



## **Assessing Language Acquisition for Three Year Olds Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Washington State**



Washington State Department of Health  
**Early Hearing Detection, Diagnosis, and  
Intervention (EHDDI) Program**

## EHDDI Program

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# Early Hearing Detection Diagnosis and Intervention



# The EHDDI Program

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Julie Walker

Program Manager  
EHDDI Program



Kelsey Davis

Follow-up Coordinator  
EHDDI Program



Anna Dodd

Follow-up Coordinator  
EHDDI Program

# Background

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- In September 2023
  - The EHDDI program received supplemental HRSA funding to better understand the language assessment process for children aged three years old, identified as deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) in Washington.
  - We worked with a project management company, First Rule Group, to determine the current language assessment process in Washington.

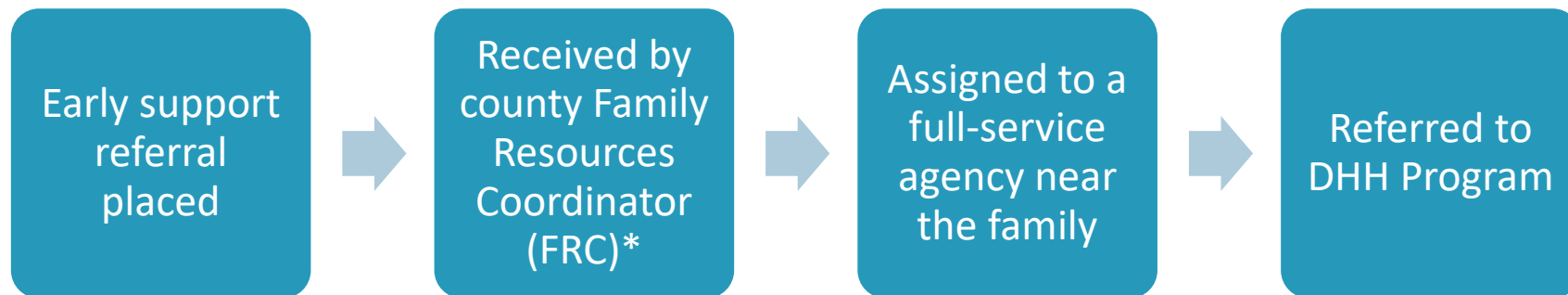
# Early Support Services in Washington

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- Part C services fall under the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program.
- Early support services are provided by programs that contract with ESIT.
  - Most of these programs do not provide deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) specific services.
    - We refer to these as “full-service” agencies.
      - ◆ There are a few programs that have a Teacher of the Deaf (TOD) on staff.
- The full-service agency will offer the family a referral to a DHH program in their area.

# Early Support Services in Washington State

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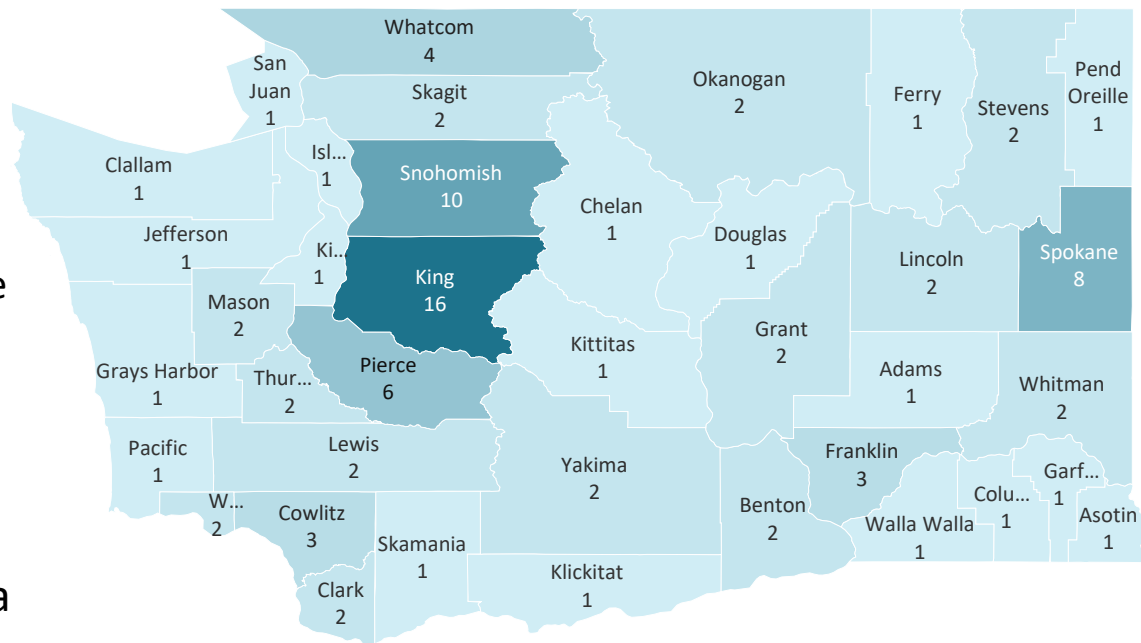


\*Some counties have multiple FRCs located at different full-service agencies.

# Methods

- The EHDDI program surveyed early support programs across Washington to investigate their current language assessment practices.
  - The EHDDI program also reached out to Early Head Start and Early Childhood Education Assistance Program, but they do not complete language assessments.
- The survey was sent to all early support programs.
  - 75 partners from 50 programs
- The survey was initially open for a week, but the deadline was extended in hopes of getting more participation.

