



HANDS &
VOICES™



ADVOCACY
SUPPORT &
TRAINING

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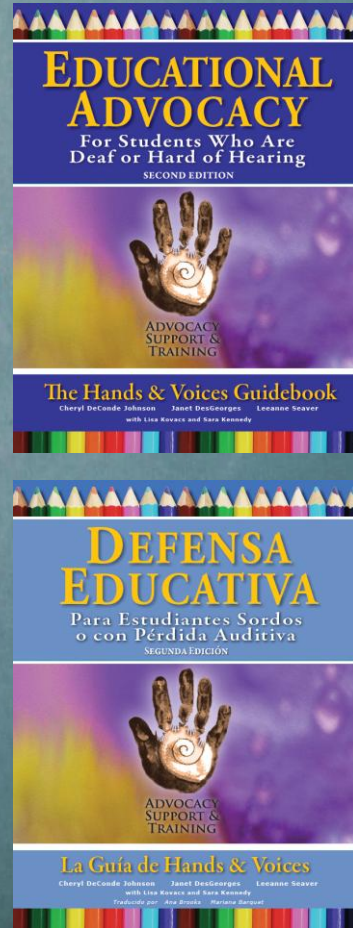


Powering EI (Early Intervention) so Children can Thrive

July 15th, 2025

Lisa Kovacs – H&V HQ Director of Programs /Parent

Carrie Balian – IL H&V GBYS Coordinator, H&V HQ GBYS Lead/Parent



Advocacy Support & Training Webinar Series

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Recognize common challenges and emotional responses families may experience when introduced to Early Intervention (EI) services for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
2. Examine reasons why some families may decline EI services and discuss strategies for addressing these concerns.
3. Apply evidence-based recommendations and principles to effectively communicate the value of EI and support families in making informed decisions that promote their child's development.
4. Identify Hands & Voices resources that will promote families' enrollment into EI.

Lived Experience – It's Real



Why Do Some Families Decline EI Services or are Loss to Follow-up?

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Where they are in acceptance (denial/grief, questioning impact)
- Competing family priorities
- Time (not enough time)
- Not understanding how EI can help
- Conflicting information
- Feeling like they don't need support; they have it under control
- D/HH Plus, complex medical needs
- Worried about being judged
- Language barriers/not wanting EI services through interpreters
- UHL minimizing 'need' by professionals



Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) Early Intervention (EI) Goals:

*goal area

Goal 1 Timely and coordinated entry into EI programs

Goal 2 Timely access to Service Coordinators who have specialized knowledge and skills

Goal 3 EI providers who have professional qualifications, core knowledge and skills

Goal 4 Children with additional disabilities

Goal 5 Families from culturally diverse backgrounds and/or from non-English speaking homes

Goal 6 All children should have their progress monitored every 6 months

Goal 7 Monitoring for children who are identified with hearing loss of any degree

Goal 8 Families will be active participants at the state/territory and local levels

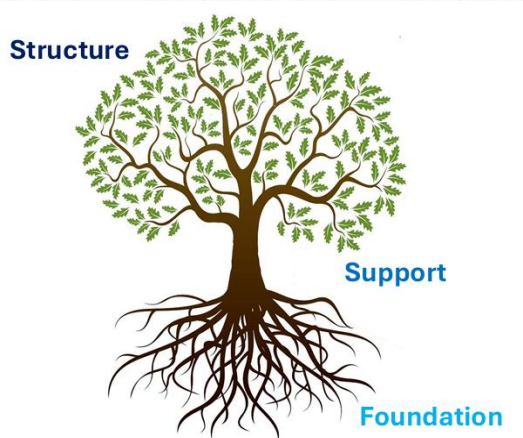
Goal 9 Access to other families who have children who are D/HH

Goal 10 Individuals who are D/HH will be active participants in the development and implementation of EHDI systems

Goal 11 Support, mentorship, and guidance from individuals who are DHH

Goal 12 Best practices are applied in the implementation of the intervention children and families receive

Link: [2013 JCIH EI Recommendations](#)



The Family Centered Early Intervention (FCEI) Principles

User-Friendly Guide



Special thanks to this incredible group who developed this user friendly-guide: James Anderson-Pole, Julia Carneiro, Gwen Carr, Janet DesGeorges, Elaine Gale, Daniel Holzinger, Josip Ladic, Trudy Smith, and Amy Szarkowski.

