

Exploring Language and Communication Opportunities Process

EHDI 2023



MECDHH/GBSD

Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- ★ 0-2 Early Intervention and Family Services
- ★ 3-6 Mackworth Island Preschool
- ★ 3-22 Statewide Outreach/Related Services and Site Based Programs
- ★ Educational Audiology Services
- ★ Family Events

www.mecdhh.org



Claire Jeffers

Mom to a 3-year-old! My son is profoundly deaf and uses both ASL and spoken English to communicate, with the aid of his Cochlear Implants.

Writer & PR/Comms professional.

Substitute teacher with MECDHH/GBSD site-based public school programs.

ASL and Deaf Studies student at University of Southern Maine.



Amy Spencer MS CCC/SLP, TOD

Early Intervention and Family Services Coordinator

Serve on the Maine Newborn Hearing Program Board, the Maine Interagency Coordinating Council, and active member of the Earliest Interactions Maine/ HRSA team.

Initiated and continuously refine the ELCO process.

Live in Southern Maine exploring both ocean and mountains with my husband and two young daughters.



Karen Hopkins

MECDHH/GBSD Executive Director

Principal Investigator - Maine's Grant/ Co-EHDI Coordinator

Author of Maine's Part C Memorandum of Understanding

Deaf Adult and mother of three (one of whom is hard of hearing)

Doctoral Student - researching perspectives of families on empowerment in early intervention

Board Membership:

- Hands & Voices Headquarters
- Maine's Foundation for Deaf Children
- Maine Newborn Hearing Screening Board
- Maine Telecommunications Board
- Maine Commission on Deafness



Disclosures

Claire Jeffers is a parent of a Deaf child and also contracts with MECDHH/GBSD as their public relations specialist.

Amy Spencer works for MECDHH/GBSD as their Early Intervention and Family Services Coordinator.

Karen Hopkins is the Executive Director at MECDHH/GBSD. She is the principal investigator of Maine's HRSA Grant.



ELCO

Exploring Language and
Communication
Opportunities Process



A process of empowering families by exploring language and communication opportunities for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

TODAY

Participants will identify **three components** of a process of exploring language and communication opportunities.

Participants will identify **three ways to empower families** in the process of exploring language and communication opportunities

Participants will **identify ways to incorporate parents and deaf and hard of hearing adults** in the process of exploring language and communication opportunities.



Purpose/ Philosophy

Early Intervention Services are designed to provide families with the support and information they need to promote their child's growth and development (Sass-Lehrer, 2011).

Maine's EI goal is to facilitate positive early interactions for families. We support families through the process of hearing screening, diagnosis, and into early intervention in order to optimize their child's language, literacy, cognitive, social, and emotional development.

We provide comprehensive information to empower families in making informed decisions that match their values and priorities, and ensure supports are in place to help meet their individual family goals and/or outcomes on their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).



Evolution of Early Intervention in Maine

Professional driven approach

Direct Referrals

Services were often provided based on who connected with the family first.

Services often ran parallel to one another, with very little communication.

Double the burden on families ...double Intake, evaluations, appointments

Therapy Approach

Inconsistent Statewide

Disempowerment of Families

Communication “Options” were a check box - one time in the first Part C visit



Evolution of Early Intervention in Maine

The importance of :

parent/child attachment

following parent's lead

statewide consistency

family centered early intervention

Began the process of building a new system

5 Years later...we had a memorandum of understanding

with our Part C Agency



MOU and the 6 Visit Process

MOU - statewide involvement on early intervention teams

- Primary service provider
- Language and Communication Exploration Process in 6 Visits
 - Maine DOE wanted a defined number of visits
 - MECDDHH/GBSD wanted:
 - focus on parent/child attachment while ensuring all opportunities were explored
 - to ensure families had the opportunity to meet other parents and Deaf adults
 - Wanted consistency statewide

Continuous reflection, discussion, research, family feedback....



Continuous Evolution.....



- Maine's Part C's model was changing from a therapy and professional driven model to Routines Based Early Intervention
- There is no "magic" in the number "6"
- 6 visits was limiting
- A more robust discussion tool was needed that incorporated what was needed for successful outcomes
- Visuals were needed to support discussions

The foundation and philosophy behind the 6 visit process was needed.....but revisions were needed....and then there was ELCO.



WHY ELCO

Family empowerment to make evidence informed decisions.

Parent-child interactions predict language outcomes.

Language outcomes are **HIGHLY** dependent on family involvement.

Family/ culture/ values.

Importance of accurate, comprehensive, consistent information.

Critical language period- **ACCESS/ EXPOSURE** needed for language development.



HOW

Meeting families where they are...

