

Kansas: Increasing the Percentage of Infants Receiving Early Intervention Services before 6 Months of Age



In the state of Kansas, all children identified with hearing loss, regardless of the type or the amount of loss, are automatically eligible to receive early intervention services through their local Infant Toddler / Tiny-K programs at no cost to the family. In 2017, the [Kansas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention \(EHDI\)](#) program collaborated with [Sound START](#) (a program housed at the [Kansas School for the Deaf](#)), and the state Part C Coordinator to implement and pilot strategies to increase early intervention service awareness and enrollment of children birth to three years of age identified with hearing loss.

Primary Accomplishments

- This initiative resulted in increased collaboration with early intervention programs.
- Kansas has experienced an increase in enrollment in early intervention programs.
- Audiologists throughout Kansas have greater knowledge about early hearing detection and intervention (EHDI) guidelines and the importance of enrollment into early intervention.

Background Information

- Type of Setting: State Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program and Early Intervention (EI) programs
- Location: Kansas
- Population Served: Children 0-3 years of age identified with any degree and type of hearing loss

Implementation Strategies/Intended Outcomes

- **Utilization of a Family Liaison** (a professional with expertise in working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing ages birth to three years old.)
 - **Strategies**
 - The Family Liaison provides the initial support for families with children who have been recently identified with hearing loss. This individual makes the initial contact with the family directly after diagnosis as a family resource support person and as the Coordinator of the family's Shared Plan of Care.
 - **Outcomes**
 - Families have a good understanding of the importance of early intervention (EI) and availability of the [Special Health Care Needs \(SHCN\)](#) program
 - Coordination of Shared Plan of Care for the family
 - Families are more accepting when EI provider calls to set up assessment
 - Increased EI enrollment for unilateral and mild hearing losses
- **Early Intervention Network Provider Scripts**
 - **Strategies**
 - Provide a script to the early intervention (EI) network providers to use when calling parents for the initial contact and to schedule the assessment. The script provides samples of situational conversations to have with the parent to promote education and support.

- **Outcomes**
 - Provides consistency and increased enrollment
- **Hearing Aid Loan Bank Requirement**
 - **Strategies**
 - As a new requirement to receive a hearing aid, the family must agree to have their child remain enrolled in early intervention (EI) services as long as they are a recipient of a hearing aid through the program
 - **Outcomes**
 - Approximately 30 children ages 0-3 years receive hearing aids through the Hearing Aid Loan Bank each year
- **No EI Enrollment Follow-Up**
 - **Strategies**
 - A Parent Letter is sent to each newly diagnosed family which includes information on the importance and benefits of early intervention (EI) with a self-addressed envelope and reasons to indicate why they have not enrolled their child.
 - The Dispensing Audiologist is contacted and encouraged to educate families at each appointment on the importance and the benefits of early intervention.
 - **Outcomes**
 - Audiologists were better prepared to talk to families about EI services and enrollment.

Challenges

- It was challenging to confirm whether audiologists discussed the importance of early intervention with parents during their audiology appointments.
- Outreach to families who were not enrolled in early intervention allowed increased understanding regarding why enrollment was not higher.

More Information

- For more information contact, [Liz Schardine](#), SoundBeginnings EHDI Coordinator, Kansas Bureau of Family Health.
- For more information about American Academy of Pediatrics Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) initiatives, visit aap.org/ehdi.