

The Pennsylvania Early Intervention Communication Plan

Tom Wolf, Governor
Pedro Rivera, Secretary of Education | Teresa Miller, Secretary of Human Services

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We have no relevant financial or nonfinancial relationships in the products or services described, reviewed, evaluated or compared in this presentation.

Introduction

- Communication and language are the most urgent concerns for an infant or toddler who is deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind and enrolling in Early Intervention.
- Few parents anticipate a child with a hearing difference and thus may not be prepared or equipped on how to address their child's needs.
- Need for a tool that provides knowledge, options and resources to aid teams in planning so children can reach their maximum potential.

Why a Communication Plan?

- Promote and guide discussion
- Present unbiased information
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- **Demonstrate growth**
- Ensure team on the same page



Joint Committee on Infant Hearing Guidance

- Families should be made aware of all communication options and available hearing technologies (presented in an **unbiased** manner). Informed family choice and desired outcome guide the decision-making process.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2007). *Executive Summary for JCIH Year 2007 Position Statement: Principles and Guidelines for Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Programs*. Available from www.asha.org/policy

How do you begin?

- Listen to the parent concerns/needs. These should be identified early and guide the decisions that are made.
- Utilize the glossary so that parents and team members understand the terminology being used.
- Allow time since the parents are taking in a lot of information and may need time to process/reflect before proceeding.
- Consider whether the Plan will be a stand alone document or if information will be embedded into the child's IFSP/IEP.

Sections of the Communication Plan

- I. Language and Communication Needs
- II. Opportunities for Direct Communication
- III. Progress, Assistive Technology, Devices and Services

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Section I. Language and Communication Needs

1. *The primary language to be checked is the language most frequently used across settings by the child and family. This information should be used by the IFSP/IEP team and may be documented in Section II Child and Family Information (page 3), “Summary of the Child’s Present Performance” and “Summary of Family Information”. These sections provide contextual information to be addressed through the development of outcomes/goals and teaching strategies.*

The child and family’s current primary language is one or more of the following. (Check all that apply).

- American Sign Language (ASL) – A visual language which is totally accessible to children who are deaf.
- Signed Language Other than ASL
- Spoken English
- Spoken Language Other than English _____
- Other _____

Section I. Language and Communication Needs (cont)

2. *Communication options to be checked are those options that are most frequently used and preferred by the family and child to receive communication and express ideas across settings. This may be different for receptive and expressive preferences. This information should inform the team regarding the preferred method for learning and may be documented in the IFSP/IEP in Section II Child and Family Information (page 3), “Summary of the Child’s Present Performance” and “Summary of Family Information”.*

The child and family’s current primary communication option is one or more of the following. (Check all that apply).

Receptive –understanding others

- Sign Language
- Listening
- Cued Speech
- Finger Spelling
- Touch Cues
- Gestures
- Signed Exact English
- Tactile Sign Language
- Object/Picture System
- Speech Reading/Lip Reading
- Other, please explain _____
- Not established yet

Expressive - sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings

- Sign Language
- Spoken Language/Speech
- Cued Speech
- Finger Spelling
- Touch Cues
- Gestures
- Signed Exact English
- Tactile Sign Language
- Object/Picture System
- Other, please explain _____
- Not established yet

Section 1. Language and Communication Needs (cont)

3. *Identify the options used and describe the effectiveness of the communication experienced between the child and family members/caregivers. This should address the preferred communication option of the family and child. If the current options are not effective, the team should consider whether to develop goals during the IFSP/IEP to improve the child's effective communication with family members/caregivers. This information may be included in the IFSP/IEP in Section II and goals documented in Section IV.*

Describe the options used and the effectiveness of the child's language and/or communication with his/her family members/caregivers. _____

Tom V
Pedro 4. *Identify the options used and describe the effectiveness of the communication experienced between the child and his/her peers, if age appropriate. This should address the preferred communication option of the child. If the current option is not effective, the team should consider whether to develop goals during the IFSP/IEP to improve the child's effective communication with peers. This information may be included in the IFSP/IEP in Section II and goals documented in Section IV.*

Describe the options used and the effectiveness of the child's language and/or communication with his/her peers.

