

# Understanding Early Intervention (EI) Providers' Experiences with Promoting Language Acquisition for Children with Hearing Loss in Minnesota

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## Background information

During the summer and fall of 2024, state agency and community partners across Minnesota (MN) developed a survey to understand how early intervention (EI) providers use language assessment tools and professional development for children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). In MN, EI services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are free through local school districts, supporting infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities.

Children who are DHH who are identified early and provided access to language supports are more likely to meet language milestones similarly to other children their age. This provider survey sought to identify how the EHDI system can be improved to better support children who are DHH and their families with language acquisition.

## Survey development

### State agency & community partner coordination

- MN Department of Health (MDH) partnered with MN Low Incidence Projects to develop the survey.
- The MN Departments of Education (MDE), Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), and the MN Commission of the Deaf, Deafblind & Hard of Hearing reviewed and contributed feedback on the survey.

### Survey distribution

- The survey was presented to participants at the MN Collaborative Experience Conference, attended by Minnesota teachers and professionals serving children who are DHH and their families, in November 2024.
- Leadership from MDE and DCYF as well as MN Low Incidence Projects distributed the survey to educational providers throughout the state in December 2024.

## What we learned

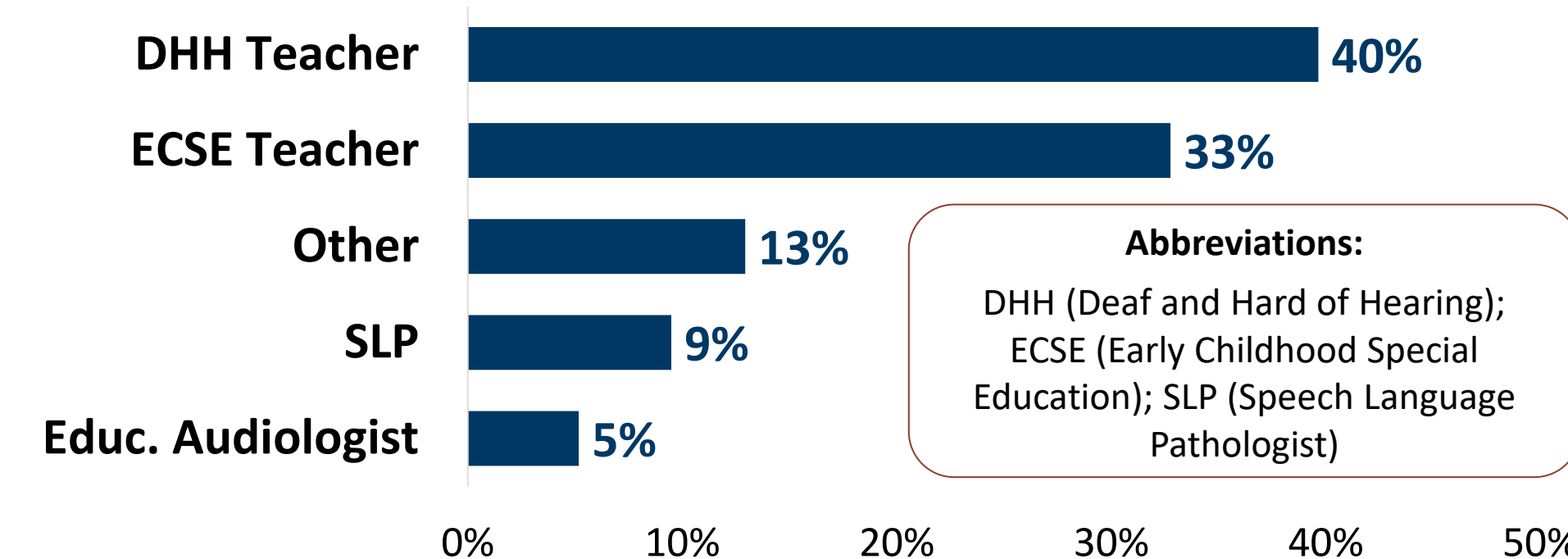
- Overall, EI professionals think the EI system in Minnesota is meeting the needs of children who are DHH and their families.
- Almost two-thirds of EI professionals want increased continuing education & professional development to support language acquisition outcomes.
- In general, two-thirds of EI professionals provide ongoing monitoring of language three or more times per year (more often than required) for their caseload.