Number of Programs Providing Services for ESIT in Each County



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# Methods

- The survey consisted of 25 questions.
- Questions were about:
  - Organization Information
    - Program name and contact information
    - Counties served
    - Number of children who are DHH enrolled in their program.
  - Administration of Language Assessment
    - Language assessments used
    - Who do they contract with for DHH support?
    - Who administers the assessments?
  - Data Sharing and Reporting
    - Data storage
    - Ability and willingness to report data

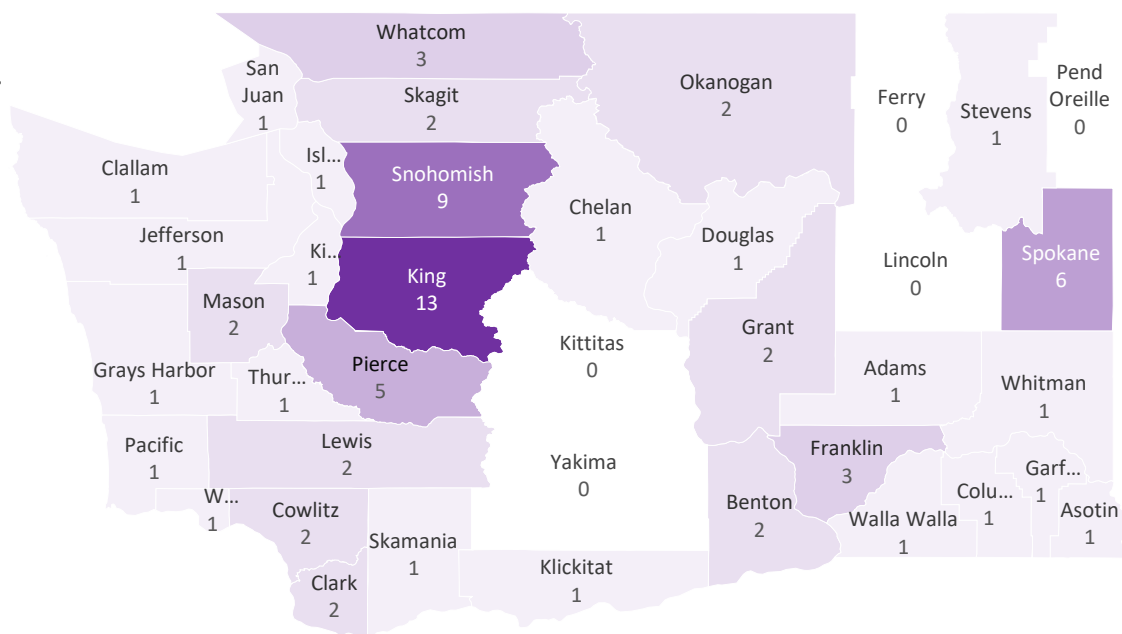




# Results - Responses

- 46 programs (92%) responded to the survey
- Received responses from 34 of the 39 counties
- Did not receive a response from:
  - Ferry
  - Kittitas
  - Lincoln
  - Pend Oreille
  - Yakima

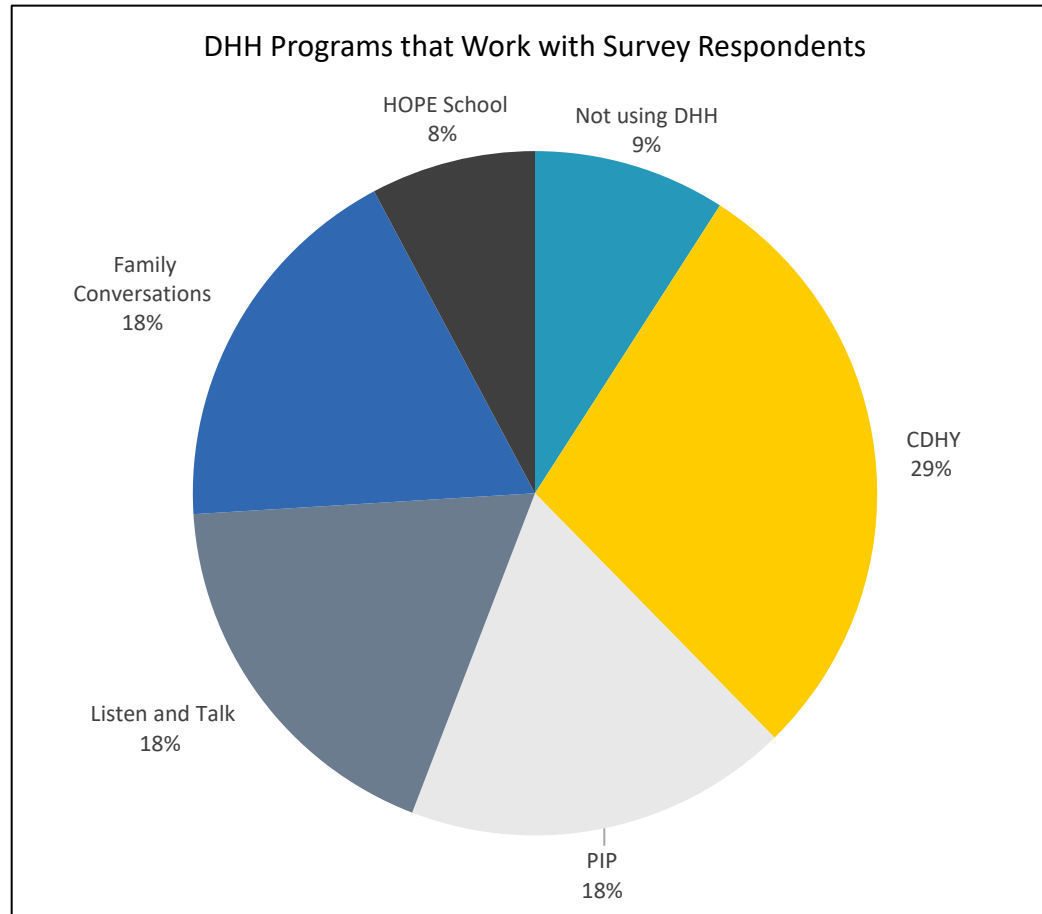
Responses by Programs Providing ESIT Services in Each County