Developing trusting partnerships

Foster baby/ parent relationship as a foundation

Proficient EI specialist for deaf and hard of hearing children & their families

Continuity of resources/ information statewide

Parent to Parent Support

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Adults

Ongoing Assessment



ELCO

Professional Guide and Sources &
Resources Available



<https://earliestinteractions.com/resources/professionals>

Maine EHDI Program: **Earliest Interactions**

Earliest Interactions is an MECDHH / GBSD program that supports families of children who are Deaf and hard of hearing throughout their journeys, from screening, to identification to early intervention and beyond. This program is funded by a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Welcome to **Earliest Interactions**

We are a HRSA grant-funded MECDHH / GBSD program that supports families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing throughout their journeys, from screening, to diagnosis, to early intervention and beyond.



Family
Resources



Professional
Resources



Key Guidance to ELCO

Guide NOT a script.

Supporting caregiver-child interactions as a foundation throughout.

Many pieces are happening simultaneously.

Fostering family empowerment.

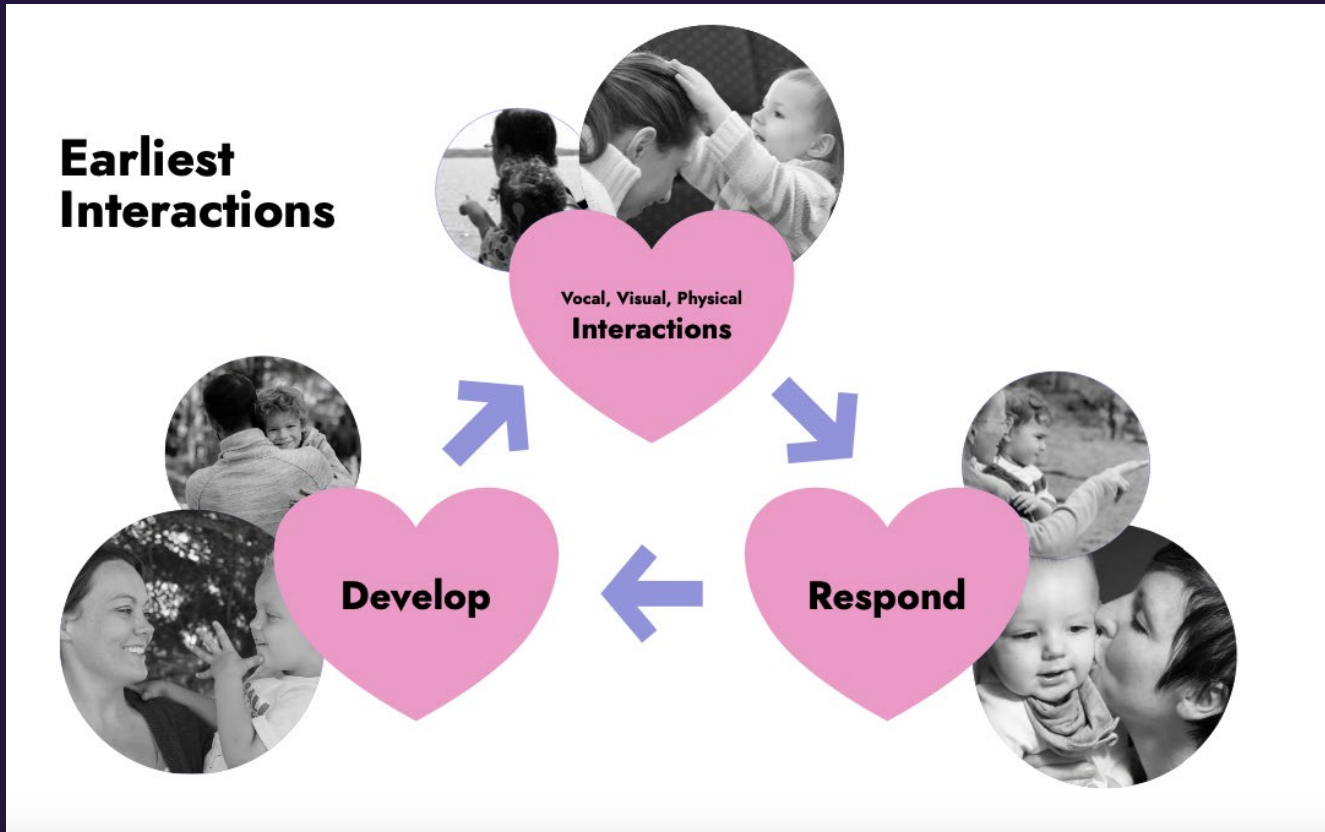
Be explicit about our role as informer/guide.

Families role as the explorer and expert on their family system and child- what will work for them.

Encourage exploration and change as needed.