Foundation

Support

Structure

Principle 1:

Early intervention following identification

Principle 2:

Family-EI Provider relationships

Principle 3:

Family support

Principle 4:

Child well-being

Principle 5:

Language and communication

Principle 6:

Family decisions

Principle 7:

Trained FCEI-DHH Providers

Principle 8:

Teamwork among professionals

Principle 9:

Developmental assessment

Principle 10:

Progress monitoring

Say YES to EI

Downloadable Resource : In English and Spanish

8 Reasons to say YES to Early Intervention for your child who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing(D/HH) ...What are you waiting for?



1. *Early Intervention is worth the time

Early Intervention (EI) will help you incorporate language development and needed supports for your child into your daily routines. Research shows early involvement can help your child avoid language delays. Starting EI now will help you and your child on the path to future success.

2. We are in this together

Feeling overwhelmed or isolated? Professionals and other parents of D/HH kids can share this journey with you and support you. A whole community is ready to embrace you. Hearing other families' experiences can help you think ahead through your own journey.



3. Early Involvement will help your other family members

As you understand your own child's needs through EI, your child's siblings, extended family, friends and neighbors can learn to better communicate with and include your child. If your circle of support is small, EI helps build a larger circle to surround your family.



4. There is more to this than just 'google it'

With a seemingly endless world of resources, articles, videos, online support, podcasts, and more, where is the wisdom? A personal connection to EI providers can help you process the information available at your fingertips with what you know and can try with your own child.

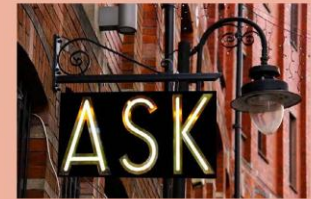


5. Facing your fears will bring freedom

You may feel like you don't know anything about what being D/HH might mean for your child. You may not see your family as part of this world. A "new normal" can be a life of joy, and better than imagined.

6. You will ask better questions

You don't know what you don't know. Having support through EI helps you learn important questions to ask and how to find answers in what works for your child. You will be able to answer the questions most pressing to your child's needs.



7. You can do this in the context of your own family's values

You can adapt services to be in line with your family's values and goals for your child's future, provided in your language and cultural context. A system is in place to ensure that EI providers and programs are a match to your family and child's needs.

8. You will gain confidence that you are your child's best advocate

You will become your child's best advocate in the school years by learning about deafness, language and development through EI. Your advocacy will light the path for your child's success.



*Early Intervention is the term used to describe the services and supports that are available to babies and young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families.





1. Early Intervention is Worth the Time



Early Intervention (EI) will help you incorporate language development and needed supports for your child into your daily routines. Research shows early involvement can help your child avoid language delays. Starting EI now will help you and your child on the path to future success.

FCEI EI DHH Principle

1. Early intervention following identification

Principle: Early identification that an infant or child is DHH should be linked to provision of **early, timely, and equitable** access to supports and interventions as soon as possible in the child's life.



Inviting a New Family to Consider Early Intervention

A script is only a guideline for the art of building a relationship with a family. This script was created to help discussion about concerns that family members may have about EI so that the parent leader can address using principles of Motivational Interviewing.

Introduction:

Goal: Beginning a Relationship

I am so glad we are connecting today. Like you, I am a parent of a child who has hearing loss. My aim is support and information that could benefit your child and family called early intervention services.

Prompting Question:

Goal: Get Perspectives with Empathy

How have things been since you learned about your child's hearing loss? What thoughts or concerns do you have about what lies ahead for your child or family?