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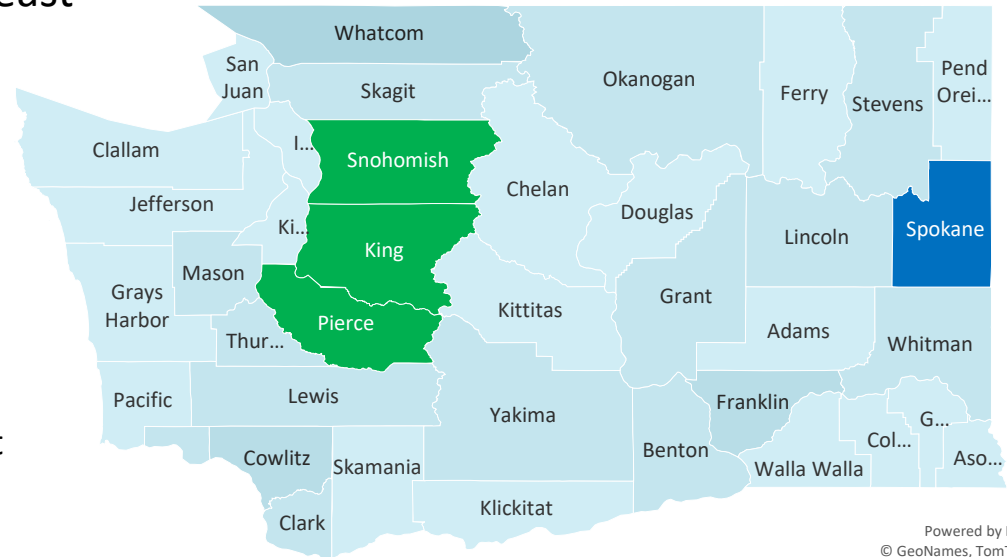
Note: For the counties that did not respond we were able to piece together some data.

# Results – DHH Programs



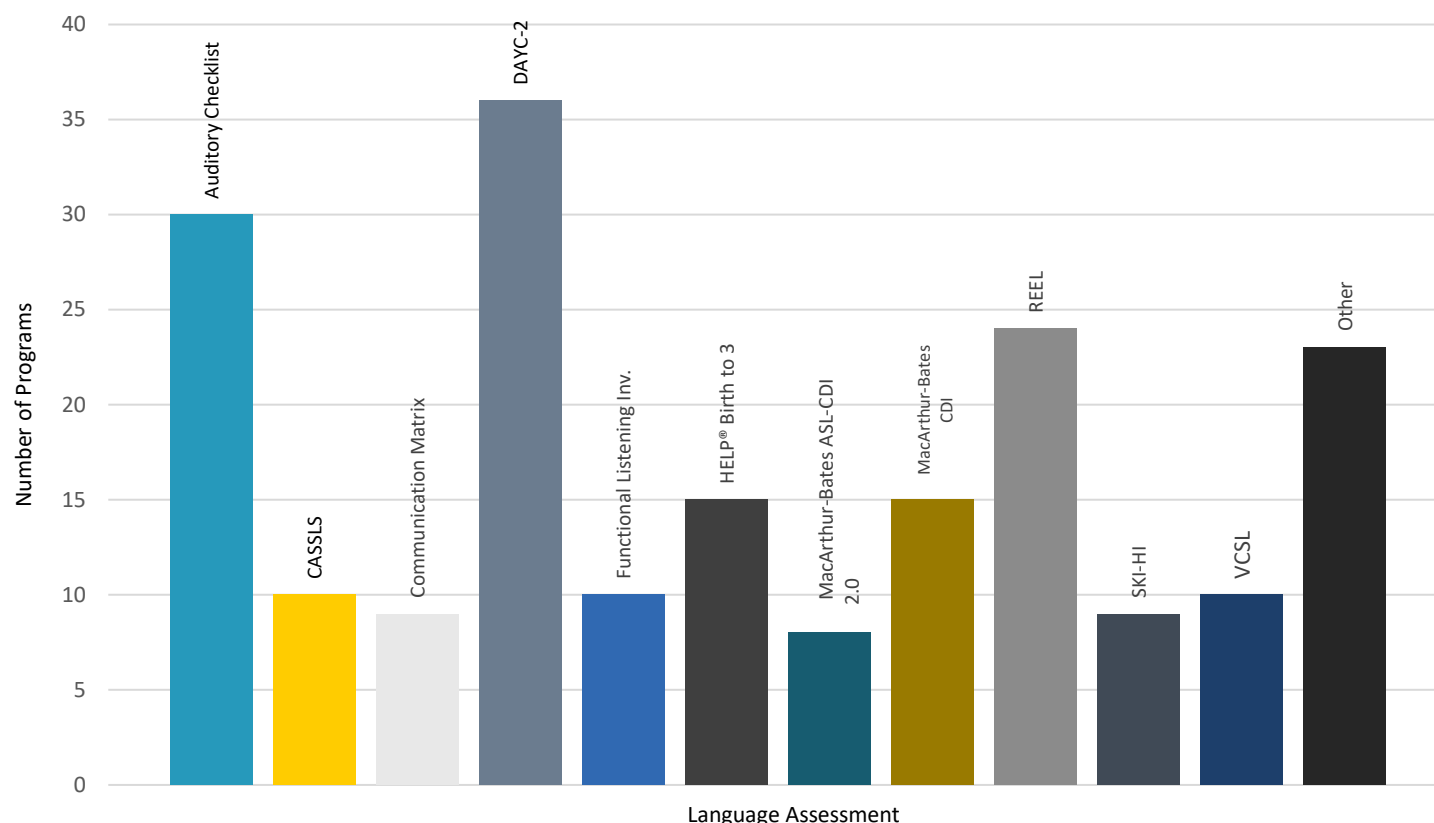
# Results – DHH Programs

- 86% of the programs contract with at least one DHH program
  - **HOPE School**
    - Spokane and neighboring counties when requested
    - Listening and Spoken Language (LSL)
  - **Family Conversations**
    - King, Pierce and Snohomish
    - Total Communication (LSL and Signing Exact English)
  - **Listen and Talk**
    - King, Pierce and Snohomish
    - LSL
  - **Parent-Infant Program (PIP)**
    - King, Pierce and Snohomish
    - Bilingual English and American Sign Language (ASL)
  - **Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth (CDHY)**
    - Statewide (except King, Pierce and Snohomish)
    - All communication modalities