### Who completed the survey?

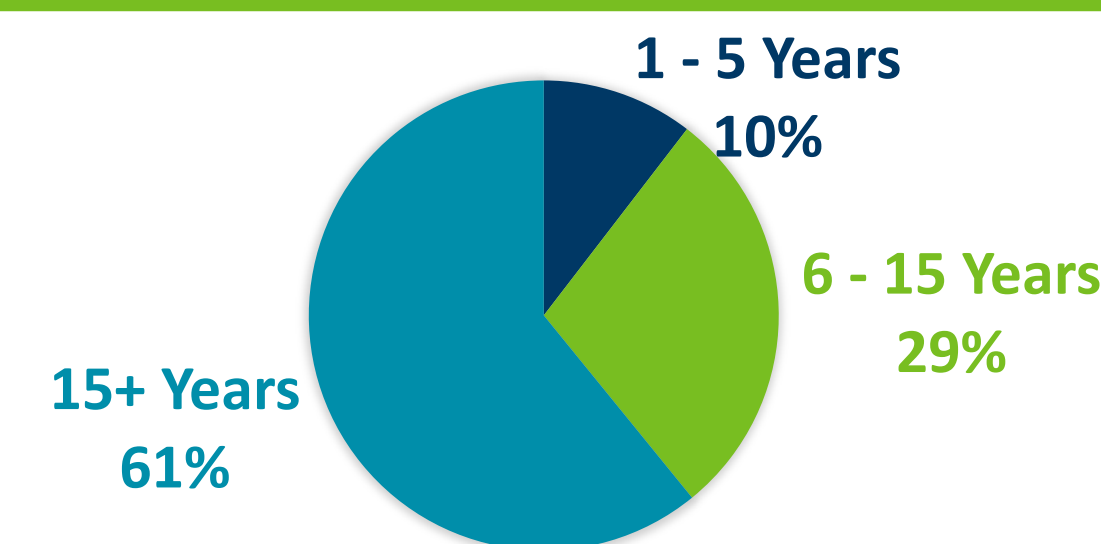
#### Early intervention providers

116 professionals working with children who are DHH (ages birth through age 2) completed the survey. All Minnesota educational regions were represented.

#### Primary role



#### Years of experience in education



Three-quarters of professionals thought the early intervention system in Minnesota was excellent or good at meeting the needs of children with hearing loss and their families.

### Employer support for continuing education

Nearly three-quarters of professionals indicated their employers supported continuing education for DHH topics, including webinars, trainings, and communities of practice.

#### Top needs of providers

- Continuing education & professional development (60%)
- Access to assessment tools (21%)
- Expanded mentorship & professional consultations (19%)

## Next steps

- Identifying language assessment tools and methods of access to tools that EI providers indicate they need.
- Explore expansion of mentorship opportunities and professional consultations for EI providers.