Your Possible Responses: (Affirm Parent's Strengths/Highlight Benefits/Address Concerns)

- I hear you saying that you're concerned about (use parent's wording, e.g. enrolling your child in a special education program, having people visit the home, etc.)
- Early Intervention is designed specifically to foster the development of babies and toddlers. These services are given by specialists in childhood hearing loss and language development and can make a big difference in your family's well-being and your child's life. You will learn about their hearing difference and how to help them. Connecting with other families and adults who have navigated similar experiences can be invaluable support. You will learn strategies to help develop language and communication, even their skills and building early reading skills. Your child will learn the most language in these early years.
- You are an important member of the team that creates an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for your child. The plan focuses on a full assessment of needs, and crucial aspects like developing communication, language, social interaction, and essential thinking skills crucial to their growth, along with any family goals (funding, instruction, community connections, for example). As your child nears age 3, the intervention team will assist you in transitioning out of the program and into school age services. They update the evaluations to better inform the school if preschool is an option. A plan called an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan can support your child in preschool and beyond. (School may seem distant, but time does fly.) If your child has additional needs, they can support these, too.
- Studies show that children in early intervention before six months have the highest language outcomes.

Prompting Question:

Goal: Explore Any Doubts - Family Support Matters:

I can understand that services might bring up mixed feelings. Remember, your involvement as a family member is immensely helpful. You will be helping your child practice what they learn and make progress even faster. You play an important role in helping the team know what is working and what is not. You can update the plan anytime. The plan is formally updated every six months to keep your baby's progress going forward.

What are your hopes for your child's development? What are you thinking about enrolling?

Inviting a New Family to Consider EI

Resource for supporting new families that includes a working script based on principles of motivational interviewing in a discussion about early intervention. The guidance focuses on listening/empathy and uncovering any concerns about entering early intervention and taking timely action.

[Inviting a New Family to Consider Early Intervention](#)



2. We are in This Together



*Feeling overwhelmed or isolated?
Professionals and other parents of
D/HH kids can share this
journey with you and support you.
A whole community is ready to
embrace you. Hearing other
families' experiences can help you
think ahead through your own
journey.*

FCEI EI DHH Principle

2. Family-Early Intervention Provider relationships

Principle: Family-early intervention (EI) provider partnerships are important for empowering families to support their child and improving EI Providers' ability to assist families effectively. In FCEI-DHH, EI Providers aim to collaborate with families, where both sides bring knowledge and expertise.

3. Family support

Principle: Family support is essential to families with DHH children. It is important to recognize their strengths, concerns, and needs. Every family is different, so support should be adjusted to fit each family's situation. This support includes both formal help and informal connections that offer guidance and encouragement.

Families are not alone!

Hands & Voices can connect families with a chapter where they live and/or another family support organization.

[Contact Us](#)
[Find Your Family-Based Organization](#)





3. Early Involvement Will Help Your Other Family Members



As you understand your own child's needs through EI, your child's siblings, extended family, friends and neighbors can learn to better communicate with and include your child . If your circle of support is small, EI helps build a larger circle to surround your family.

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[View all PEP Materials](#)



