

Suggested Talking Points for Early Intervention in Confirmed Hearing Loss

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

Families receive a lot of calls and mailings around the time their child is diagnosed with hearing loss (some families use the term hearing difference or deaf/hard of hearing). It's common for families to feel uncertain about next steps, especially when the newborn screening program identifies hearing loss well before any delays in speech and language development are noticeable.

Some families may wonder how early intervention will help when their baby is so young, and they might decline a referral if they do not understand the benefits. However, starting early can make a significant difference in their child's communication and development. By explaining the importance of early intervention, you can support families in making informed decisions.

Since health care providers are also asked to make referrals to early intervention, it is possible that a child may have already been referred. The talking points below can be used and adapted to help guide conversations when a child has confirmed hearing loss and their referral status is 'not enrolled' or 'unknown'. **Please refer all children with confirmed hearing loss, from birth through kindergarten entrance, to Help Me Grow.**

Suggested talking points

- By now, you've learned that your child has a hearing loss or difference. Your child's health care provider is required to share this information with public health, which is how I received your contact information.
- Hearing differences can affect a child's ability to develop speech, language, and social skills which is why it is highly recommended that all children with a hearing difference participate in early intervention. These services are free of charge to all eligible children and families regardless of your income or immigration status. Has anyone discussed this program with you before?
- Babies and young children are constantly learning. For children who have hearing differences, the early years are especially important for building language, communication, and social skills. These early experiences also set the foundation for learning in school and beyond.
- Connecting your child with early intervention as soon as possible can make a big difference in their development. Once connected, your local school district will send a teacher who specializes in working with children that have hearing differences. The teacher will partner with you to make sure your child's educational needs are met and will work around your schedule. Early intervention is so important that the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Minnesota Department of Health recommend connecting all children with a hearing difference to in early intervention.

Minnesota Department of Health
Children and Youth with Special Health Needs
PO Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
health.cyshn@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us/improveehdi

09/26/2024

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5466.