Foundation of Language



Audiological Understanding Process

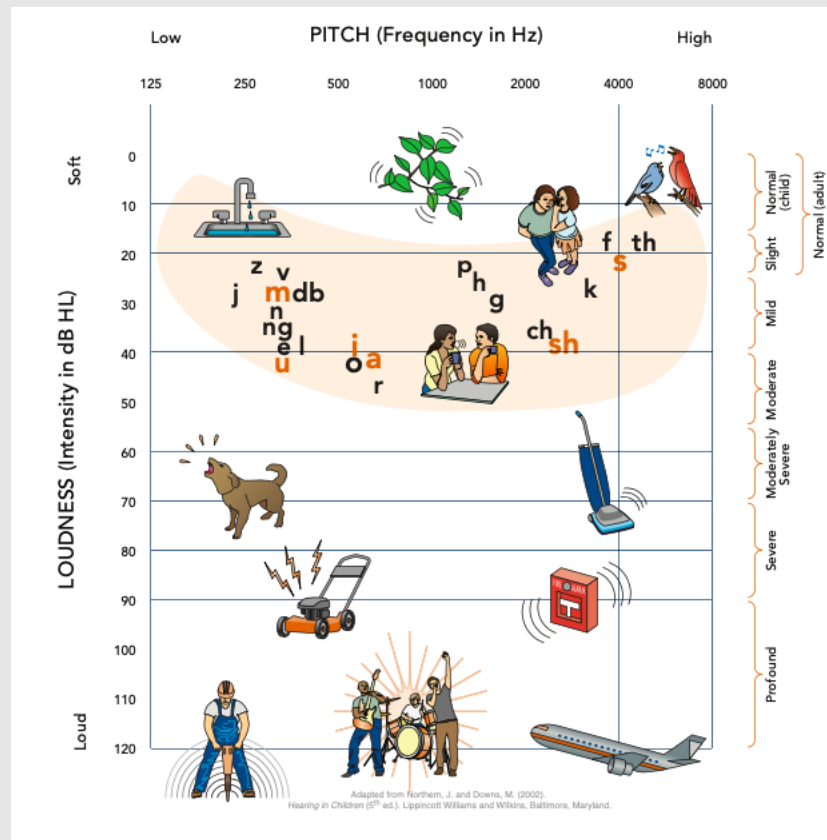
How will my child learn language?

What are the impacts of my child's hearing difference?

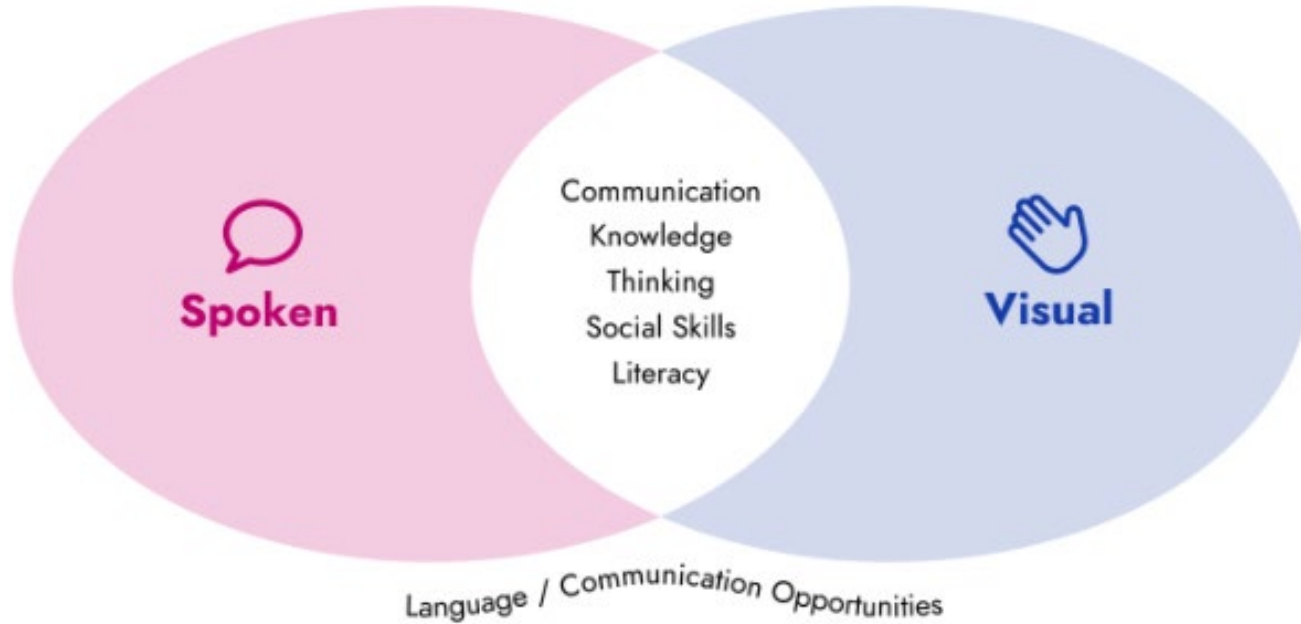
What is an audiogram?

