Total Communication Philosophy

Bilingual/Bimodal Approach

Cued Speech

Sign Supported Speech

6. Can someone on your team explain the developmental progression of an infant's:

Auditory development;

Visual development;

Speech development;

American Sign Language development;

Cognitive development;

Social Emotional development

7. Do you have strategies/ideas that can be shared with families, within their home setting and other natural environments (keeping in mind that for deaf, hard of hearing

infants/toddlers, a natural environment may be without hearing peers), to facilitate their child's development in all areas listed above?

8. Does your program have access to Deaf or Hard of Hearing adults, who have chosen a variety of communication options and have a variety of life experiences, that can meet with families to share their life experiences?
9. Can someone on your team explain technology options for amplification (hearing aids, cochlear implants, frequency modulation systems, etc.)?
10. What family friendly resources do you have access to that can be shared with families regarding support for children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind (local, state, and national)?
11. Are you familiar with the organization Hands & Voices (a non-profit, parent-driven organization dedicated to supporting families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing)? Do you know that Wisconsin has an active state chapter (Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices) that provides resources to families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and professionals who support them?

In reflecting upon your answers, do you feel that your team needs support and information to improve their knowledge and skills in providing effective early intervention services? If so, consultation for the child/family and team, and, program supports can be provided to you at no cost. For more information, please contact:

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Reference: Yoshinaga-Itano C, Sedey AL, Coulter DK, Mehl AL. Language of early-and later-identified children with hearing loss. *Pediatrics*. 1998;102 : 1161-1171