4. There is More to This Than Just 'google it'

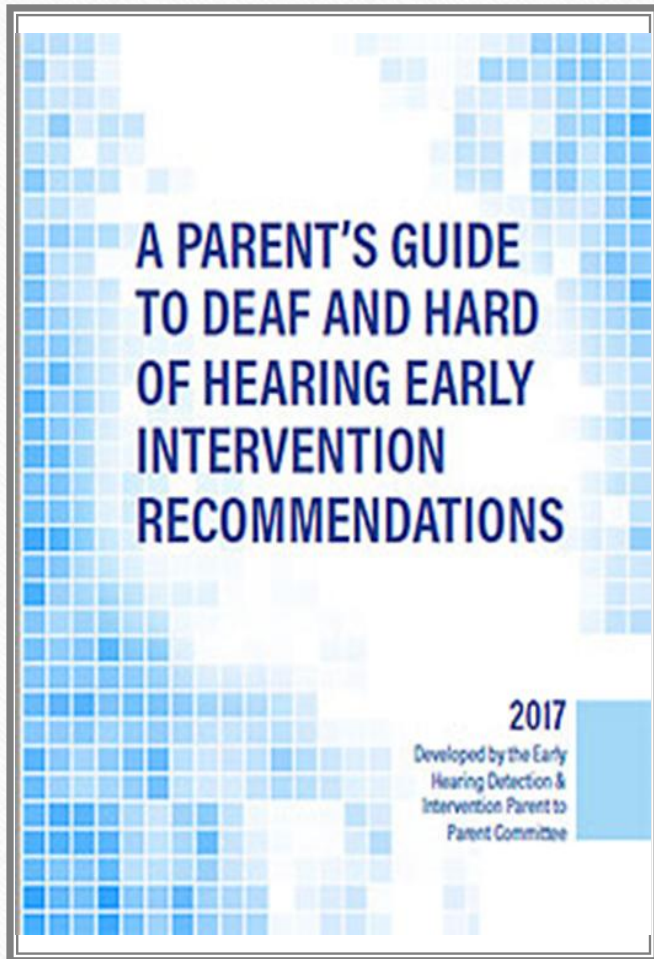


With a seemingly endless world of resources, articles, videos, online support, podcasts, and more, where is the wisdom? A personal connection to EI providers can help you process the information available at your fingertips with what you know and can try with your own child.

FCEI EI DHH Principle

7. Trained FCEI-DHH Providers

Principle: EI Providers need to have certain qualities so they can connect with and build relationships with families and other providers. They also need competency in their own area of expertise, in general early intervention, and when providing specific support to children who are DHH. Trained EI Providers offer effective, professional, equitable, and inclusive FCEI-DHH supports to promote children and family outcomes.



[Link to Guide](#)

The Guide Includes:

- **Goal:** Original statement of the goal as it appears in the JCIH Supplement
- **What this means to me:** Brief outline of what the goal means to families
- **Things to think about:** Ideas about what families have a right to expect in Early Intervention



5. Facing Your Fears Will Bring Freedom

FCEI EI DHH Principle

You may feel like you don't know anything about what being D/HH might mean for your child. You may not see your family as part of this world. A “new normal” can be a life of joy, and better than imagined.

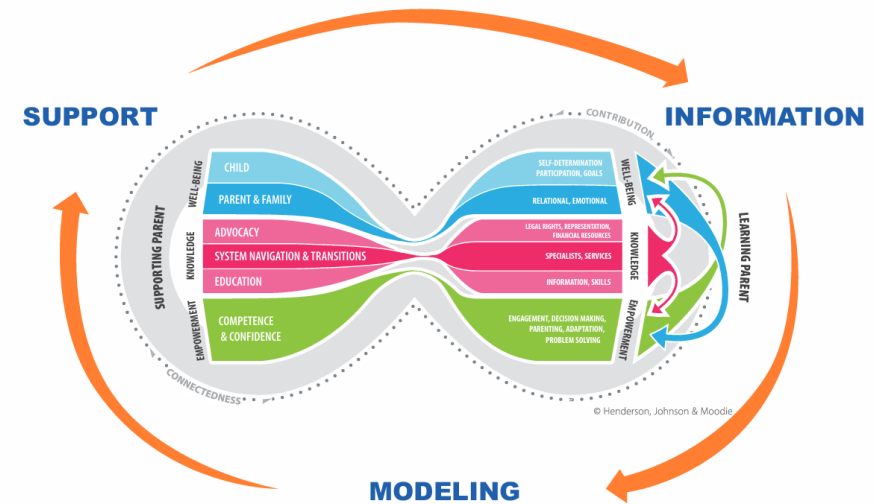
4. Child well-being

Principle: Child well-being can be accomplished when early intervention focuses on the whole child: Infant/child development, positive social-emotional functioning, child welfare, and safeguarding.

Family Support Activities Guide

[Link to Guide](#)

HANDS & VOICES FAMILY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES GUIDE



A guide that includes family support activities developed from an evidence-based parent-to-parent support framework for families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.



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Fostering Joy



Fostering Joy Journal	Fostering Joy Journal
<p><i>When it rains, look for rainbows. When it's dark, look for stars.</i> ~Betsy Jarrell</p> 	<p>How did I experience joy recently?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p></p> <p>I am grateful for:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>How is joy different from happiness?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

Fostering Joy



THE JOYS OF RAISING DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN Family Tip Sheet



TIPS

Fostering Joy is a family/professional effort celebrating the joy of raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH). Fostering Joy provides resources for families and professionals to support the growth and development of a child who is D/HH.

Loving and supportive families provide a strong base for social and emotional health and well-being. Focusing on special moments that bring joy helps families put aside concerns and focus on their natural and loving parent-child connections.

Taking short breaks from the stresses of everyday life helps families explore and appreciate the joyful moments that come with raising their children. Here are a few tips, offered by families, for finding joy everyday - taking time to celebrate milestones, connecting with your children, and letting the lights of their love shine through.

