



Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI)

Parent Guide



Health and
Human Services

Public Health



Dear Parents and Guardians of a child newly diagnosed with a hearing difference,

We are writing to you with hope that this guide provides you with next steps and gives you hope and encouragement during this overwhelming time.

You may experience many different emotions. All of those feelings are okay, and they may be different for each family member. Wherever you are in this process, please remember that your child is a wonderful gift. There is a bright future ahead for him or her.

In this guide you will find information about:

- 1 Next steps:** What should you expect?
- 2 Guidance and support:** Who is available to support you?
- 3 Language and Communication:** How can you improve communication for you, your child, and your family?
- 4 Resources:** What programs, websites, and resources are available?

When deciding the next steps for your child, it is important to act quickly. You want your child to learn language as soon as possible. Remember, decisions you make today are not set in stone. Your choices may change as your child grows.

Sincerely,

Iowa's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/ehdi>

1-833-496-8040

Planning Your Journey

Identification of Hearing Loss and Understanding the Diagnosis

The next steps will depend on your situation and your child's needs. Let's begin with helpful, accurate information. Here are four important steps you can take:

Receive support while you learn. Connect with early intervention and family support groups to learn from others with good information.

Take care of your needs. As your needs change, seek out helpful people and services. Your child will learn to take care of themselves from watching you.

Choose what is best for your family. Learn what steps other families take and consider if these are right for you. Choices are best made in small steps.

Create a support team. Carefully choose a team to support your family's need, they can help you make good decisions.

6,000 children every year are identified with permanent hearing loss.

Approximately **70 of the 36,000** babies born in Iowa each year will be diagnosed with hearing loss shortly after birth.

Another **2-3%** will be diagnosed with late onset hearing loss before Kindergarten.

Next Steps

Understand who is on your support team and what they do. They can help you make decisions about your child's future. See below for brief descriptions of professionals and family supporters who might be on your team.

Audiologists – A professional who specializes in testing the hearing of infants and children and recommends hearing technology and other forms of treatment or interventions.

Otolaryngologists (ENT) – A doctor who specializes in problems of the ear, nose, and throat.

Primary Care Providers – A doctor who provides health care for infants and children.

Early Intervention Professionals – Early ACCESS service providers work closely with families to identify their needs and provide services to help children stay on track developmentally.

Family Mentors – Parents/Guardians of children with hearing differences that provide unbiased support to families with a child newly diagnosed with hearing differences.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Mentors – Deaf/Hard of Hearing adults trained to work with families to provide unbiased support, resources, and serve as a role model for families.

Geneticists – A doctor that specializes in testing and counseling on the potential genetic component of hearing differences.

Speech Language Pathologist – A professional that works with individuals who have speech and language difficulties.

Visit our page to find out how to connect with some of these people.

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/ehdi/ehdi-families>



Language and Communication

Learn what to expect and how you can help your child.

The first three years of life, as the brain develops and matures, is the most important period for learning language and communication skills. These skills best develop in a world that is full of sounds, sights, and consistent exposure to the language of others. Children with a hearing difference are more likely to have language delays even if they still have some hearing ability.



There are many options for helping your child develop language and communication skills. Please note that your choice for language learning for your child may change overtime and may include a combination of different communication methods. Using a signed language along with spoken language will NOT stunt communication skill growth and may help your child.

Language and Communication

Learn what to expect and how you can help your child.

What is Language?

Language and communication are different.

Languages are used to help people communicate and are made up of words and follow rules (grammar) that tell how these words are used.

Communication is about sharing ideas, thoughts, and other information.

Each child's ability to express themselves (expressive language) and understand others (receptive language) is different. What works well for one child may not be the best choice for a different child. Finding the best choice for your family can be a complex process and change over time.



Receptive language is the ability to understand spoken, signed or printed language.

Expressive language is the ability to put thoughts into words or signs.

Your Communication Toolbox

You and your child have communication options. Choose what works best for your family.

What is a communication tool box?

As in a common toolbox, communication strategies are tools that help you communicate with your child. You can choose the contents of your family's communication toolbox. This toolbox should encourage your child's learning of language and communication. Your tools in your toolbox may change overtime as your child develops and grows.

Children with hearing differences use different languages, tools, systems, technologies and strategies to communicate based on the child's and family's needs and desired outcomes. Communication tools and languages may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Languages:



Signed languages
(e.g., American Sign Language, Mexican Sign Language)



Spoken languages
(e.g., English, Spanish)



A combination of signed or spoken languages



Visual Supports and Tools:

- ▶ Signing systems to support or represent spoken languages (e.g., Signed Exact English (SEE), Manually Coded English (MCE))
- ▶ Cueing Systems (e.g., cued speech)
- ▶ Gestures, facial expressions, pictures, and written words
- ▶ Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- ▶ A Combination of languages, supports and tools, and/or AAC (e.g., total communication, multimodal communication)

Amplification tools:

Hearing aids, BAHA, and cochlear implants

Please note that using ASL or other manual communication modes along with spoken languages WILL NOT stunt communication skill growth and may help your child. EHDI supports all forms of communication for a child diagnosed with hearing differences and are here to support you in your family's journey.



Family Support

The EHDl program provides family support services for children newborn to three years of age in Iowa diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing. EHDl's Family Support Coordinator is available to connect you with the resources and support that work for your family. You are not alone in this journey, EHDl will support you throughout the process. The needs of Iowa families vary and so do the kind of supports available. Below are some of, but not limited to, the types of support available through the EHDl program.

Monthly E-Newsletter: Sign up to receive a monthly newsletter straight to your inbox full of resources and upcoming events specific to children with hearing differences.

Family Mentors: Connect with other families who have lived experience raising a child with hearing differences.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing Mentors: Connect with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing adult to learn and received unbiased support and resources.

Book Club for Tots: This fun family story time is offered virtually every month. Book Club hosts read the story and teach American Sign Language (ASL) to go along with it to families.

New to the Journey: New to the Journey groups are offered virtually throughout the year. A wide range of topics related to hearing differences are covered in sessions as well as an opportunity to connect, learn, and share with others.

Events: In-person events are provided throughout the year to connect you to other families, providers, resources, and information. Stay up to date by checking the EHDl Family Events Calendar on the website or by joining the mailing list to receive the E-News.

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/ehdi/ehdi-families>



Learn More

There is so much to learn! Look for well-researched information about the types of hearing differences, types of hearing devices, communication options, language resources, and family support. It is important to keep learning as your child learns. Below are a few resources for families in Iowa.

- ▶ **Family support can be a great resource to get connected.** To learn more about family support opportunities, call 833-496-8040 or visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/ehdi/ehdi-families>
- ▶ **Hearing differences can affect a child’s ability to develop speech, language, and social skills.** A child with a diagnosed hearing difference qualifies for free services with Early ACCESS any time from birth until 3 years old. Services focus on cognitive, communication, physical, social-emotional and adaptive development. Many of the services help with child development and school readiness. For more information or to request services, contact Early ACCESS at 888-425-4371 or visit <https://www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/families/early-access>
- ▶ **The EHDl website contains information about resources and services** for children with hearing differences. It also contains information about recommendations and best practices. Learn more about childhood hearing differences, hearing testing, and family support at <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/ehdi>

Scan the QR code to visit the EHDl Family Support Page and connect with resources:

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/ehdi/ehdi-families>





Health and Human Services
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