

# Measuring early language acquisition: Assessing visual and spoken languages

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- Highlights the importance of early access to sign language for deaf infants and toddlers, which positively impacts expressive and receptive vocabulary development.
- Introduces the Spoken Language Checklist and the Visual Sign Language Communication Checklist, assessments used by the Cognition ‘n Context Research Lab (a collaboration between Lamar and Gallaudet Universities), to assess language acquisition in bimodal bilingual DHH children.
- Emphasizes the use of these tools to evaluate language skills in both American Sign Language (ASL) and English, tailored to the child’s developmental stage.
- Underscores the importance of comprehensive language assessments that account for all languages used by the child and their family.
- Explains how state and territory EHDI systems can meet HRSA grant requirements by implementing these assessments to monitor and report language outcomes.
- Stresses the role of these practices in ensuring optimal developmental support for DHH children within the EHDI system.

The findings reveal that most DHH children exhibit delayed language development, with only a small percentage demonstrating age-appropriate or advanced skills. Children assessed with the SLC showed a range of language abilities, while those assessed with the VCSL predominantly displayed delays. These results emphasize the need for early interventions, vigilant monitoring, and tailored support based on the child’s language modality.

- 34% of children showed delayed language development, 26% had age-appropriate skills, and 0.2% demonstrated advanced skills.
- Emphasizes the importance of early interventions, regular monitoring, and tailored support for spoken, signed, or bimodal bilingual language development.
- Modality does not appear to predict better language acquisition

## Research Question

How well are young deaf children doing in their language acquisition?

## Measurement Tools

Spoken Language Checklist  
(Clark et al., 2021)  
&  
Visual Communication Sign Language Checklist  
(Simms et al., 2013)

## Participants

34 children  
6 months – 6 years  
All identified before the age of 2.  
1:11 (n=5), 2:0 to 2:11 (n=7), 3:0-3:11 (n=5), 4:0 to 4:11 (n=8), 5:0- 5:11 years (n=7), and 6:0-6:11(n=2)

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## Results

Out of the 34 children evaluated, 24 (70%) exhibited delayed language development, while nine (26%) had age-appropriate language skills. One child (0.2%) demonstrated advanced language development.

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