# Results – Language Assessments

## Most Common Assessments Administered by Programs



**CASSLS** - Cottage Acquisition Scales for Listening, Language and Speech

**DAYC-2** - Developmental Assessment of Young Children Second Edition

**HELP® Birth to 3** - Hawaii Early Learning Profile Birth to 3

**REEL** - Receptive-Expressive Emergent Language

**VCSL** - Visual Communication and Sign Language Checklist

# Results – Language Assessments

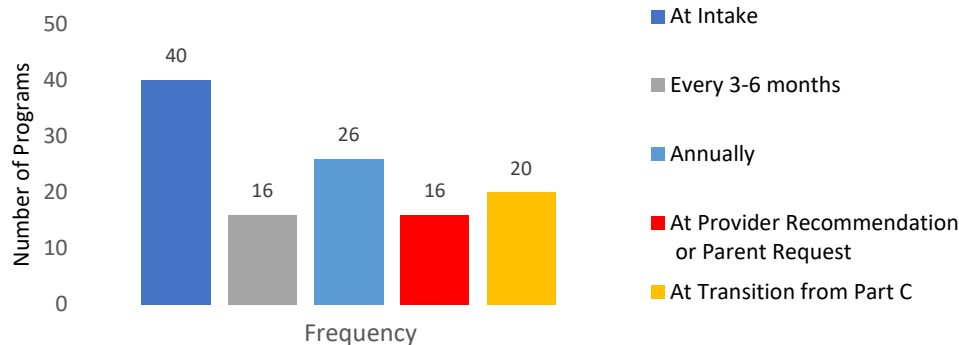
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- Other:

- Battelle Developmental Inventory – 2nd Edition
- Preschool Language Scales – 5<sup>th</sup> Edition; English and Spanish
- Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS)
- Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development (BSID)
- Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation (GFTA)
- Pragmatic Skills Checklist
- Language samples/mean length of utterance (MLU)

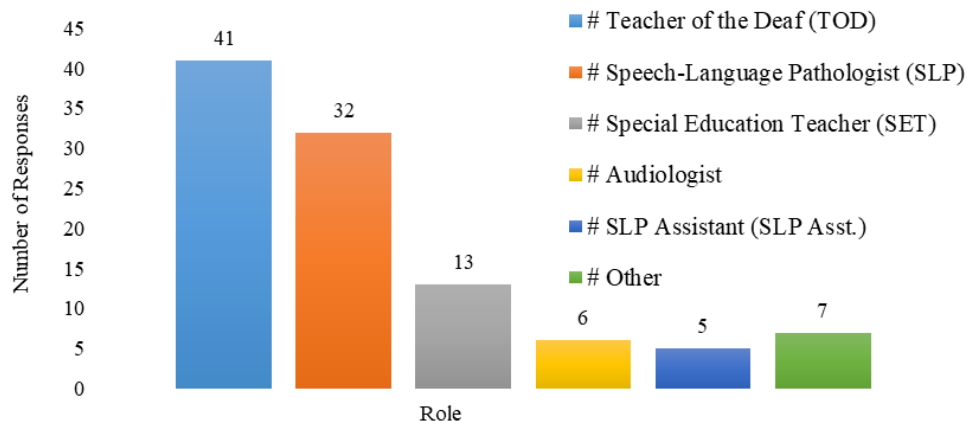
# Results - Assessments

How Frequently are Programs Conducting Language Assessments?



- 20 respondents reported assessing language at transition from Part C
  - This could be due to also reporting under “annually”, or “every 3-6 months”

