

Background:

When families or individuals receive a diagnosis related to their hearing status, it can be overwhelming. Families often seek more information and guidance to help them support their child. This identified need was the driving force to create the family friendly resource guide.

Methods:

In Ohio, the MedEd Connections Resource Guide (<https://deafandblindoutreach.org/meded-connections-dhh>) was established to help families build their understanding and connect important medical and education information. During the vetting process, it was recognized that the resource could be helpful for doctors unfamiliar with the EMDI system. This guide was developed in partnership with experts in the field used evidence-based information and leveraged collaborations with the multiple agencies supporting families along their journey. Dissemination of the content is occurring through state support team family engagement specialists, teachers, related service professionals, audiologists, and medical providers and is available to the public.

Results:

The MedEd Connections Resource Guide includes content in the areas of Communication, Special Education supports and Rights and Laws. The content of this poster will focus on the content areas of Preparing for your Doctor Visit, Professional Team Members, Early Intervention, and Language.

Strategies for building meaningful cross-agency collaborations will be discussed.

Conclusions:

The MedEd Connections Resource Guide is a state-guided resource serving as a model for state EMDI programs to ensure accessible information on resources, professionals and service agencies for families. This approach supports families to make informed decisions about what's best for their children.

BACKGROUND

- Developed in partnership with experts in the field and research-based information, the MedEd Connections Resource Guides are a one-stop source for unbiased medical and education information. From addressing common questions to understanding rights and what agencies and services are available to families and their children, these guides put all of the important information together in one place.
- The MedEd Connections Resource Guides are free and available to download online or in print to all.
- These guides offer a variety of information specific to navigating the systems in Ohio, which can support families at any point in their life journey.

This poster describes an evidence-based, collaborative tool to support families from screening to service acquisition in community resources, and state agencies.

- Development of Interagency Collaborations
- Identification of Evidence-Based Information
- Building in Accessibility and Family Priority-Driven Content

The resource guide was designed to be highly accessible as it can be used as both an online resource and a downloadable, printable document that can be given to families in medical, educational, and related service providers. appointments.

There are 15 sections of the on-line guide which include:

After the Hearing Screening	Rights and Laws
Preparing for your Doctor Visit	Literacy
Language, Communication	Assistive Technology and Communication Technology
Early intervention	Assistance Purchasing Hearing Aids
Professional Team Members	Cochlear Implants
Special Education and Specifically Designed Instructions	FM systems
Transition	Obtaining Additional Services
Family Support	Understanding Deaf Culture

The guide includes a glossary of terms used throughout the guide and two tables that display the steps from screening to service and the accompanying agencies in Ohio who provide support at each stage of the journey.

Table 1. Agency Contributors/Collaborators

Agency Contributor/Collaborator	Role in Ohio
The Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness at OCALI	Build community capacity to increase access, communication, and equity for learners who are D/HH or B/VI.
Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children	Provide leadership, assistance and oversight to school districts and other entities that provide differentiated instruction for students with disabilities and gifted students.
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities	Oversee a statewide system of supportive services that focus on health and safety, supporting access to community participation, and increasing opportunities for meaningful employment. This includes Ohio's early intervention system.
Ohio Department of Health	Advance the health and well-being of all Ohioans through unique partnerships. This includes addressing inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disability	Empowers Ohioans with disabilities through employment, disability determinations, and independence.
The Ohio School for the Deaf	Serve a diverse population of deaf/hard of hearing students, families, and communities through educating students in a language rich environment.

Table 2. Steps from Screening to Service: Birth-Age 3

*This is a sample of first two steps. See website for complete table.

Steps	Who	What	State Agency	Parts of the Agency/System
Step 1: Newborn Hearing Screening	Audiologist, hospital nurse, speech language pathologist (SLP), any trained allied medical professional	Infant Hearing Program: Performs required hearing screening for newborns before discharge. A second screening is performed prior to referring for audiological evaluation.	Ohio Department of Health (ODH)	Hospital
Step 2: Follow Up Audiological Evaluation	Audiologist	For newborns who did not pass the second screening, an audiologist performs diagnostic audiological evaluation, to identify whether a hearing loss or deafness is present.	Ohio Department of Health (ODH)	Hospital, clinic, children's hospital, or audiology diagnostic site

Table 3. Steps from Screening to Service: Ages 3-21

*This is a sample of first two steps. See website for complete table.

Steps	Who	What	State Agency	Parts of the Agency/System
Step 1: Screening	Audiologist, school nurse, hospital nurse, or speech language pathologist (SLP)	Performs required school age screening, as mandated by Ohio state law	Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Ohio Department of Education (ODE)	Local school district, hospital, clinic, or doctor's office
Step 2: After Screening If Did Not Pass	Audiologist, school nurse, hospital nurse, or speech language pathologist (SLP)	For children who did not pass the school age screening, the performer of the screening sends a referral to the family, requesting further testing to be done by an audiologist.	Ohio Department of Health (ODH)	Hospital, doctor's office, or audiology diagnostic site

• While resources exist, our agency sought to combine medical and education into one resource AND provide inclusive and unbiased information to empower families in their decisions for their child.

• Because available resources may differ based on where a family works/lives, being aware of multiple choices and perspectives is important. This allows families to consider the unique needs of their child and consider many other factors.

• By having access to valuable information about the resources, professionals, and service agencies available, families can be empowered through knowledge and information to make informed decisions about what is best for their children.

• Families can use knowledge this within the framework of their values and priorities when partnering with educational and medical systems.

• This resource guide includes a companion blind/visually impaired guide which provides information and steps specific to the Ohio systems.

• The printable download version of the guide is an abridged version of the online version.

MedEd Connections Resource Guide: Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Online version: <https://deafandblindoutreach.org/meded-connections-dhh>

Abridged, downloadable version: <https://ims.ocali.io/storage/ocali-ims-sites/ocali-ims-outreach/documents/MedEd-Booklet-DHH-06052020.pdf>

Content Development based on:
Ferrell, K. A., Bruce, S., & Luckner, J. L. (2014). Evidence-based practices for students with sensory impairments (Document No. IC-4). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/>

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), (2018). Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Educational Service Guidelines, 3rd ed. Alexandria, Virginia: Author. Available from: www.nasdse.org

Numerous networks of professionals across Ohio, including family members, teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech language pathologists, parent mentors, interpreters, audiologists, and advisory council members of the Outreach Center (<https://deafblindoutreach.org/about-us/advisory-council>)

Captioned, audio presentation of this poster available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Trk671J-AQ8>