What did the hearing test tell us?

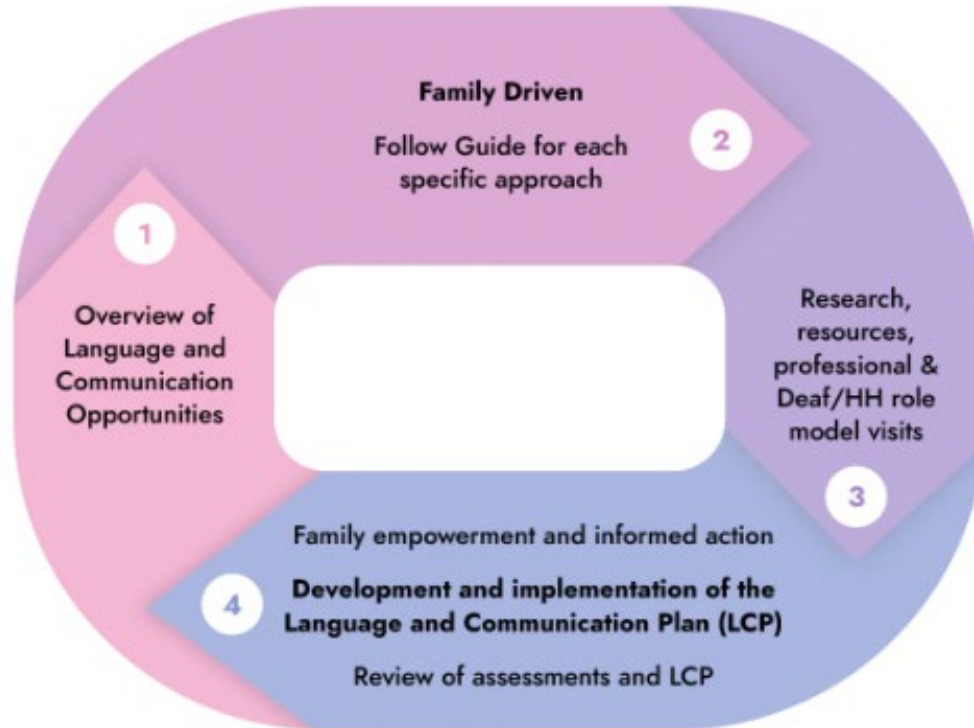
How do we hear?





Children Need Language to Learn

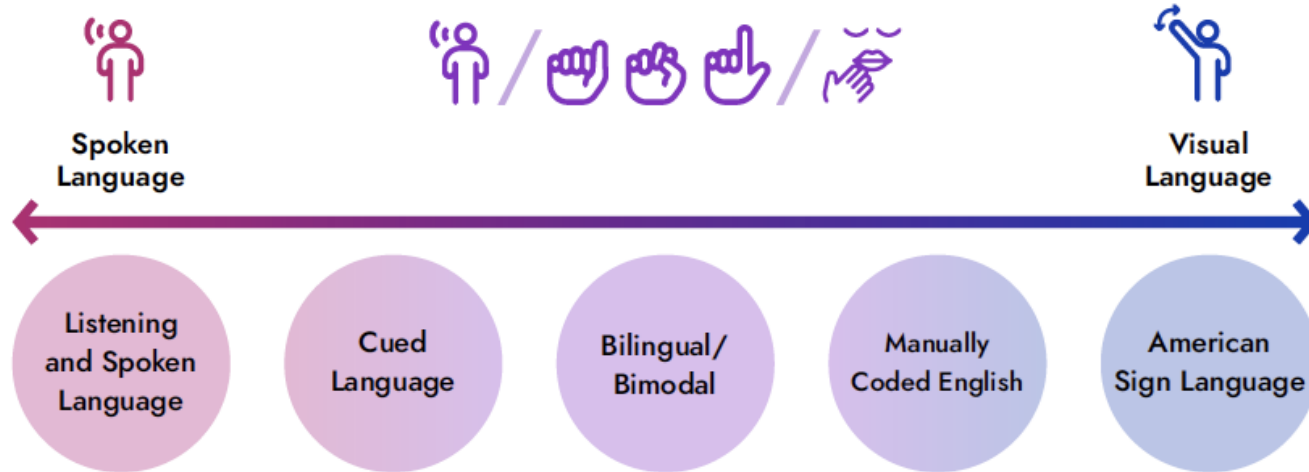


Professional Approach





Communication & Language Opportunities for Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing



