

IFSP Checklist for Providers Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infants & Toddlers: Special Considerations

This checklist supports early intervention providers in delivering family-centered, legally compliant, and communication-accessible early intervention services for infants and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is intended to guide preparation, participation, follow-up, and DHH-specific considerations so the IFSP meaningfully reflects the child's development, the family's priorities, and real-life communication access.

Strengthening Planning and Implementation

- ☐ Document the full language and communication environment the child experiences on a regular basis
Ensure the IFSP captures:
 - Languages used in the home
 - Family's experience with deafness
 - Child's access to auditory and visual communication

Provider reflection: Am I avoiding assumptions about the child and family's preferred language pathways?

- ☐ Use linguistically appropriate assessment practices
High-quality evaluation includes:
 - Separate consideration of each language modality
 - Evidence-based, normed tools when appropriate
 - Awareness of multicultural and multilingual influences

Provider reflection: Am I able to articulate how the assessments we used are appropriate for deaf or hard of hearing children?

- ☐ Develop goals reflecting language, identity, and whole-child development
Goals should integrate:
 - Communication and language growth
 - Cultural and identity considerations
 - Hearing levels and developmental profile
 - Family access to resources and support
 - Clear measurability

Provider reflection: Are services expanding the child and family's language opportunities, not narrowing them?

○ Ensure access to DHH-specific expertise and language models

Consider inclusion of:

- Qualified DHH professionals and deaf adult role models
- ASL and/or spoken language services aligned with family priorities
- Services in natural communication environments

Provider reflection: Does the family have opportunities to connect with the Deaf community and other families?

○ Promote advocacy, connection, and long-term opportunity

Support families in accessing:

- Advocacy resources and state/regional supports
- Family-to-family networking and Deaf community connection
- ASL classes, Deaf events, and national organizations
- Opportunities that expand—not limit—future pathways

Provider reflection: Am I communicating a vision of the child's future that is asset-based, culturally responsive, and expansive?

NOTES