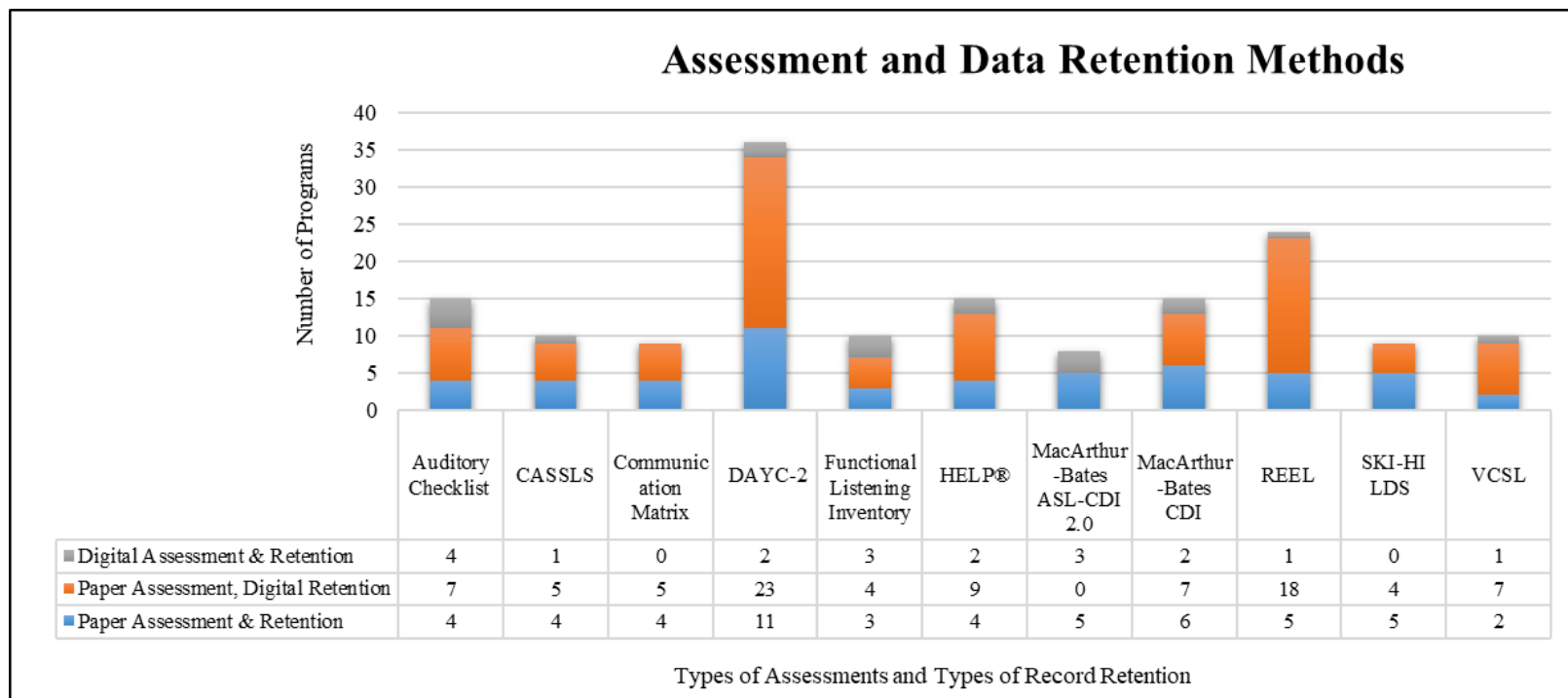
Roles Administering Language Assessments Across Washington



- Most agencies have access to a TOD or SLP to assess language
  - Note: Just because agencies have access to a TOD, does not mean they are always using them for language assessments.