Components Needed for Each Opportunity

Specialists in EI for Deaf and hard of hearing children & families & Specialists specific to approach

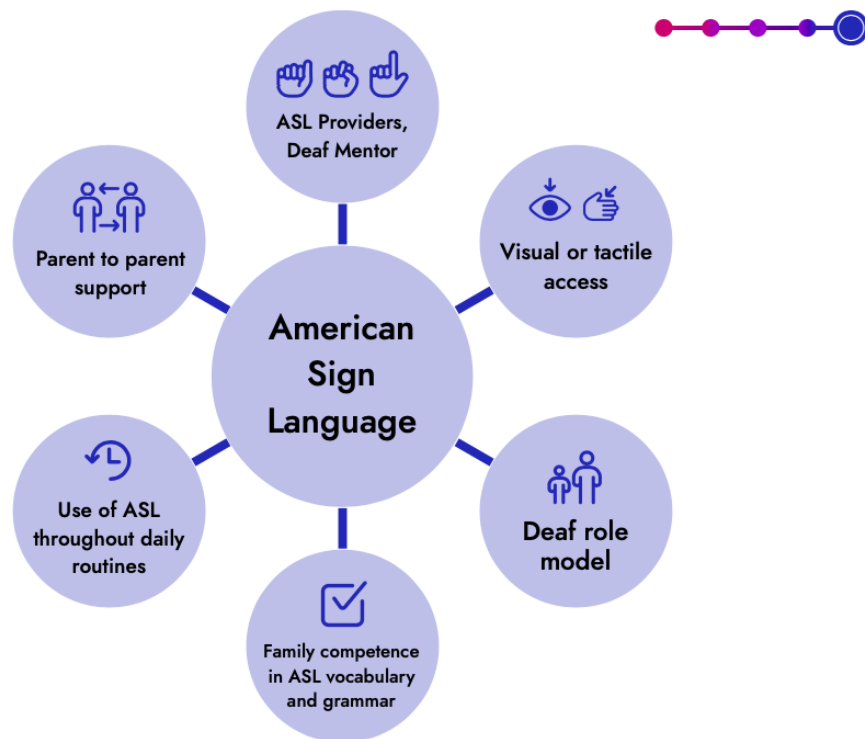
Access Requirements

Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Role Models

Developing strategies/ skills

Using the approach in routines

Parent to Parent Support



Meeting Families Where They Are

Processing

Hearing parents of a Deaf child

Fear of failing