- Find something to be grateful for everyday.
- Carve out a few minutes each day to breathe deeply, enjoy a laugh, and snuggle closely with your child.
- See the world through your child's eyes - notice the wonder, excitement, and love!
- Share something with your child that made you smile, felt like a success, and renewed your hope.
- Seek balance and refreshment: take a walk together in nature, do "baby yoga", or read a fun book together.
- Connect an appointment or therapy session with a treat or adventure.
- Trust that making space to foster joy will lead to increased learning and deeper connections for you and your child.
- Document your family's journey together through pictures, video, social media, or journaling. (A few short sentences will do!)
- Take time regularly to revisit your child's and family's history and reflect on just how far you've come.
- Set aside your "to do" list and do something you love with your child - take a walk, blow bubbles, cook together, play peek-a-boo, dance.
- **Appreciate yourself and all you are doing to support and advocate for your child!**



6. You Will Ask Better Questions

You don't know what you don't know. Having support through EI helps you learn important questions to ask and how to find answers in what works for your child. You will be able to answer the questions most pressing to your child's needs.

FCEI EI DHH Principle

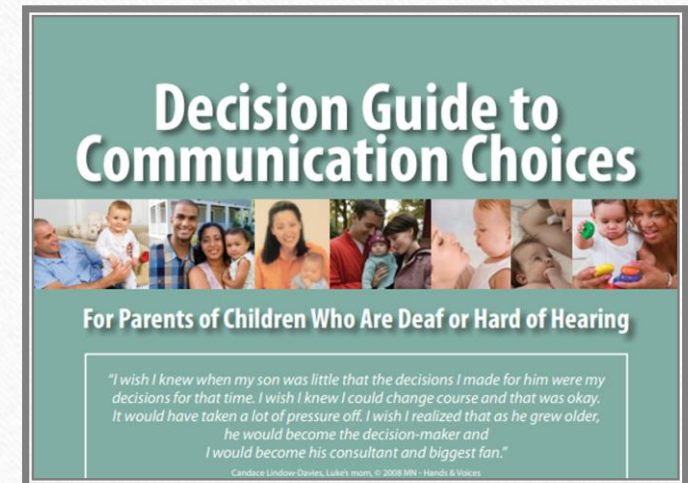
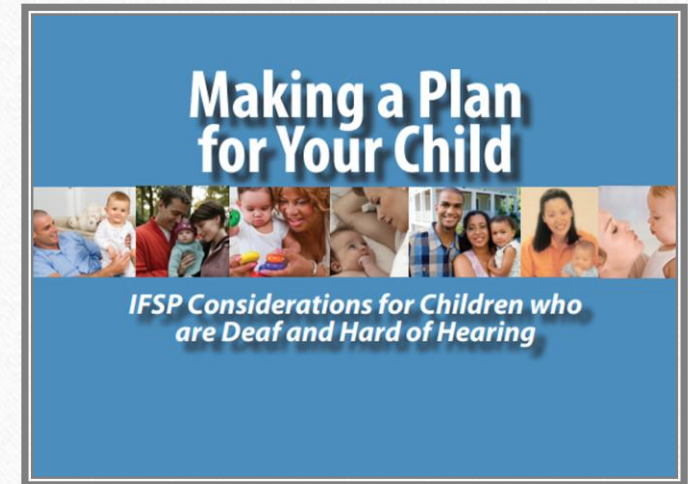
6. Family decisions

Principle: Families have different structures and relationships. It is important to understand the family structure in order to involve the most appropriate family members in the intervention process. FCEI-DHH provides support, information, and experiences that strengthen families to make competent decisions for themselves and their children.

CDC Communication Decision Making Guide/Making Plan for Your Child

[Making Plan for Your Child.pdf](#)

[Decision Guide](#)





7. You Can Do This In The Context of Your Own Family's Values

FCEI EI DHH Principle

You can adapt services to be in line with your family's values and goals for your child's future, provided in your language and cultural context. A system is in place to ensure that EI providers and programs are a match to your family and child's needs.