5. *For those children who have both visual impairment and a hearing loss (Deaf-Blindness), identify the options used and describe how they provide access to visual and environmental information. This should address the communication option used for intervention/instruction. If the current option is not effective, the team should develop goals to improve communication in order to make visual and environmental information more accessible to the child. This information may be included in the IFSP/IEP in Section II and goals documented in Section IV.*

If the child has both visual impairment and a hearing loss, identify the options used and the effectiveness of communication in providing access to visual and environmental information. _____

Section II, Opportunities for Direct Communication

1. *Identify settings/situations which provide opportunities for direct communication between the child and his or her family/caregivers using the child's preferred language and communication option without the use of an interpreter. If communication is not effective, the team should consider developing goals that promote direct communication with the child and family/caregivers or whether additional supports are needed in order to promote opportunities for direct communication. This information may be included in the IFSP/IEP in Section II, goals documented in Section IV, and additional supports to be provided in Section V.*

Describe the opportunities for direct communication between the child and his or her family/caregivers in the child's language and communication option(s) that are to be addressed in the IFSP/IEP. _____

2. *Identify opportunities for direct communication with friends/peers, other families who have a child who is deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf-Blind, and adult role models who are deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf-Blind. If these opportunities do not currently exist, the team should consider whether to develop goals to improve the child's access to peers, the family's access to other families, and adult role models. This information may be included in the IFSP/IEP in Section II, goals documented in Section IV, and additional supports to be provided in Section V.*

Describe opportunities for direct communication with peers, other families who have a child who is deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf-Blind, and adult role models who are deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf-Blind which are to be addressed in the IFSP/IEP. _____

3. *Identify settings/situations which provide opportunities for direct communication between the child and interventionists/educational staff without the use of an interpreter or transliterator. If communication is not effective, the team should consider developing goals that promote direct communication with the interventionists/educational staff or whether additional supports are needed in order to promote opportunities for direct communication. This information may be included in the IFSP/IEP in Section II, goals documented in Section IV, and additional supports to be provided in Section V.*

Describe the opportunities for direct communication between the child and interventionists/educational staff which are to be addressed in the IFSP/IEP. _____

Section III. Progress, Assistive Tech, Devices and Services

Assistive Technology (AT) can be thought of as any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device (Authority 20 U, S.C 1401(1)). AT devices and/or services can support a child's ability to participate actively in his/her home, child care program, school or other community settings. Examples of AT include FM systems, videophones, and adaptive toys. Examples of AT services are monitoring hearing aids, fm systems, cochlear implants, and instruction in the use of assistive technology devices. This information may be included in the IFSP/IEP in Section V.

1. What language and communication supports are needed for the child to participate and make progress?

- Intervention/Instruction is delivered by a teacher proficient in the language(s) and communication option(s) identified in Part I, questions 1 and 2.
- Intervention/Instruction is delivered through the use of a qualified interpreter and/or intervener (if child is Deaf-Blind)
 - American Sign Language Interpretation
 - Cued Speech Transliteration
 - Deaf-Blind Interpreting (tactile or visual)
 - English Transliteration
 - Intervener for children who are Deaf-Blind
 - Oral Interpreting
 - Other _____

Section III. Progress, Assistive Tech, Devices and Services (cont)

- Assistive devices/services have been considered:
 - Cochlear implant monitoring
 - Communication device
 - FM system
 - FM system monitoring
 - Hearing aid monitoring
 - Sound field system
 - Other _____

2. Describe how the language and communication supports effectively meet the child's needs? _____

Hands & Voices Guide by Your Side of PA

- Provides families with unbiased information on all communication options and a copy of the EI Communication Plan in the initial mailing after a confirmed hearing loss.
- If the family agrees to a home visit from a Parent Guide, the Guide can assist the family with developing a draft EI Communication Plan.
- Serves as a framework for discussion when the family first meets with their Special Instructor – Hearing or Teacher of the Deaf.
- Updated on a regular basis as communication needs change, it is a living document that grows during the child’s enrollment in Early Intervention.

Resources to aid in Communication Plan completion

ASL resources:

<https://www.gallaudet.edu/asl-connect/asl-for-free>

<https://www.mydeafchild.org/#welcome>

Cued Speech and ASL resources:

<https://dcmp.org/>

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Listening & Spoken Language:

