

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) National Technical Resource Center
Utah State University, 2615 Old Main Hill, Logan UT 84318, <http://infanthearing.org>
Project Director: Karl R. White, Ph.D., karl.white@usu.edu; (435) 797-3013
Annual Funds request: \$850,000

Problem: When infants and young children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are identified early and provided timely and appropriate intervention services, they demonstrate better outcomes than later-identified children in the areas of language development, socio-emotional development and school readiness. More than 95% of newborns in the U.S. now receive hearing screening. However, babies who do not pass the screen are often lost to follow-up and many young children are not screened again during early childhood, even though the incidence of permanent hearing loss doubles between birth and the time children enter school. Linking newborn and childhood hearing screening services to diagnostic, early intervention, medical home, and family support is critical to achieving the optimum outcomes of early identification systems.

Purpose: The EHDI National Technical Resource Center (NTRC) will assist state agencies and other federal and non-federal partners in the development, improvement, and operation of sustainable statewide newborn and early childhood hearing screening, diagnosis, and intervention (often referred to as the EHDI systems).

Goals: Statewide EHDI systems will ensure that all infants (1) are screened for hearing loss, and those who do not pass the screening (2) receive diagnostic evaluations before 3 months of age and (3) are enrolled in early intervention programs where necessary before 6 months of age. Additional goals include (4) appropriate family support, (5) linkages with a medical home, (6) creating sustainable systems for screening young children for hearing loss throughout early childhood, (7) statewide EHDI data and tracking systems that are linked with other relevant public health data, and (8) disseminating information about EHDI to relevant constituencies.

Methodology: Gaps in the system noted by State EHDI Coordinators, families, collaborators, and other EHDI experts will be addressed through technical assistance activities, including resource development, education and training, communication and dissemination activities, policy initiatives, telehealth technologies, quality improvement activities, and data collection. Activities will be coordinated and often jointly implemented in partnership with professionals and family members, in cooperation with individuals and organizations that serve children with hearing loss, State EHDI systems, and appropriate federal agencies.

Evaluation: Needs assessments, data collection, and product/process evaluations will be integrated into all activities. Members of multiple Advisory Committees will regularly review the work scope to suggest improvements. An independent evaluation will be done annually.

Key Words: early hearing detection, newborn hearing screening, early childhood hearing screening, technical assistance, audiology, early intervention

Annotation: All states and jurisdictions in the United States have established early hearing detection and intervention (EHDI) programs. To be successful, these programs must link newborn hearing screening to diagnostic services, early intervention, family support, and medical homes. The National Technical Resource Center will collaborate with EHDI stakeholders and other organizations to assist states in the implementation of effective and sustainable statewide EHDI systems.