5. Language and communication

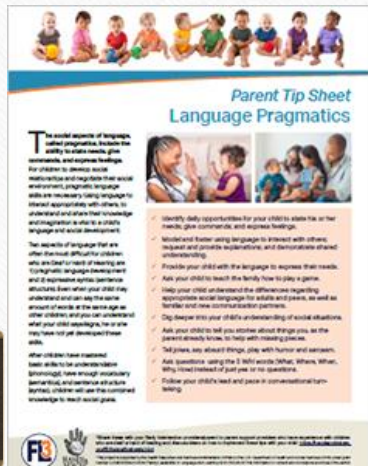
Principle: Families should be supported to promote their children's language and communication development in natural, daily interactions. Early access to language, whether signed, spoken, or combined, is important.

8. Teamwork among professionals

Principle: Teamwork among professionals is important in FCEI-DHH services. Teams consist of various skilled EI Providers and other experts who collaborate to support positive outcomes for children and families.

Language and Literacy Resources for Families

<https://handsandvoices.org/fl3/topics/tipsheets.html>



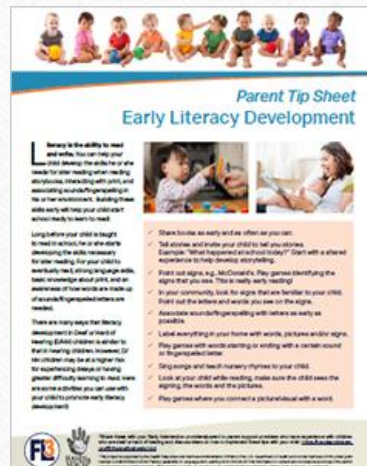
Parent Tip Sheet
Language Pragmatics

The social aspects of language, known as pragmatics, involve the skills to use language in social contexts and to understand the intentions of others. For children to develop these skills, they need to learn how to use language in different ways. This tip sheet provides parents with strategies to help their children develop these skills.

Key points to remember:

- Identify the opportunities for your child to learn the social rules of language.
- Model the use of language in different contexts.
- Encourage your child to use language to express their needs and wants.
- Help your child understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate language use.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand the social rules of language.

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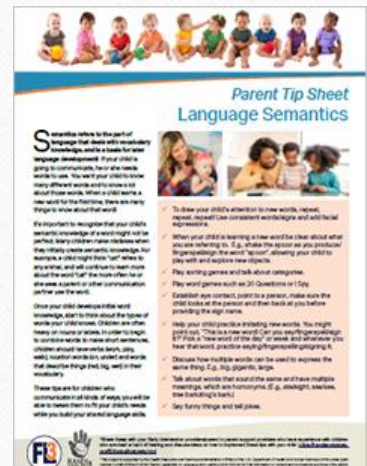
Parent Tip Sheet
Early Literacy Development

Literacy is the ability to read and write. For children, literacy is the foundation for learning and communication. This tip sheet provides parents with strategies to help their children develop early literacy skills.

Key points to remember:

- Expose your child to a variety of books and reading materials.
- Read to your child every day.
- Encourage your child to write their own words.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand the meaning of words.

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Parent Tip Sheet
Language Semantics

Semantics refers to the meaning of words and sentences. For children to develop these skills, they need to learn how to use words and sentences to convey meaning. This tip sheet provides parents with strategies to help their children develop these skills.

Key points to remember:

- Use words and sentences to describe the world around you.
- Encourage your child to use words and sentences to describe their own experiences.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand the meaning of words.

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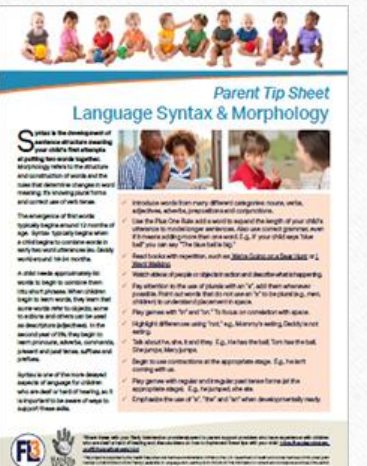
Parent Tip Sheet
Language Phonology

Phonology refers to the organization of sounds in language. For children to develop these skills, they need to learn how to use sounds to form words and sentences. This tip sheet provides parents with strategies to help their children develop these skills.

Key points to remember:

- Use words and sentences to describe the world around you.
- Encourage your child to use words and sentences to describe their own experiences.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand the meaning of words.

