**Starting Points for EI Service Coordinators**

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing**



INFORMATION *This list is not meant to be all inclusive. .*

**What are Specialty Services? Specialty Services are provided to children enrolled in EI programs who have been identified as requiring specialized services due to identification as Deaf or Hard of Hearing, a diagnosis of vision loss, are on the autism spectrum, have complex medical needs or multiple disabilities.**

Children with specialty service conditions, including those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, require specialized care and services that may not be appropriately, adequately, or specifically provided within the existing early intervention system. A clinician with special skills or knowledge may be needed to supplement the child’s program.

**Who are the Specialty Service Providers (SSP) for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children?** Early intervention programs contract with a number of organizations and individuals to provide services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing infants and toddlers in the EI system. Referrals should be made early so children and their families may fully benefit from these supports. Families may be enrolled in more than one SSP at the same time. Prior to initiating a referral, contact your EI director for current information on SSP services available.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL .

A child who has been identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing is eligible for Early Intervention services as this is an established condition (eligible until 3rd birthday). DPH Diagnosed Conditions List includes:

* Hearing impairment, bilateral permanent
* Hearing impairment, unilateral permanent
* Neural hearing loss/auditory neuropathy

Children enrolled in EI programs who are diagnosed as Deaf or Hard of Hearing are eligible for Specialty Services.

FIRST STEPS S PS

1. Connect with the child’s audiologist to determine:

* Type and degree of loss
* Plans for amplification (hearing aids, cochlear implants)?
* Schedule for ongoing audiological visits
* Any special concerns?

1. Connect with pediatrician to review:

* Need for additional assessments—especially vision and any impact on physical development and achievement of developmental milestones

1. Connect with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children’s Specialist

**617-740-1600** to:

Review options for services and supports to EI and to family

Gain a better understanding of how hearing loss might affect development

1. Speak with your EI Program Director to determine which SSP agencies your EIP contracts with.
2. Inform family of SSP options and provide unbiased information about service delivery models to support the family’s decision making.
3. When making a referral to the SSP, the service coordinator’s role is to facilitate smooth communication, coordination, and oversight of the service delivery process.
4. Monitor:

* Early language exposure (collaboration among and support to all caregivers to ensure a language rich environment, all caregivers actively engaged in promoting language development)
* If there are concerns about hearing aid/cochlear implant use consider additional support for family
* Periodic in-depth assessment of child’s language development by qualified personnel
* Referral to RCP or DPH Care Coordination if child has ongoing, significant medical issues or if family needs respite
* Special Consideration for transition out of EI: MCDHH Children’s Specialist can discuss options for educational programs specifically designed for Deaf or Hard of Hearing children
* Adaptive equipment needs (e.g. FM system, video phone)

1. Review sections of Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) Parent Information Kit with family provided by the diagnosing audiologist. If the family does not have kit, call **800-882-1435** for a copy.

9. Is the family interested in:

* Family Sign Language Program

<https://www.necc.mass.edu/gallaudet/ma-family-sign-language-program/>

* Opportunity to talk with other parents of Deaf or Hard of Hearing children?
  + Refer to Family Ties 800-905-TIES (8437) or [www.massfamilyties.org](http://www.massfamilyties.org/)
* Opportunity to talk with staff of UNHS Program, including a parent 800-882-1435.

For Spanish, call 617-994-9816.

10. Collaboration between the EI program and SSP is enhanced by clear and frequent communication, co-visits with EI professionals *(****not limited****)*, sharing of developmental and functional assessment information, group brainstorming, IFSP meetings, and working as a team with the family

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN .

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| **A. G. Bell Association**  [www.agbell.org](http://www.agbell.org) | **American Society for Deaf Children**  [www.deafchildren.org](http://www.deafchildren.org) | **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association**  [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org) |
| **Beginnings**  *(Guidance for parents of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing)*  [www.ncbegin.org](http://www.ncbegin.org) | **The Decibels Foundation**  *(Help children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and their families)*  [www.decibelsfoundation.org](http://www.decibelsfoundation.org) | **DPH hearing aid program**  *(income eligible families)*  1-800-882-1435 |
| **Gallaudet University**  **VL2 Parent Information Package**  *(Visual Language & Visual Learning)*  [www.vl2parentspackage.org](http://www.vl2parentspackage.org) | **Hands and Voices**  *(organization dedicated to supporting families of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing)*  [www.handsandvoices.org](http://www.handsandvoices.org) | **Massachusetts Commission for the**  **Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  *(Children’s Specialists)*  [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcdhh](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcdhh) |
| **Massachusetts Family Sign Language Program**  *(available to eligible families who are currently enrolled in EI in Massachusetts)*  <https://www.necc.mass.edu/gallaudet/ma-family-sign-language-program/> | **MA Specialty Service Providers**  *(have specialized skills, knowledge and training about working with families of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing )*  [www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/prego-newborn/hear-screen-specialty-services.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/prego-newborn/hear-screen-specialty-services.pdf) | **Setting Language in Motion:**  *(Family Supports & Early Intervention for Babies Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing)*  [www.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center-sites/setting-language-in-motion.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center-sites/setting-language-in-motion.html) |

**Determine eligibility for entitlements**, based on family’s financial situation.

Call the Department of Public Health, Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs Community Support Line at 1-800-882-1435 for information on these resources and public benefits (*This is a great place to start if you aren’t sure about a family’s eligibility for other public benefit programs or services*)

* **Mass Health/CommonHealth** (*buy-in program of Mass Health for children with disabilities*)
* **Kaleigh Mulligan** (*home care for children whose severe health care needs require care equivalent to a hospital or nursing facility*)
* **Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund** *(financial reimbursement for families who have extraordinary out-of-pocket expenses relating to their child’s special health care needs*) [www.mass.gov/cicrf](http://www.mass.gov/cicrf)
* **Community Case Management** (*approval for in home nursing for medically fragile children on Mass Health*) 1-800-863-6068
* **SSI** (*Social Security benefits for children with disabilities with limited financial resources)* 1-800-772-1213 [www.ssa.gov/pubs/10026.html](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10026.html)
* **WIC** (*nutrition program that provides free nutrition and health education, healthy food and other services to families who qualify*). To **apply call 1-800-WIC-1007 or the WIC program in your community.**
* **SNAP** (*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)* to help low-income households buy food <http://www.mass.gov/snap>