

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING IN GLENN COUNTY SCHOOLS

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October 2015

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MISSION STATEMENT

To provide and implement policies and procedures that will meet the educational needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in a uniform and consistent manner throughout Glenn County in compliance with federal regulations, state laws, and professional standards of practice. Collaboration among all professional education and hearing specialist staff members in providing coordinated, comprehensive services is critical in achieving the greatest success for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Educational decisions may need to be changed over time to reflect the student's emerging strengths, needs, and preferences. Cultural and linguistic diversity are valued and respected.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Glenn County Office of Education provides services to deaf and hard of hearing students from 0-22 years of age, whose hearing losses range from mild to profound. The program offers a continuum of services based on student need and communication preferences. Students are provided access to a full continuum of program, service, and communication options through collaboration between GCOE and other agencies in the region to insure provision of appropriate services. Students are enrolled in a variety of school settings, including general education and special education classrooms, as well as home based settings. Itinerant DHH teachers travel between the various school and home settings providing services for individual students.

DEFINITION OF DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

FEDERAL DEFINITION

The current federal definition for children who are deaf or hard of hearing is defined separately in Public Law 108-446 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004). The federal legislation defines deafness as "a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification." The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (2004) further defines deafness as "a condition that prevents an individual from receiving sound in all or most of its forms. In contrast, a child with a hearing loss can generally respond to auditory stimuli, including speech."

STATE DEFINITION

In California a student is eligible for special education services if he or she "has a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, which impairs the processing of linguistic information through hearing, even with amplification and which adversely affects educational performance. Processing linguistic information includes speech and language reception and speech and language discrimination." (CCR Title 5, Section 3030(a))

The California Education Code (EC) Section 56000.5 states that "It is essential that hard of hearing and deaf children, like all children, have an education in which their unique

communication mode is respected, utilized, and developed to an appropriate level of proficiency. EC Section 56000.5(b)(7) further states that “It is essential that deaf and hard of hearing children have programs in which they have direct and appropriate access to all components of the educational process, including but not limited to, recess, lunch, and extracurricular social and athletic activities.

DEFINITION OF LOW INCIDENCE DISABILITY

“Low incidence disability” means a severe disabling condition with an expected incidence rate of less than 1% of the total statewide enrollment in kindergarten through grade 12. For purposes of this definition, severe disabling conditions are hearing impairments, vision impairments, and severe orthopedic impairments, or any combination thereof (30 EC56026.5.)

DHH SERVICES IN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A. Eligibility for DHH Services

A disability under federal and state special education requirements means that the student meets the eligibility criteria for at least one of the impairments and has a need for special education. A student may meet the eligibility criteria for deaf or hard of hearing, for example, but does not automatically have a need for special education.

In order to establish eligibility as a student who meets the eligibility criteria for Deaf there must be evidence of the following:

- A current audiological evaluation completed by a qualified audiologist, *as well as a determination that*
- the hearing impairment limits the student’s access to language and communication through hearing with or without amplification;
- the hearing impairment adversely affects the development of expressive and/or receptive language and communication;
- the hearing impairment adversely affects the student’s educational performance, and requires special education to meet the student’s needs (EC 3030(a), Title 5, CCR).

In order to establish eligibility as a student who meets the eligibility criteria for Hard of Hearing the following must be in evidence:

- A current audiological evaluation is completed by a qualified audiologist, *as well as a determination that*
- the hearing impairment, without amplification, makes it difficult for the student to access language communication through hearing, but the impairment is not of a level of severity to establish eligibility under the definition of Deafness;
- the hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, adversely affects expressive and/or receptive language and communication;
- the hearing impairment affects the student’s educational performance and requires special education to meet the student’s needs.

In order to receive DHH services, the child must be determined to be an “Individual with Exceptional Needs” as defined by the Education Code and local SELPA guidelines. All the requirements for eligibility for special education must be met. The objective of the Teacher for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing is to have his or her student participate and

function as independently as possible in the in the school and classroom setting. Public schools are not required to provide a service to a child with special needs just because the child will benefit from the service or even if the child requires the service for other than educational reasons. According to CA Ed Code and IDEA 2004, the IEP team is addressing the question, "Are DHH services and instruction necessary for the child to benefit from his/her educational instruction?"

B. Accessing DHH Instruction and Services: Screening and Referral

Students are considered for DHH services if both of the following criteria are met:

1. The student has a mild to profound, permanent or fluctuating, hearing loss in one or both ears that is documented in a current written report from a clinical audiologist.
2. The hearing loss affects the student's educational performance.

Hearing Screening: Hearing Screening is a procedure used to identify children who may require additional assessment to determine whether they have any special needs, including a suspected hearing loss. Information from screening alone may not be used to determine a child's hearing loss, but the results are used as criteria for a referral for more extensive evaluation.