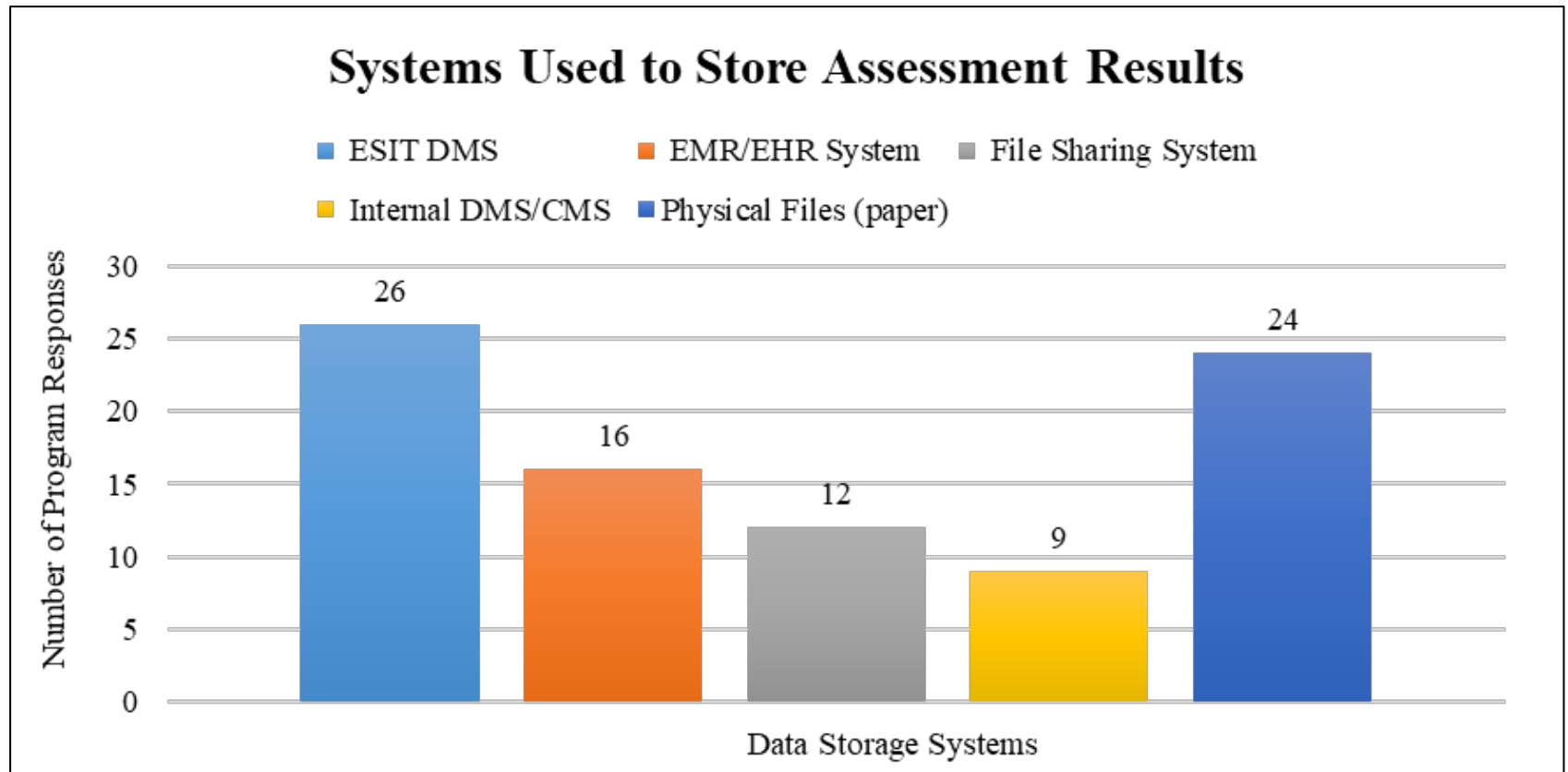


# Results - Language Assessment Data & Retention

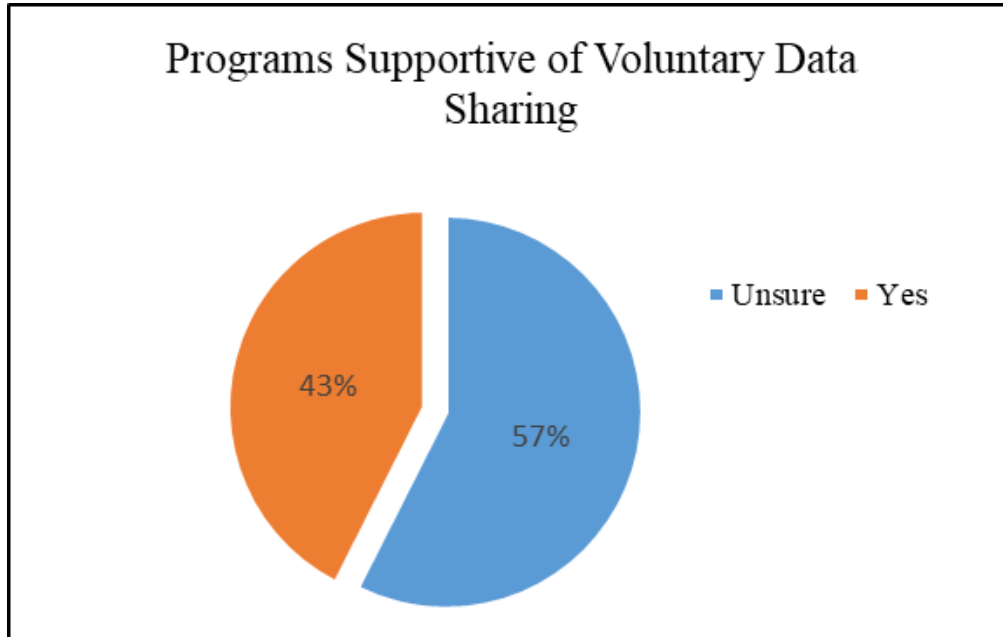


- Most respondents are using paper assessments.
- The paper assessments are stored in their office or are stored electronically as a PDF.

# Results - Language Assessment Data & Retention



# Results – Data Sharing



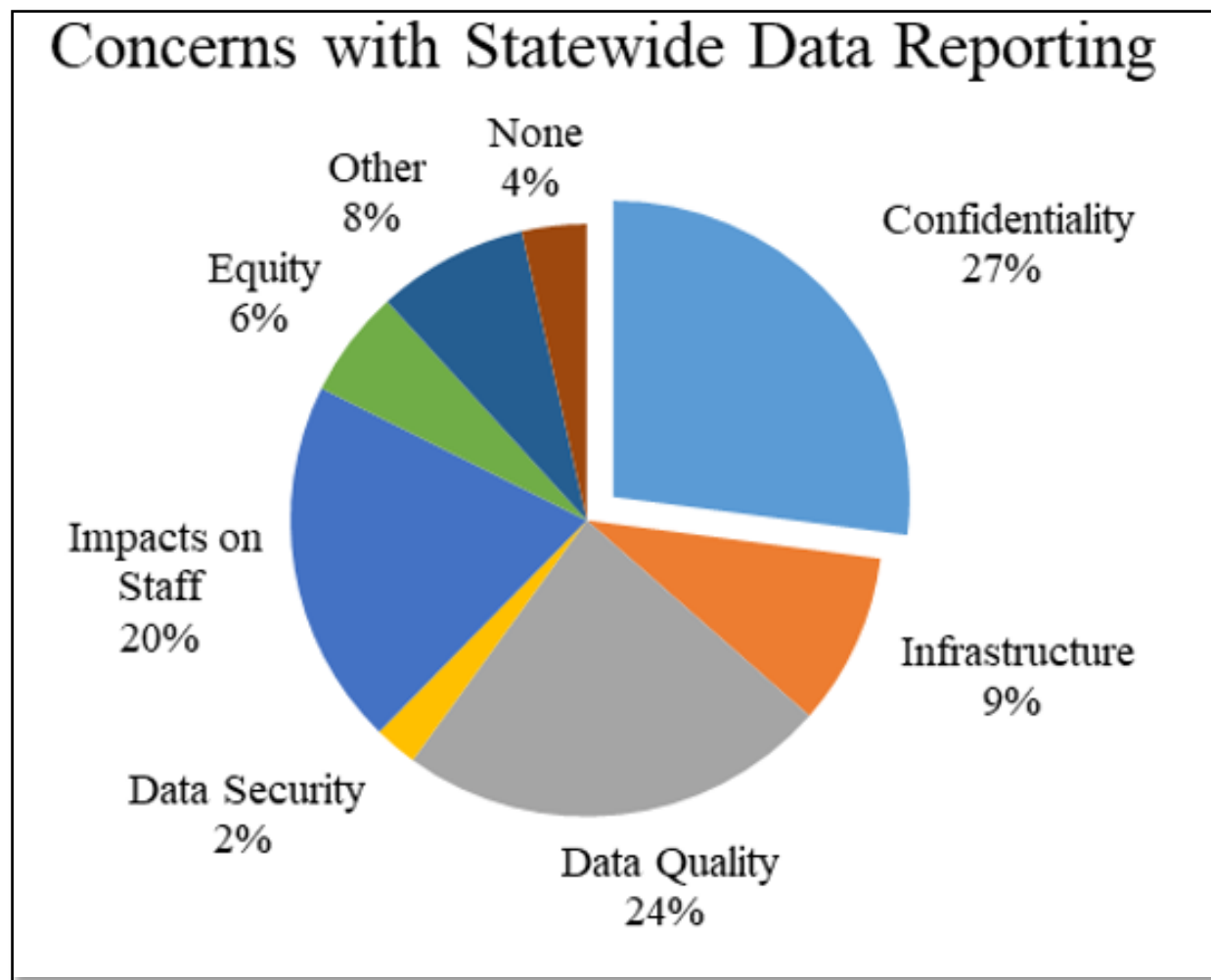
## ● Yes:

