



Technical Assistance Bulletin

TO: WV Birth to Three Interim Service Coordinators, Service Coordinators and Practitioners

FROM: WV Birth to Three

DATE: March 2021

ISSUE: Supporting Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

The purpose of this Technical Assistance Bulletin is to provide requirements for supporting children who are deaf or hard of hearing. When a child's hearing loss is identified, the family should immediately receive information about the type of hearing loss and the various communication options available to the child. Families with young children who are deaf or hard of hearing need to consider all the possible communication modalities and language opportunities that best fit the needs of their child. This information should be provided by someone such as a Hearing Specialist who is trained to provide unbiased information on potential communication options.

The family should be made aware that there are Hearing Specialists enrolled in WV Birth to Three. These individuals have knowledge and expertise in hearing loss, communication options, technology and promoting language and literacy development. Each family should be given the opportunity to have a consultation by a Hearing Specialist. These specialists can review the [WV Resource Guide for Families of Young Children Birth to Five with Hearing Loss](#) and assist families identifying next steps. The [WV Resource Guide for Families of Young Children Birth to Five with Hearing Loss](#) is available on the WV Birth to Three website and printed copies are available for families.

Regardless of the mode of language that the family chooses for their child, it is important for families to have information to help their child to progress along developmental milestones that are appropriate for his/her age. Developing language requires commitment and hard work on the part of the child, family and team. Families may choose to have both a Hearing Specialist and a Speech Language Pathologist on their team if that is their preference.

Communication, language and literacy are all connected. Developing a fluent, primary mode of communication supports the bridge to reading and written language. When IFSP teams are working with families to develop relevant IFSP outcomes for the child, it is important that the full team is aware of the child's status with language development. Review of the child's progress in language development will be shared at the six-month review and the annual IFSP meetings. If a child who is deaf or hard of hearing is not making progress in language development, the IFSP team will discuss with the family the reason why progress has not been made and identify strategies that could assist the child's progress. IFSP teams will want to be sure that the family is comfortable providing these strategies for their child and that the child/family has access to needed services and supports.