Day by Day, Hour by Hour

Sleep Deprivation

New parent challenges

Work

Isolation

Questions

March 13, 2020



Developing Trusting Partnerships

Family-driven, not agenda-driven

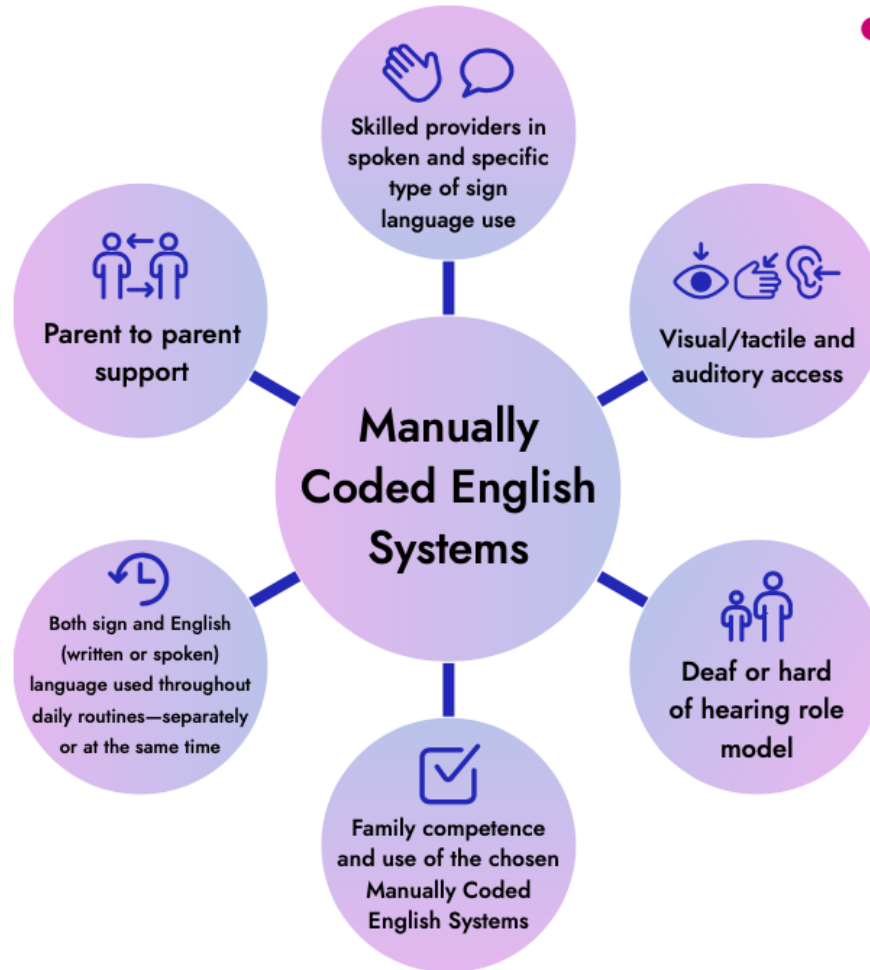
Guided and respected

Baby steps: language & communication
strategies

Recognized & supported our unique process,
experience, and circumstance

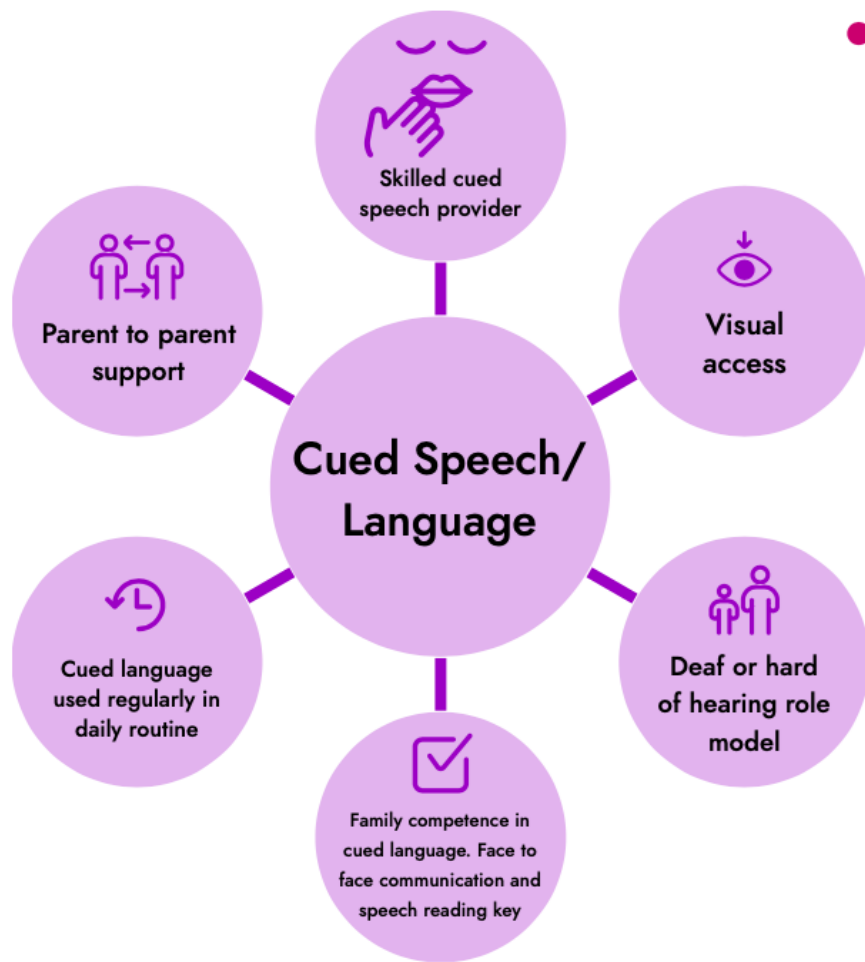
EI team was: cohesive, consistent, reliable