- Interested in data helping to influence statewide strategies and planning
- Insight into trends and impacts of services
- Data can contribute to research opportunities
- Provide better insight into best practices and collaboration

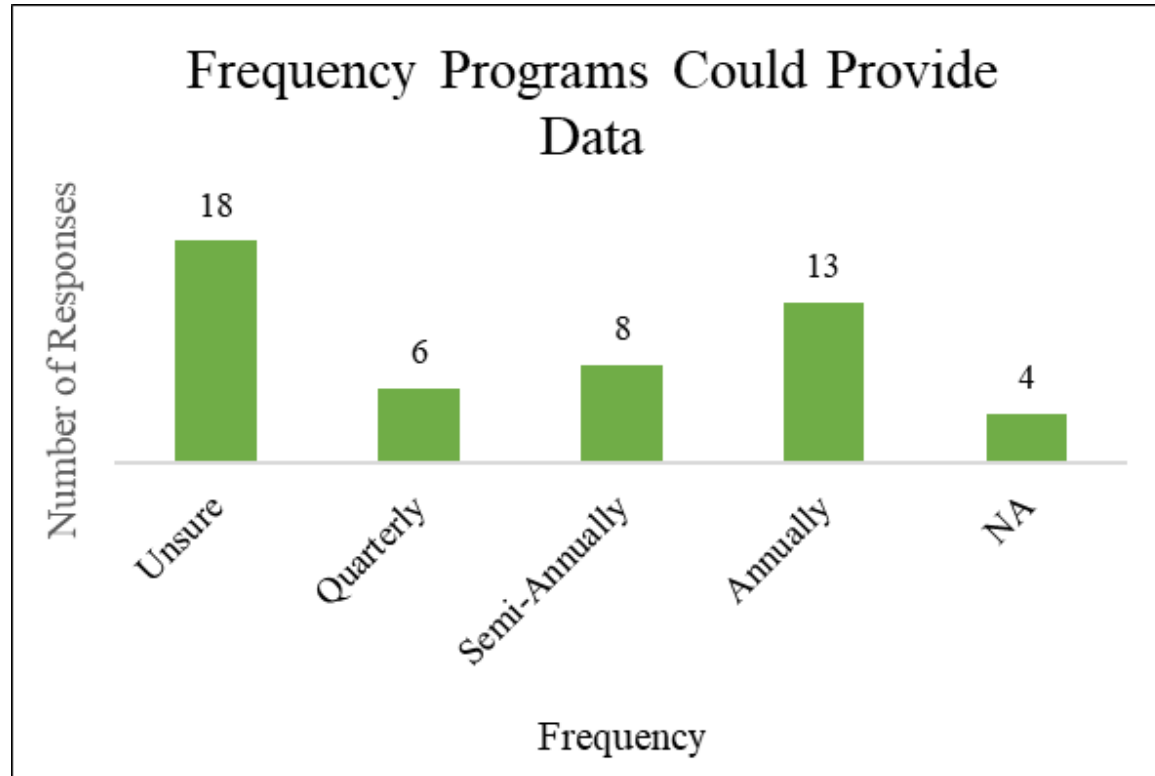
## ● Unsure:

- Need more information on the purpose of data gathering
- Clarification on how the data would be used

## Results – Data Sharing



# Results – Data Sharing



- Respondents preferred to align data sharing with ESIT’s annual data sharing process.

# Challenges Identified

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- Early support programs do not use the same assessments on all children who are DHH.
- Language assessment data is stored differently and is not easily retrievable and reportable.
- Currently, the EHDDI program only has a data sharing agreement with ESIT.
  - Data would have to be pulled from DMS, or we would need a data sharing agreement for each program.



# Challenges With the Data Survey

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- Some questions and responses were confusing.
  - Especially questions about frequency of assessments and who provides the assessments.
  - In a perfect world, an in-person survey would have been very beneficial.
- Had to fill in the gaps for counties that did not respond.
- Had to determine what constitutes a DHH program.
  - Some early support programs have a TOD on staff.
    - Is this a DHH program?

# Recommendations

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1. Standardize recommendations for screening and early detection of children who are DHH.
2. Standardize statewide best practices and focus on four key language assessments.
3. Invest resources where the biggest impact can be implemented, in partnership with the DHH programs.
4. Clarify objectives and right-size technology investments.



# Recommendation - #1

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- Standardize recommendations for screening and early detection of children who are DHH.
- 1-3-6 Data Benchmarking
  - Continue to focus on improving 1-3-6 guidelines
- Increase education about available DHH services and the benefits of early support services
  - Pathways to services [practice guidance](#) and [FRC online training modules](#)
- Improve the referral process to enable more efficient access to services
  - Dual Referrals – Full-Service Agencies and DHH Providers
    - Send initial early support referrals to the FRC at the full-service agency and the DHH program in their county at the same time

## Recommendation - #2

- Standardize statewide best practices and focus on four key language assessments.