Every newborn infant should be screened for hearing loss before leaving the hospital. Federal law requires that infants found to have a hearing loss be referred to the Early Start Program operated by the regional center or LEA. Infants and toddlers being assessed for eligibility for the Early Start Program must be given a hearing assessment prior to their first IFSP.

GCOE and local school districts conduct mandated hearing screenings to identify individuals with a potential hearing loss. The schools must provide the parents or guardians of children who fail the hearing screening with written notification of the screening results and recommend that further screening or evaluation be obtained, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 1685.

Additional pertinent information to be considered during the screening process include the student's current IEP, current IEP, speech/language and psycho-educational reports, report cards, etc.

Referral: Audiometric screening and re-screening by an audiologist should precede any referral for educational follow-up. A referral for DHH services and instruction should be initiated when a student's hearing loss has been substantiated through his process. Once student eligibility is confirmed via the screening process, a referral for special education is completed and the DHH teacher obtains parent permission for assessment. Following assessment, the DHH teacher compiles a report, and an IEP meeting is held to review the results of the testing, as well as eligibility for special education services and educational placement.

C. Service Delivery Models

The DHH teacher works as a part of a team, and this team may include general education and special education teachers, and the speech therapist. In the educational

setting, the DHH teacher may provide services that include *assessment*, *direct instruction*, and several types of *consultation/ collaboration*. These intervention activities are not mutually exclusive and may occur at the same time. It is important to remember that DHH services are dictated by the current and ongoing needs of the student and should be flexible, using various options across the continuum of service delivery.

Assessment: Deaf and hard of hearing students will receive an assessment of their unique needs when initially identified and at least every three years after entering a special education program. The assessment is conducted by assessment personnel who understand the unique nature of hearing loss and are specifically trained to work with deaf and hard of hearing students. The goal of the assessment is to gather valid information about the child's present level of functioning in the school and/or home setting, in order to construct an educational plan to meet the needs of the child. In assessing and identifying the unique needs of children with a hearing loss, attention must be given to the etiology of hearing loss, age and onset of diagnosis, type and severity of hearing loss, and educational and family health history. Parental involvement during the assessment process is crucial in obtaining both the quantity and quality of information required to make the best education and communication decisions for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The assessment of deaf and hard of hearing students is conducted by assessment personnel who understand the unique nature of hearing loss and are specifically trained to work with deaf and hard of hearing students.

Technical Assistance: The DHH Teacher requests and manages specialized low incidence equipment, such as FM and amplification systems. Responsibilities may include teaching students to use and care for hearing aids, cochlear implants, and FM systems, and monitoring the management and effectiveness of audiological equipment, including equipment maintenance and troubleshooting of hearing aids and FM systems.

Direct Instruction: The DHH Teacher provides direct instruction, services, and supports for the student in both the home and classroom settings, as appropriate, in or to address hearing issues that are: 1) identified through the assessment process, 2) adversely affect educational performance, 3) are required to meet educational goals and 4) are based on program objectives developed by the multidisciplinary team.

Direct instructional services may be delivered individually, in a "pull out" or "push in" model or may be done in small groups with other students with similar needs and goals. Direct services are provided for those students whose needs can not be met by collaboration/ consultation with the DHH specialist and class staff. The continuum of placement options include regular education programs, special education programs (mild/moderate/severe), designated instruction and services, special classes, nonpublic, nonsectarian schools services, state special schools, itinerant instruction, instruction using telecommunication, and instruction in the home or hospital, pursuant to California Education Code 56360.

Consultation/Collaboration: These services include the collaboration among the DHH Specialist, other specialists and therapists, educational staff, parents and/or child to plan and implement modifications and interventions, to meet the child's needs. It can also include monitoring or periodic rechecking of the child's progress. Consultation services have proven as equally effective as direct services for some students as the interventions are: 1) set in natural environments, 2) embedded in class routines, 3) use functional life skills to increase the efficacy of intervention, and 4) increase the student's

motivation to participate and achieve their IEP goals. Consultation services also increase the opportunities for collaboration and skill building among team members along with practice opportunities for the child. The nature of the consultation should be defined on the comments page of the IEP. All consultation should have a written report delineating what the consultation encompassed and the results.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEACHER FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

DHH Teachers are credentialed by the state, with graduate level specialization in deaf and hard of hearing education. All of the teachers meet federal No Child Left Behind proficiency standards and are authorized to serve students who are English language learners.

