

Safety Attachment For Student who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing(D/HH), D/HH+, or Deaf-Blind

The IFSP/IEP/504 team has considered a child's safety within the home/academic/community settings in compliance with FAPE. Research shows that students who are D/HH, D/HH+ or Deaf-Blind experience three-four times higher risks of maltreatment. Addressing the development of protective factors can decrease the child's risk for abuse/neglect. For each aspect below, consideration should be given for goals, services, accommodations/modifications, or staff training to further develop family or child protective factors. The educational team understands that the purpose of special education is: *"to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living."* Services and goals directed at improving a student's personal safety sets a critical foundation student learning and wellbeing.

1. Knowledge of Protective Factors for Parents: Parent Counseling and Training (34 CFR § 300.34(c)(8), 34 CFR § 303.344 Content of the IFSP

- Can I describe how I can foster my child's ongoing development through positive relationships and appropriate language exposure?
- Can I describe how to establish a circle of trust with my child's caregivers, family and friends who have individual contact?
- Do all educators/providers have background checks? Training on protective factors, prevention strategies, and to recognize and report signs of maltreatment? Do I have an understanding how to promote safety skills through proactive language/communication skills (ability to describe situations/feelings, retell, telling a trusted adult appropriate to age and developmental level?)
- Do I understand the concepts of "grooming," open door policies, and the specific risk factors for my child?

Examples:

- a) *The child indicates a clear nonverbal, signed or spoken "no" to uncomfortable interaction followed by an appropriate parent or caregiver response to that "no." including an explanation when interaction is necessary for health or safety of child (e.g., medical visits, hygiene.)*
- b) *Parents interview childcare and can orient to child's needs.*

Action Plan if needed:

2. IEP/504: Communication/language and self-advocacy: Full range of needs: 34 CFR § 300.324(a)(2)(iv)

IEP: A "safe" student is noted to communicate frequently and well with parents and teachers. Goal could be linked to typical educational standard of "Student communicates effectively with a variety of audiences." Can the student share effectively in these areas?

- Basic needs
- Reactions and thoughts about all educational settings (childcare, school, extracurricular, time with others)
- Pragmatic social language skills (taking turns, seeking clarification, sharing personal information safely, differentiating audiences, using humor appropriately)

Examples:

- a) *The student will communicate effectively with 1-2 trusted adults and peers within a circle of support, including making friends, using appropriate pragmatic language skills (e.g., identifying trusted others, maintain topics, seek clarification, repair communication breakdowns, and use humor and sarcasm appropriately.*
- b) *A student can describe their hearing status, how they learn best, and seek accommodations (preferential seating, note taking, clarification of assignments, etc) in preparation for entering the adult world, using ADA laws to ensure equal access through a self-advocacy workshop series.*

Action Plan if needed:

3. IEP: Knowledge of Protective Factors for Students: Related Services 34 C.F.R. § 300.34(c)(14)(iv, v), Independent living skills 34 CFR §300.320(b)

- The student recognizes risky situations for themselves or others (unhealthy relationships, listening to intuition about safety issues, determining intent of others)
- The student demonstrates an appropriate response to boundary crossing behavior of others.
- The student demonstrates how and who to tell if they or another student has faced an inappropriate behavior by a peer or adult.

Examples:

- a) *Given a variety of scenarios, the student can identify elements of healthy and unhealthy relationships of peers or children/ adult pairs, recognizing red flags of unequal or inappropriate relationships, and describes first steps to change the balance of power. (Methods: role plays, literature/media, social stories.)*
- b) *The student effectively and consistently demonstrates these protective factors: (choose) making healthy social connections, recognizing and avoiding risky situations, understanding and managing changes during puberty (physical, emotional) and/or setting personal boundaries including safety with unfamiliar people in person or online.*

Action Plan if needed:

Guidelines: Parents have the right to ask for attachments or inclusion of documents into the IEP and IFSP. For the 504, an assertion of equal access to the curriculum needs to be made. (For example, a student with a hearing difference is unlikely to learn these skills in a large group or assembly setting.)

IDEA makes it clear that the rights of children with disabilities and parents are protected. Families should have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children and the development of educational plans. The IDEA Prior Notice also specifies that suggestions presented must be accepted or rejected, and the IEP team must list the reasons for accepting or rejecting the proposal based on evaluation. (Sections 300.343(c)(iii) and 300.346(a)(1) and (b)) Parents are considered equal partners with school personnel in making these decisions, and the IEP team must consider the parents' concerns and the information that they provide about their child in developing and implementing the IEP. See Appendix A from the 1997 on the involvement of parents and students; a district policy barring parent IEP attachments or the inclusion of parental/student input is not consistent with the spirit or letter of the law.

Family Protective Factors:

1. Nurturing and Attachment
2. Knowledge of child development (both hearing and D/HH)
3. Parental Resilience
4. Social connections for parents
5. Concrete support for families (basic needs)
6. Social/emotional competence of children

Protective Factors for D/HH Children

1. Knowing what healthy relationships look like
2. Knowing they have the right to say no, ask questions, and tell a trusted adult
3. Have some social connections/trusted adults
4. Effectively communicate day to day, label feelings, mental states, body parts, differentiates between secret/surprise, story retell with beginning, middle, end in context to time, adjusted for audience
5. Understand emerging sexuality and how that fits into social rules
6. Are developing their intuition; begin to recognize risky situations