## Survey results

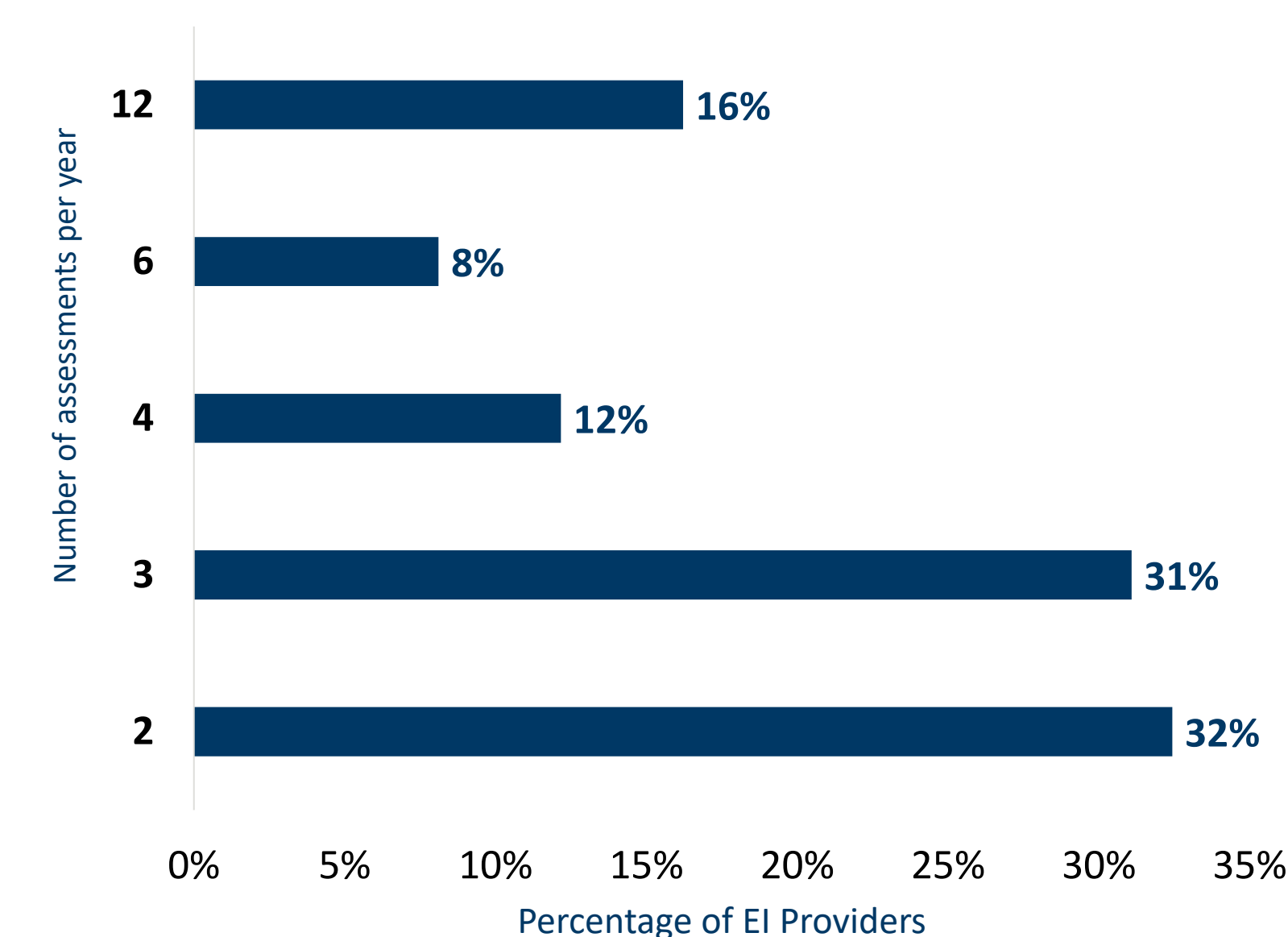
### What is the state of language assessments & continuing education in Minnesota?