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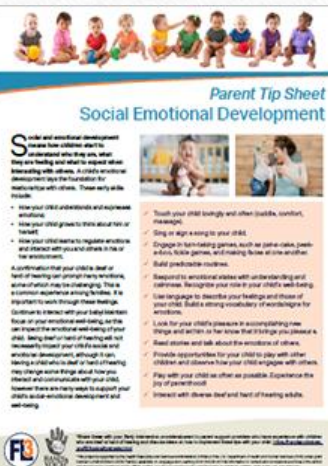
Parent Tip Sheet
Language Syntax & Morphology

Syntax refers to the development of sentence structure. For children to develop these skills, they need to learn how to use words and sentences to form a complete thought. This tip sheet provides parents with strategies to help their children develop these skills.

Key points to remember:

- Use words and sentences to describe the world around you.
- Encourage your child to use words and sentences to describe their own experiences.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand the meaning of words.

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Parent Tip Sheet
Social Emotional Development

Social and emotional development refers to the skills that children need to interact with others. For children to develop these skills, they need to learn how to use language to express their feelings and needs. This tip sheet provides parents with strategies to help their children develop these skills.

Key points to remember:

- Use words and sentences to describe the world around you.
- Encourage your child to use words and sentences to describe their own experiences.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand the meaning of words.

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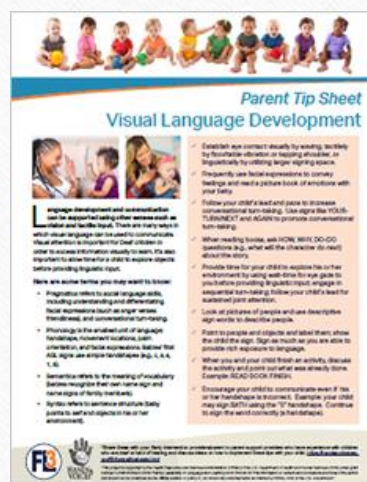
Parent Tip Sheet
Cognitive Development

Cognitive development refers to the skills that children need to think and learn. For children to develop these skills, they need to learn how to use language to express their thoughts and ideas. This tip sheet provides parents with strategies to help their children develop these skills.

Key points to remember:

- Use words and sentences to describe the world around you.
- Encourage your child to use words and sentences to describe their own experiences.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand the meaning of words.

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Parent Tip Sheet
Visual Language Development

Visual language development refers to the skills that children need to use language to describe the world around them. For children to develop these skills, they need to learn how to use language to express their thoughts and ideas. This tip sheet provides parents with strategies to help their children develop these skills.

Key points to remember:

- Use words and sentences to describe the world around you.
- Encourage your child to use words and sentences to describe their own experiences.
- Use visual supports to help your child understand the meaning of words.

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Family Activity Plan
Language, Literacy and Social Emotional Skills

Skill Set: What to teach and how to teach it.

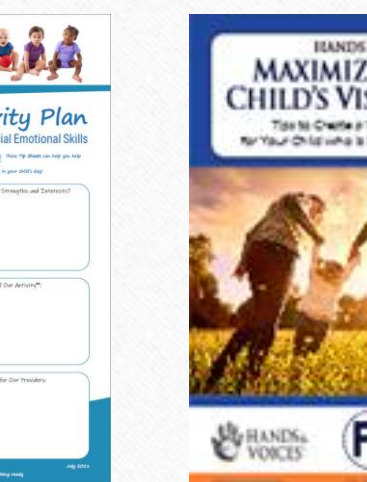
- Early Literacy
- Visual Language
- Pragmatics
- Syntax and Morphology
- Semantics

What are my child's strengths and interests?

Timing of our activity:


What does our child need to learn?

Questions for our children:



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MAXIMIZING YOUR CHILD'S VISUAL ACCESS
This is Visual Access: A Visual Access Kit for Your Child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

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DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES



FAMILY LEADERSHIP IN LANGUAGE & LEARNING (FL3)

FL3

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303-442-6263



8. You Will Gain Confidence That You Are Your Child's Best Advocate



You will become your child's best advocate in the school years by learning about deafness, language and development through EI. Your advocacy will light the path for your child's success.