In Glenn County, DHH services are provided through an itinerant model of service delivery, meaning that the itinerant DHH teacher travels to any number of school sites providing instruction and consultation for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing has training and expertise which ranges from audiological implications, academic support, and language acquisition to social and emotional development. The goal of the teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing is to promote inclusive practice by:

- Providing specialist support options to enable children with hearing loss equity of access to the curriculum. Training and in service support to educate staff on use of FM systems;
- Promoting language development by providing a range of communication modes and strategies;
- Working in collaboration with students, staff, and families;
- Ensuring ongoing evaluation of student progress and offering relevant information to enable informed choices;
- Creating positive attitudes towards individuals with hearing loss within the school
- Supporting communication and linguistic development through spoken language and/or sign language;
- Assessing audiological implications related to speech and language development
- Providing specialist knowledge relative to the distinctive range of learning needs of each individual child;
- Developing appropriate IEP goals related to skill deficits which have occurred as a result of the student's hearing loss;
- Providing specialized instruction related directly to the areas of need identified by present level of academic and functional performance; and
- Promoting a proactive partnership with the student to develop their self-esteem and encourage positive attitudes toward learning.

EXIT CRITERIA FOR DHH SERVICES

Any or a combination of the following criteria may justify the dismissal of DHH services:

1. Strategies can be effectively implemented by current educational team and no longer require the training and expertise of the DHH teacher. The student has learned appropriate strategies to compensate for deficits. Equipment and environmental modifications are in place and are effective.

2. Formal reassessment indicates the child no longer requires the previous level of service and IEP team concurs. The student continues to make progress in the areas being addressed by the DHH services that is consistent with developmental progress in other educational areas.

Appendix A: GLOSSARY of TERMS

Hard of Hearing: A hearing loss, whether permanent or fluctuating, which adversely affects an individual's ability to detect and decipher some sounds. The term is preferred over "heating impaired" by the deaf and hard of hearing community and refers to individuals who have hearing loss, but also have and use residual hearing.

Hearing Loss: The following is a list of some of the terms used to describe a hearing loss:

Symmetrical vs Asymmetrical: Symmetrical hearing loss means that the degree and configuration of hearing loss are the same in each ear. An asymmetrical hearing loss is one in which the degree and/or configuration of the loss is different in each ear.

Bilateral: When the hearing loss is present in both ears

Progressive: When the hearing loss has become worse over time

Fluctuating vs Stable: Some hearing losses change, sometimes getting better and sometimes worse. Such change commonly occurs in children who have hearing loss as a result of fluid in the middle ear.

Sudden: An acute or rapid onset of hearing loss

Unilateral: When the hearing loss is present in just one ear

Mixed Hearing Loss: A hearing loss with combined sensorineural and conductive elements caused by a combination of damage or obstruction in the outer/middle ear and the inner ear/auditory nerve.

Prelingual Deafness: Hearing loss acquired before learning a first language.

Postlingual Deafness: Hearing loss acquired after learning a first language.

Sensorineural Hearing Loss: A type of hearing loss stemming from damage within the cochlea (sensory) and adjacent parts of the auditory nerve (neural). Typically, a sensorineural hearing loss is permanent and cannot be reduced or eliminated by medical or surgical intervention. The extent of damage to these fine structures impacts not only the individual's hearing acuity (ability to detect sounds) but the clarity of sound.

Appendix B: PROTOCOL FOR REFERRAL for DHH Services

Step 1. School or Parent Requests Screening

School personnel or parents may request a screening packet that, once completed, will help DHH program staff determine student eligibility for referral. Program staff determine student eligibility for referral. School personnel include the following:

Program Specialist	Special Education Teacher	General Education Teacher
School Psychologist	D.I.S. Professional Staff	Calif. Department of Ed.
School Nurse	Parent	

Step 2. Documentation and Review by DHH teacher

- 1. Documentation is submitted by school and reviewed by DHH teacher to determine student eligibility for referral for special education. DHH teacher reviews medical and other pertinent records and current audiological report.**
- 2. SST, IFSP or IEP is held to review findings and determine need for additional assessment.**
- 3. Student receives DHH assessment if appropriate**
- 4. IFSP or IEP meeting is scheduled to review assessment results and determine appropriate level of DHH services, if any, in order to support the student's current educational placement.**

Step 3. IEP/ IFSP is Held

- 1. IEP or IFSP meeting is held to determine eligibility for Early Start Program or educationally necessary DHH instruction and support services K-12.**
- 2. Options are discussed and a decision is made about program placement and services, in consideration of least restrictive environment and educational benefit. These options may include but are not limited to a general education classroom, special education classroom, state special school, or DHH programs on public school campuses in adjacent counties.**

Appendix C: STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCES

**California Department of Education
State Special Schools and Services Division
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit
1430 N Street
Sacramento, California
(916) 445-4550
(916) 327-3868**

**California Department of Social Services
Office of Deaf Access
744 P Street, MS 8-16-91
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-8320 (Voice)
(916) 653-7651 (TTY)
(916) 653-4001 (Fax)
Website: www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/PG145.htm
E-mail: deaf.access@dss.ca.gov**

**California School for the Deaf
39350 Gallaudet Drive
Fremont, California 94538
510-344-6044**