#### Providers self-rating as *confident* in providing language assessments to children who are DHH

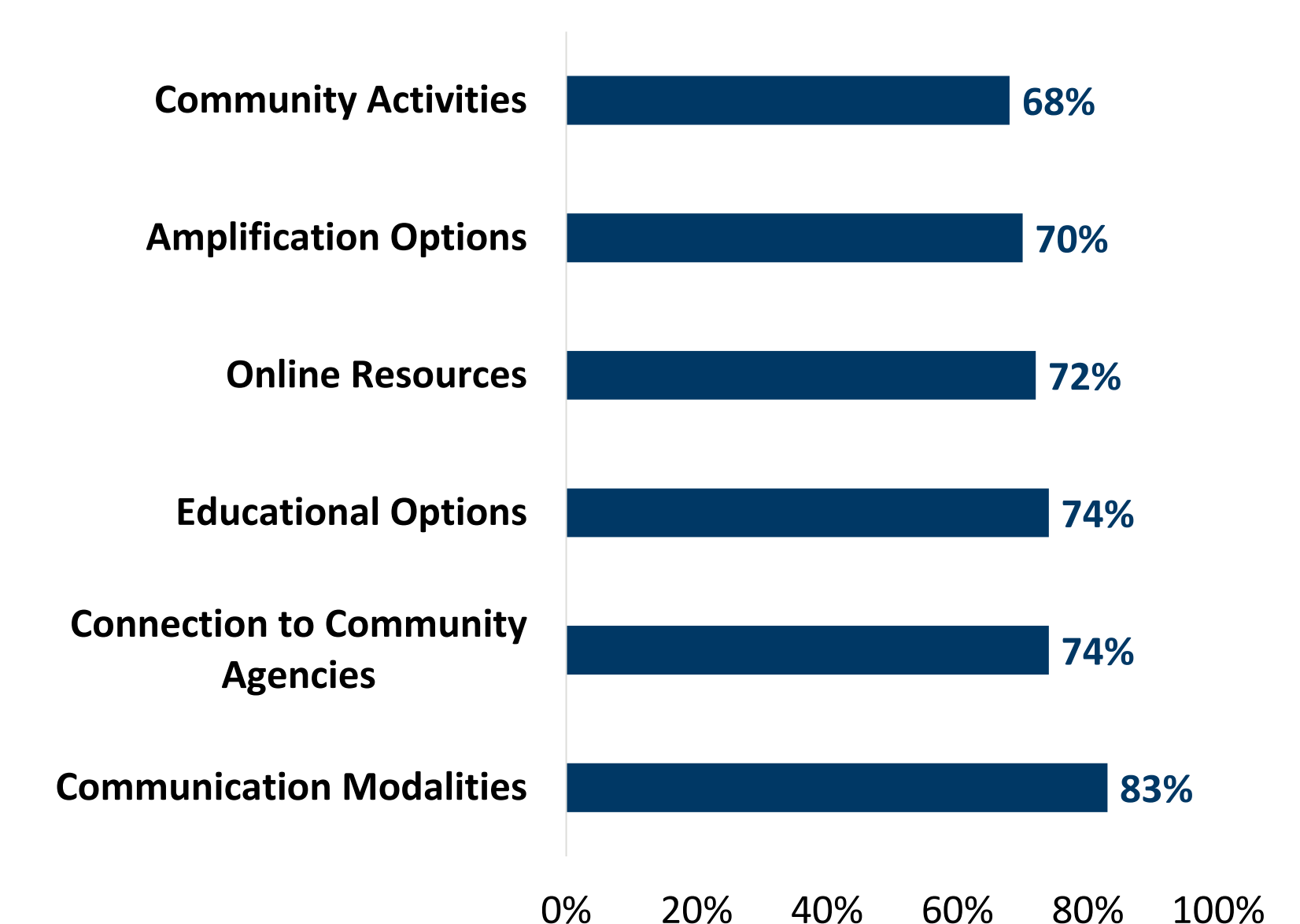
	American Sign Language	Cued Speech	Listening / Spoken Language (English)
<b>Overall*</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Teacher (DHH)</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>Teacher (ECSE)</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>58%</b>

\*ASL Specialists, DHH Teachers, ECSE Teachers, and SLPs

#### Reported estimates of how often language assessments are provided to children



#### Resources commonly provided to families by educators



### What common language assessment tools are being used?

Language Assessment	Ongoing Assessment <sup>a</sup>	Evaluation <sup>b</sup>
Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) Birth to 3	70%	45%
Developmental Milestone Checklists	67%	39%
SKI-HI Language Development Scale	58%	50%
American Sign Language Expressive Skills Test	8%	17%
Auditory Skills Checklist	42%	37%
Communication Matrix	25%	38%
Cottage Acquisition Scales for Listening, Language and Speech (CASSLS)	13%	18%
Developmental Assessment of Young Children: 2nd Edition (DAYC-2)	12%	46%
Functional Listening Inventory	26%	43%
MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory (CDI)	18%	14%
MacArthur Bates ASL CDI 2.0	8%	8%
Receptive Expressive Emergent Language Scale (REEL)	11%	41%
Visual Communication and Sign Language Checklist (VCSL)	25%	26%

<sup>a</sup> Assessment means the ongoing procedures used by qualified personnel to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the early intervention services appropriate to meet those needs throughout the period of the child's eligibility and includes the assessment of the child, and the assessment of the child's family.

<sup>b</sup> Evaluation means the procedures used by qualified personnel to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility.