

Iowa: Utilizing Regional Educational (Early Intervention) Audiology Providers to Increase Timely Diagnosis for Iowa Infants

The [Iowa Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) (EHDI) program partnered with regional educational audiologists to perform unседated diagnostic hearing assessments to ensure timely diagnosis and enrollment into early intervention (EI) services for children identified as deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH).



Primary Accomplishments

- Educational audiologist provided results of diagnostic assessment to families in person and counseled them on next steps (eg, scheduling appointments with specialists, amplification choices, early intervention (EI) referrals, access to [Iowa Family Resource Guide](#)).
- Updates were made to the state Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) database to allow diagnostic providers access to enter data that would facilitate automated EI referrals through the system based on assessment results.
- Created [checklist](#) for audiologists and primary care providers outlining the necessary referrals to be made upon diagnosis of deaf or hard of hearing status.

Background Information

- Type of Setting: Regional service agency charged with providing special education services, early intervention and school improvement services
- Location: Iowa
- Population Served: Children who did not pass their outpatient hearing screen

Implementation Strategies

- Children were referred to a nearby educational audiologist upon a “did not pass” outpatient hearing screen for an unседated diagnostic assessment at no charge to the family.
- The educational audiologist provided the results of the diagnostic assessment to the family in person (and via letter) and counseled them on recommended next steps (eg, confirmatory testing, specialty appointments, communication options, early intervention [EI] referral).
- The educational audiologist discussed intervention options, helped the family locate resources (eg, the [Iowa Family Resource Guide](#)), assisted in decision-making, and discussed additional support options and referrals.
- The educational audiologists who provided unседated diagnostic assessments were part of the same agency that provided EI services, so the referral process was internal and streamlined.
- The state Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) database was updated to allow all diagnostic providers access to making automated EI referrals through the system upon report of assessment results.
- A recommended referral process was developed by parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- A [checklist](#) was developed and provided to audiologists and primary care providers with instruction to complete with families during consultation regarding diagnosis and recommended next steps.

Challenges

- Issues regarding time and financial resources impacted completion of a comprehensive evaluation of the project.
- Time devoted by the EHDI pediatric audiologist to provide coaching and training diverted a small amount of attention from other Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) responsibilities.
- Though the infrastructure is in place, sustainability will be a challenge due to the need for updated equipment and cost to cover consumables.

More Information

- For more information, contact [Tammy O’Hollearn](#), Director, [Iowa Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) (EHDI) Program.
- For more information about the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) initiatives, visit: aap.org/ehdi.