<https://www.jtc.org/worldwide-parent-education/>

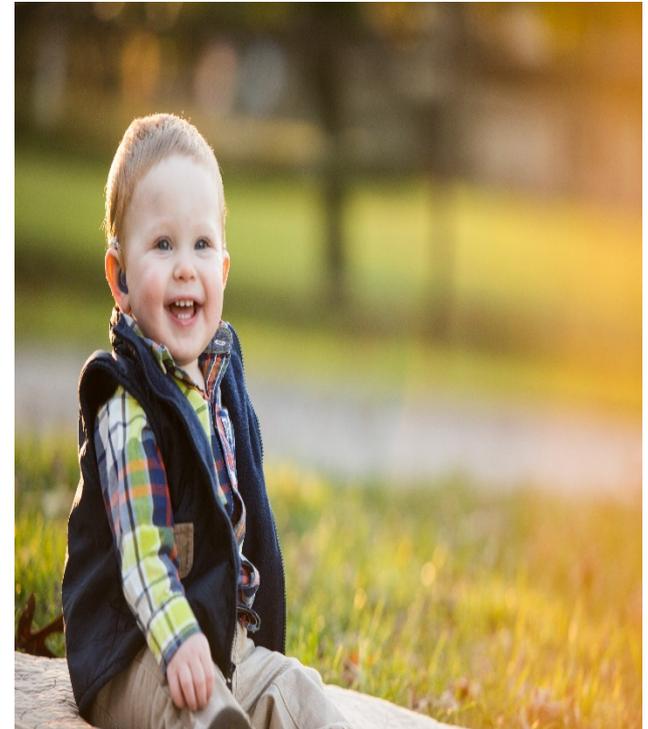
<https://hearingfirst.org/>

PA's Early Intervention Technical Assistance resources:

<http://www.eita-pa.org/low-incidence/>

CDC – Making a Plan for Your Child

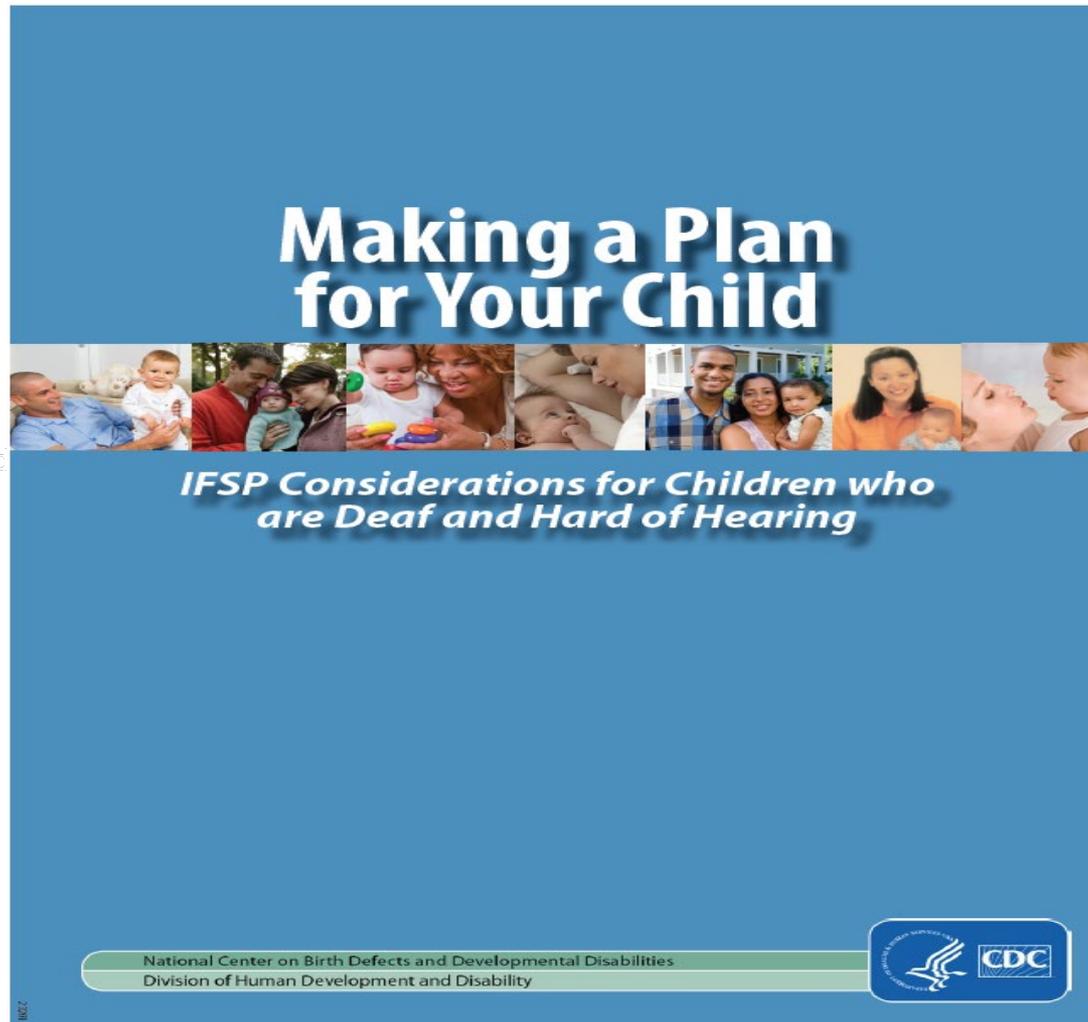
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/freematerials/planforyourchild.pdf>