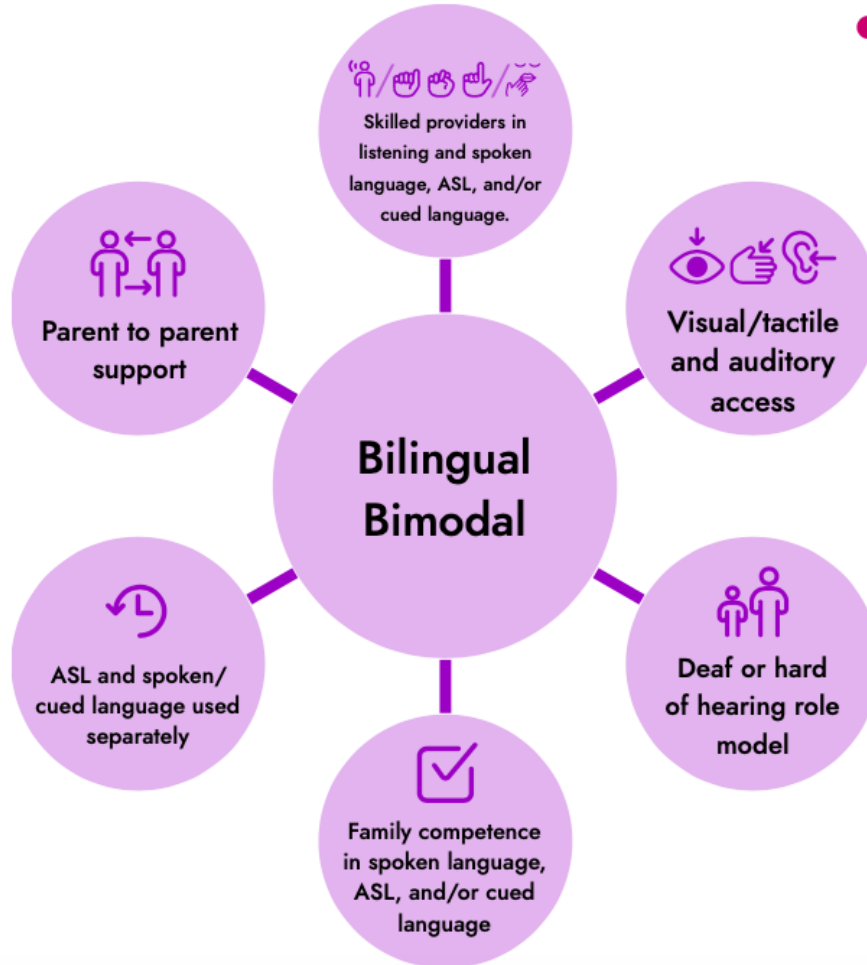


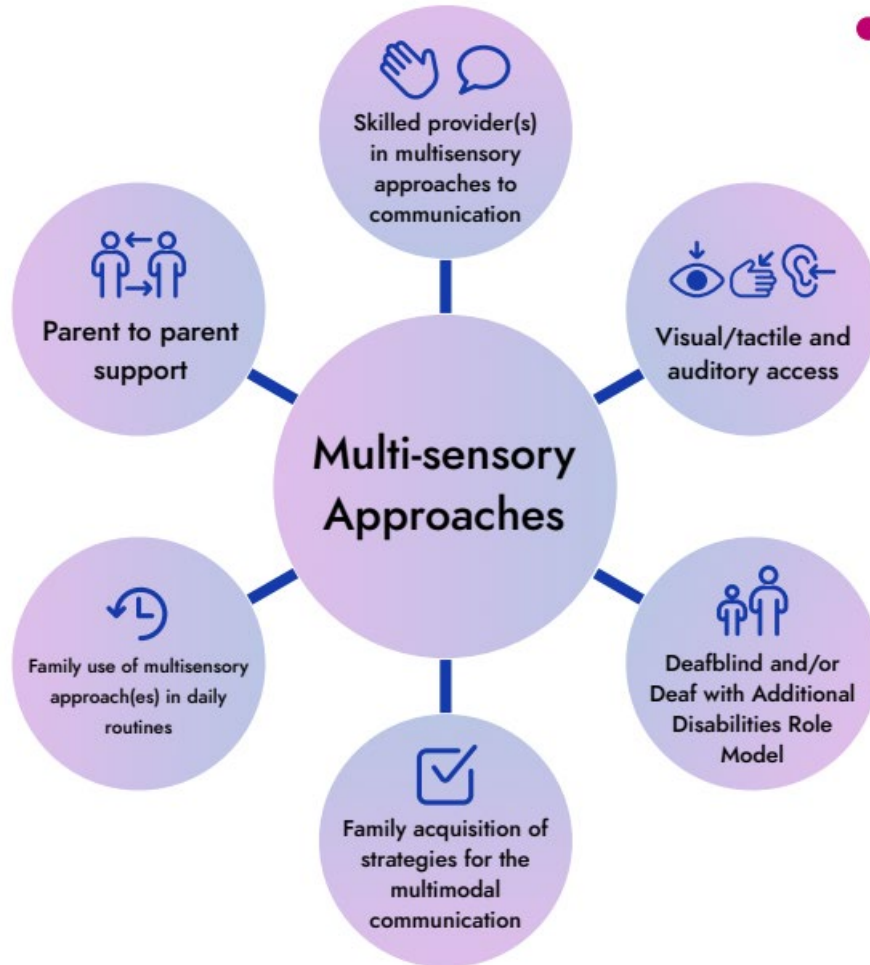












Language and Communication Plan

Language and Communication Plan for Families with Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Child's home language and communication

We use the following (check all that apply) as the primary language in our home:

Receptive

Expressive

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | American Sign Language (ASL) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____ |

Continuum of Language & Communication Opportunities



We have as much information as we would like, at this time, on the following communication opportunities:

- American Sign Language 
- Bilingual Bimodal 
- Cued Speech/Language 
- Listening and Spoken Language (Auditory Oral) 
- Listening and Spoken Language (Auditory Verbal) 
- Manually Coded English Systems (including sign supported speech) 
- Other, please explain: _____



Advantages and limitations of language and communication opportunities

We have considered the personal advantages and limitations of the language and communication opportunities we are exploring for our family.