Communication Modality	Recommended Language Assessment(s)
American Sign Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DAYC-2</li><li>• MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory (MB ASL-CDI)</li><li>• SKI-HI LDS (optional)</li><li>• Visual Communication and Sign Language (VCSL) (optional)</li></ul>
Listening and Spoken Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DAYC-2</li><li>• MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory (MB-CDI)</li><li>• SKI-HI LDS (optional)</li></ul>
Total Communication, using Listening and Spoken Language and Signing Exact English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DAYC-2</li><li>• MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory (MB-CDI)</li><li>• SKI-HI LDS (optional)</li><li>• Visual Communication and Sign Language (VCSL) (optional)</li></ul>

## Recommendation -#3

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- Invest resources where the biggest impact can be implemented, in partnership with the DHH programs.
- Focus on strengthening and supporting the 5 DHH programs.
  - Create shared tools and best practices to support common standards for care of children who are DHH
  - Provide guidance on assessment standards and when assessments should occur
  - Evaluate and propose resources that could address critical gaps and challenges DHH programs are facing
  - Centralize resource sharing

# Recommendation - #4

- Improve collecting and reporting of assessment results
- Currently, FRCs and early support providers who report assessment results in DMS must select from a drop-down menu of pre-defined assessments.
  - However, only two language assessments are available in the list (DAYC-2, MacArthur-Bates CDI).
  - The fields are geared towards the DAYC-2:
    - Age Equivalence (months)
    - Percent Delay
    - Standard Deviation (-5.0 to +5.0)
    - Present Level of Development (written narrative)

The screenshot shows a web-based form titled "Edit Results of Test, Tool or Other Evaluation Method". The form is for a "DayC-2 Expressive" assessment. It includes fields for "Administered By" (redacted), "Location Performed" (redacted), and "Date Performed" (11/15/2023). Below these are fields for "Applicable Domains and Developmental Levels", where "Expressive Communication" is selected. This selection reveals a row of fields: "Age Equivalence (months)" (empty), "Percentage Delay (%)" (53), and "Std.Deviation (-5.0 to +5.0)" (empty). A large text area labeled "Present Level of Development" is redacted with a black box. At the bottom, there is a list of checkboxes for other domains: Adaptive, Cognitive, Receptive Communication, Physical: Fine Motor, Physical: Gross Motor, Social/Emotional, Vision, and Hearing. The form has "OK" and "Cancel" buttons at the bottom right.



# Recommendation - #4

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- **Option 1: Customize Assessment input fields in ESIT DMS**

- Work with ESIT to create customized fields in DMS to report language assessment data in a manner that is reportable and useable.

- **Option 2: Report scores in ESIT DMS without customization**

- Report assessment scores in DMS as is but provide programs with guidance about how to enter in the data so it is reportable and useable.

- **Option 3: Manually collect data from programs**

- Utilize EHDDI staff or temporary staff to work with DHH programs to collect assessment scores manually.

- **Option 4: Create an EHDDI Data Collection Tool**

- The EHDDI program creates a tool that DHH programs could use to report assessment results without identifiable information.
  - Example: <https://forms.office.com/r/ipmpbdHHSK>

# Next Steps

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- Year 1
  - Educate ESIT and early support providers about data and information collected during our language assessment survey.
    - The survey data has been reported to our EHDDI Advisory Group.
  - Work with the DHH programs and discuss our recommendations to gain a better understanding of the feasibility of our recommendations.
    - Determine the frequency of collecting language assessment data from the DHH programs directly
  - Work on improving our 1-3-6 guidelines by collaborating with hospital newborn hearing screening programs, primary care providers, audiologists, and early support providers.

# Next Steps

- In November 2024, we met with DHH programs to determine what language assessments their programs preferred.

Communication Modality	Recommended Language Assessment(s)
American Sign Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory (MB ASL-CDI)</li><li>• SKI-HI LDS</li><li>• Visual Communication and Sign Language (VCSL)</li></ul>
Listening and Spoken Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory (MB-CDI)</li><li>• <a href="#">Language Environment Analysis (LENA)</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Parents' Evaluation of Aural/Oral Performance of Children (PEACH)</a></li></ul>
Total Communication, using Listening and Spoken Language and Signing Exact English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DAYC-2</li><li>• MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory (MB-CDI)</li><li>• Cottage Acquisition Scales for Listening, Language, and Speech (CASLLS)</li></ul>

# Next Steps

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## ● Year 2

- Work with DHH programs to determine if there is one language assessment that all programs would be willing to report data on.
- If data collection is feasible, we will work with one or two DHH programs and test out the data collection process.
- The EHDDI program will also need to determine how to store language assessment data.

# Summary

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- Most counties in Washington contract with a DHH program.
- DHH programs in Washington provide most of the language assessments.
- Early support programs use many different language assessments.
  - There are some that are commonly used.
- Language assessment data are stored in many ways and in a manner that is not always easily reportable.
- Working with DHH programs directly may improve our chances of receiving language assessment data.

## EHDDI Program



## EARLY HEARING DETECTION DIAGNOSIS AND INTERVENTION

1610 NE 150<sup>th</sup> St  
Shoreline, WA 98155  
Toll-free: 1-888-WAEHDDI  
Fax: 206-364-0074  
Email: [ehddi2@doh.wa.gov](mailto:ehddi2@doh.wa.gov)  
Website: [www.doh.wa.gov/earlyhearing](http://www.doh.wa.gov/earlyhearing)

EHDDI FRC and Early Support Provider  
Trainings:  
<https://waportal.org/partners/early-hearing-detection-diagnosis-and-intervention-ehddi-program>

Julie Walker  
Phone: 206-418-5556  
[Julie.Walker@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Julie.Walker@doh.wa.gov)

Kelsey Davis  
Phone: 206-418-5613  
[Kelsey.Davis@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Kelsey.Davis@doh.wa.gov)

Anna Dodd  
Phone: 206-418-5612  
[Anna.Dodd@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Anna.Dodd@doh.wa.gov)





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