

Parent Education Pages

Early Intervention

The Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) has representatives from Pediatrics, Otology, Speech Language Pathology, Audiology, Deaf Education and State Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programs. JCIH published a position statement in 2019 that provides guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the providers you may encounter on your journey with your newly identified child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH).

How can Early Intervention (EI) help?

Early Intervention is the term used to describe the services and supports that are available to babies and young children with developmental delays and/or disabilities and their families. This may include speech therapy, physical therapy, and other types of services based on the needs of the child and family. This support can have a significant impact on a child's ability to learn new skills, overcome challenges and can increase success in school and life. These publicly funded programs are available in every state and territory and provide services for free or at reduced cost for any child who is eligible.

All infants who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) in one or both ears should be referred immediately to early intervention (EI) in order to receive targeted and appropriate services.

- Services should be offered that reflect the family's preferences and goals for their child.
- Families should have access to EI Service Coordinators who have specialized knowledge and skills related to working with children who are DHH.
- Families will participate in a meeting with EI providers to determine the services, goals and frequency of services.
- The information from this meeting is documented and signed and is called an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- Family's preference and goals for their child are documented on the IFSP and should be reflected in EI services.

Family Support

- All families have access to other families with children who are DHH and are trained to provide culturally and linguistically sensitive support, mentorship and guidance.
- All children who are DHH and their families have access to support, mentorship and guidance from individuals who are DHH.

Guidelines

The information shared here is simplified language of the guidelines set forth by the JCIH. The guidelines were written for professionals and families to set standards of care for children through the hearing screening, diagnosis and early intervention process. Parents should consider these overall recommendations and timelines may vary based on family circumstances.



[Questions to ask
your EI Team](#)



[Learning from
DHH Adults](#)



[All About EI](#)



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EI Services

- EI should be provided by professionals with appropriate training and core knowledge about the needs and requirements of children who are DHH to optimize the child's development and child/family well being.
- Services should be evidence based and build on the strengths of the family.
- Families of children with additional disabilities should have access to specialists with professional qualifications, specialized knowledge and skills to support and promote their optimal developmental outcomes.
- Recommendations are that EI Services should begin as soon as a hearing loss is identified, but no later than six months of age.
- All children who are identified with hearing loss of any degree, including those with unilateral or slight hearing loss, those with auditory neural hearing loss (auditory neuropathy), and those with progressive or fluctuating hearing loss shall receive appropriate monitoring and immediate follow-up intervention services where appropriate.
- Every six months EI progress is monitored using standardized, norm-referenced developmental evaluations.

Supporting the Family's Language

- Families that choose American Sign Language (ASL) should have access to fluent/native signers.
- Listening and spoken language (LSL) services shall be provided by professionals who have specialized skills and knowledge of LSL.
- All children who are DHH and their families from culturally diverse backgrounds and/or from non-English speaking homes shall have access to culturally competent services with provision of the same quality and quantity of information given to families from the majority culture.

Partnering with EHDI

Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) refers to the practice of screening every newborn for hearing loss prior to hospital discharge. Infants not passing the screening should receive a diagnostic hearing test no later than three months of age and, if the hearing status is not determined to be typical hearing, the infant should be enrolled in early intervention programs no later than six months of age.

The JCIH encourages families and those that are DHH to be active participants in the development and implementation of EHDI systems at the state/territory and local levels.