

Guidance Document 2013-1: Determination of need for early intervention services for children with diagnosed permanent hearing loss

Without early identification (by 3 months of age) and appropriate intervention services (by 6 months of age), children deaf & hard-of hearing may experience delays in the development of auditory, language, cognitive, and social skills. Since language becomes more complex as the child grows, it is unrealistic to expect a child to no longer need services because they appear to be age appropriate during a snapshot of development on a child assessment tool. The ultimate goal is to keep young children with hearing loss on track throughout these intensive language learning years.

Research has demonstrated that early enrollment and longer stays in early intervention programs provide increased opportunities for families to gain greater understanding of their child's needs and potential which results in greater success for the child in multiple areas of development, on par with their hearing peers (NCHAM).

We must ensure infants and toddlers with diagnosed permanent hearing loss have access to early intervention services. A few reminders about children being made eligible for Early Intervention:

- A child who is deaf or hard-of-hearing is eligible for Early Intervention, because these conditions are on the state's list of diagnosed physical or mental conditions which have a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay (see Appendix 07 – A in Ohio Administrative Code 3701-8-07).
- A child with a hearing impairment should be assessed by a professional with expertise in his or her area of "delay." In Ohio, parent advisors and audiologists employed by the Regional Infant Hearing Program have the training to assess communication functioning and may or may not have certification depending upon their educational backgrounds. . These individuals may be used to complete child assessment in Ohio (see paragraph (E)(2)(b) in Ohio Administrative Code 3701-8-07).
- An assessment tool should not be used as the sole criterion for deciding whether a child is in need of EI services or not (see form HEA 8032).
- When assessing a child with a hearing impairment, the Language Development Scale or other tools approved by ODH specifically able to assess expressive and receptive language skills as well as auditory functioning should be used.
- A child assessment does not need to meet any certain threshold (i.e., score) for a child to be made eligible; the determination of need for services is determined by the TEAM assessing the child.
- Please make sure you have appropriate people, with skills and knowledge in hearing loss, on any team which assesses an infant or toddler with a diagnosed hearing impairment. Regional Infant Hearing Program Parent Advisors and Project Directors can provide professional opinion along with audiologists, speech language pathologists and teachers of the deaf.