Usage and Success in PA

- As part of the annual Deaf/Hard of Hearing family satisfaction survey, we recently added the question “In EI, does your child have a Communication Plan in addition to the IFSP/IEP?”
- The percentage of families reporting their child does have a communication plan went from 30% in FY 2016-17 to 58% in FY 2017-18.
- Plans in development to add the Communication Plan to our PELICAN systems database which will ensure it becomes part of the child’s electronic record so it can be accessible to all team members.

Images of the CDC's IFSP Communication Considerations for a Child who is D/HH



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IFSP COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR A CHILD WHO IS DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

The IFSP team should consider each the following areas and provide opportunities, regardless of the child's hearing level, the ability of the parent(s) to communicate, or the child's experience with other communication modes. (Please ask your IFSP team or other resource people to provide information on any of the following terms that are not familiar.)

1. Language and Communication

a. The language(s) we currently use in our home are: *(Check all that apply)*

- Home language (English, American Sign Language (ASL), Spanish etc), Specify _____
- Combination of several languages

Describe:

b. We currently communicate with our child using: *(Check all that apply)*

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Sign Language (ASL) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fingerspelling | <input type="checkbox"/> Signing Exact English/Signed English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual signs (Pidgin Signed English or Conceptually Accurate Signed English) | <input type="checkbox"/> Gestures | <input type="checkbox"/> Speechreading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cued Speech/Cued English | <input type="checkbox"/> Home signs | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactile/Object |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening and spoken language | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Picture symbols/pictures/ photographs | |

c. We are considering or would like more information on the following: *(Check all that apply)*

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Sign Language | <input type="checkbox"/> Gestures | <input type="checkbox"/> Speechreading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual signs (Pidgin Signed English or Conceptually Accurate Signed English) | <input type="checkbox"/> Home signs | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactile/objects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cued Speech/Cued English | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening and Spoken language | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fingerspelling | <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures symbols/pictures/ photographs | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Signing Exact English/Signed English | <i>Action Plan, if any:</i> |

d. Describe the supports that are necessary to increase the ability of parents and family members to become language models

Considerations:

Action Plan, if any:

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2. Assistive technology (AT) is any item that supports a child's ability to participate actively in his or her home, child care program, school, or other community settings. (Some examples are hearing aids, cochlear implants, special FM systems, closed captions, videophones, and adaptive toys.)

a. We are currently using the following assistive technology devices:

b. We are considering or would like more information on the following:

Action Plan, if any:

3. Identify opportunities for direct communication with others who are deaf/hard of hearing. Discuss what supports are needed to: Get adult role model connections for the family and identify opportunities for the child to have direct interaction with other children the same age who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Opportunities considered:

Action Plan, if any

4. Discuss supports the family needs to access the services and resources recommended or developed by the early intervention team. That could include the environment in which these might need to be provided.

Services/Programs considered:

Action Plan, if any:

5. List the qualified service providers on the IFSP team who have expertise, experience, and training in assessing and working with children from birth to 3 years of age who are deaf or hard of hearing. Specifically, indicate those service providers with the expertise, experience, and training in the child's and family's chosen communication option(s), if the family has decided on the option(s). (Make sure the providers have appropriate certification).

Considerations:

Action Plan, if any:

6.a. Identify the community opportunities and activities in which the family would like to participate (for example, playgroups, baby gyms, music programs, and story time at the library).

Considerations:

Action Plan, if any:

b. Discuss resources and supports needed to let the child and family fully participate in these community settings with full communication access (for example: visuals, seating, interpreting, FM systems, sound field, and appropriate group size).

Considerations:

Action Plan, if any:

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Questions



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For more information on the Pennsylvania Early Intervention Communication Plan please visit PDE's website at www.education.pa.gov and the Early Intervention Technical Assistance Online Learning Portal at www.eita-pa.org/low-incidence/deafhard-of-hearing

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) provides families access to high quality services to prepare children for school and life success.