FCEI EI DHH Principle

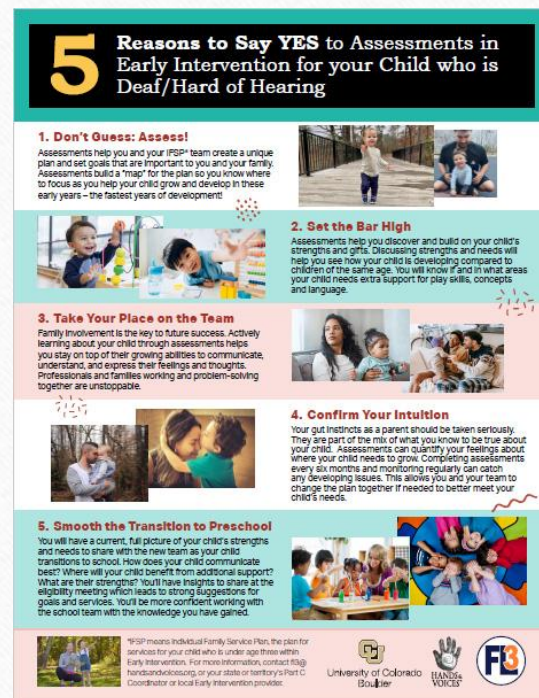
9. Developmental assessment

Principle: Meaningful continuous assessment for children and their families is important in FCEI-DHH. Professionals need skills to do assessments, manage language(s), and interpret results for planning interventions.

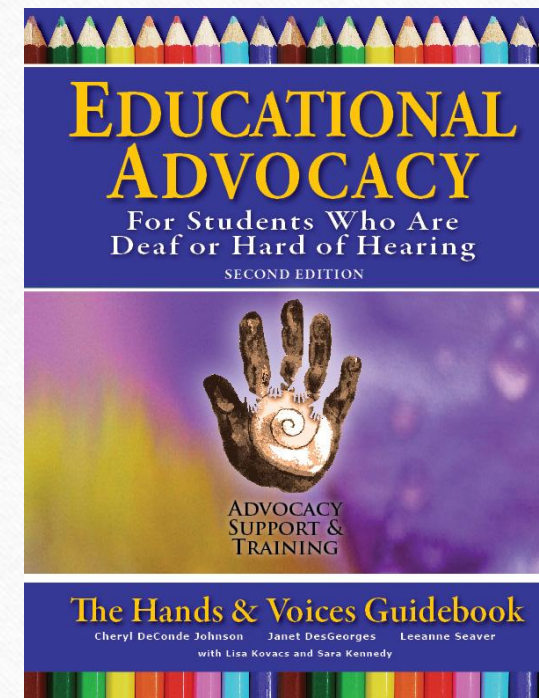
10. Progress monitoring

Principle: Progress monitoring is an important part of making sure the support provided to families is effective across families and across FCEI-DHH programs / services and systems.

Say YES to assessments/ ASTra Educational Advocacy Guidebook



Infographic in English and Spanish



Guidebook



Off to a
Great Start!



Explore resources and activities to support the early intervention journey for families of children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing through this virtual, interactive website.



**Interactive webpage
created for EHDI Programs
and Family Based
Organizations:**

**Dissemination
considerations:**

Websites

Social Media

Who:

EHDI Programs

EI Providers

Family-based Organizations

Families

Other Stakeholders

Getting Families to...

- Learn from those who say “no”: exit interview
- Share what has worked with other families
- Connect families to parent-to-parent support
- Provide parent-created resources
- Create a personal ‘connection’ with EI providers who work with families
- Ask families ‘what do you need?’ not ‘here’s what you need’
- Circle back to families who initially decline
- Contact families through multiple means: text communication has become more acceptable/successful
- Reinforce the benefits of EI



Yes YOU!

Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Need ALL of Us!

Families – We are here for you!

1

Find a H&V Chapter
or Family-based Org

2

Find the Early
Hearing Detection &
Intervention Program

3

Find the Part C
Program

4

Don't forget
Hands & Voices –
Off to a Great Start



Your Turn...
Please type your
questions in the Q&A
box

Thank you!



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ASTraWebinar9>

The slide deck and recording of this webinar will be made available soon and found:

<https://handsandvoices.org/astra/webinars/>