Yes No







Advantages

Limitations

Personal journey to language and communication

We have identified the language and communication opportunities we would like to pursue with our child at this time.

Receptive Expressive

- American Sign Language (ASL) 
- Bilingual Bimodal 
- Cued Speech 
- Listening and Spoken Language (Auditory Oral) 
- Listening and Spoken Language (Auditory Verbal) 
- Manually Coded English System (incl. sign supported speech) 
- Other, please explain: _____

Statewide resources and supports

We have discussed opportunities to connect with families who have children with varied hearing levels as well as Deaf adults.

- Guide by Your Side Hands and Voices
- Family Events & Playgroups Other: _____

We have identified the following opportunities within natural environments, activities and places for our child to communicate with children and adults who are Deaf or hard of hearing:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Language and Communication Development

The following assessments have been used to monitor the language and communication development of our child.

Date	Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____



LCP

Filled out by parents

Fluid document

Revisited every 6m with a review language and communication opportunities.

Reflective process with ongoing assessment and perceived progress.

Changes made as needed.

We have reached this decision without pressure from others, personal or professional.

Yes No (if no, please explain)

We have completed and reviewed this language and communication plan.

If at any point you want to discuss, comment, or change this plan, please contact your provider(s).

Date **Parent/Caregiver Signature:**

<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

I am comfortable sharing this language and communication plan with:

___ Service Coordinator

___ Service Provider



LCP written WHAT'S NEXT...

Review IFSP

Add outcomes as needed to address what needs to be in place for that approach.

Add services/ change providers as needed to meet family needs.



Maine's EI Process Summary

Ensure families have:

- Knowledge and resources about ALL language and communication approaches.
- Access to ALL INFORMATION to feel empowered.
- Parent-to-Parent support
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing role models

Family involvement & caregiver-child interactions are two most important factors of success, no matter the approach.

Benefits & limitations to each approach are not static, but dynamic to each family's connection, culture, and values.

Ongoing assessment is essential.

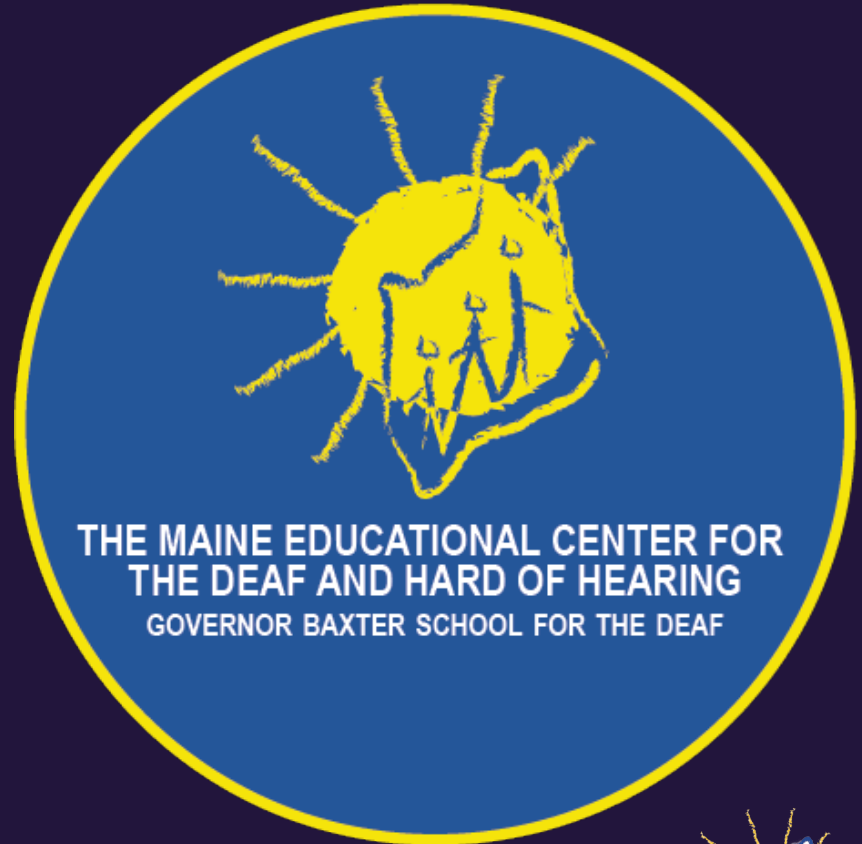


QUESTIONS?

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Additional References

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