

5 Essentials for a Successful Family-Centered Playgroup Program

For Programs Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infants & Toddlers

A successful playgroup program is language-rich, family-centered, and intentionally designed to promote early communication, relationships, and learning. It provides accessible environments, qualified providers, meaningful family engagement, and strong community partnerships. Use these five essentials to guide the development and continuous improvement of high-quality playgroup services.

1

Language-Rich & Accessible Environment

Create environments that maximize visual access through thoughtful lighting, clear sightlines, and flexible activity spaces. Use bilingual (ASL/spoken language) materials that reflect Deaf culture, Deaf adults, and diverse families.

2

Qualified & Supported Providers

Ensure providers have the knowledge and support to deliver family-centered, language-rich services. Promote ongoing professional learning and access to ASL-proficient staff and Deaf professionals.

3

Family Engagement & Communication

Provide accessible, culturally and linguistically responsive communication that keeps families informed and engaged. Embed caregiver coaching and language-learning opportunities into playgroup routines.

4

Community Connections

Connect families with bilingual resources, Deaf adults, and other families of deaf and hard of hearing children. Foster relationships that support shared learning, belonging, and positive Deaf identity development.

5

Program Leadership & Quality

Align program practices with EHDI and Part C while maintaining family-centered, evidence-based services. Use family feedback and program data to strengthen quality, staffing, and continuous improvement.