

The Importance of Language Allocation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Cindy Lawrence and Laura Burklew

Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (CDHHE)



Family Opportunities

In today's fast paced society, many families are choosing to explore every opportunity for their deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) child to learn and acquire language and be included in their family and communities. When families choose to incorporate both ASL and English into their child's language development, understanding each child's unique ability to access information is critical to successful acquisition in both languages. Research shows benefits to early acquisition of both visual and spoken language. ^{2,3} By incorporating strategies and tools for discussion, such as learning how to embed language into everyday routines, families can plan opportunities for learning language around meaningful activities and family time together. Ongoing assessment and tracking of language milestones should be used as a framework to guide families as they plan robust language opportunities in various settings. When practitioners share all the tools and resources available, families can be confident in the language(s) their child is developing, and language deprivation can be prevented.

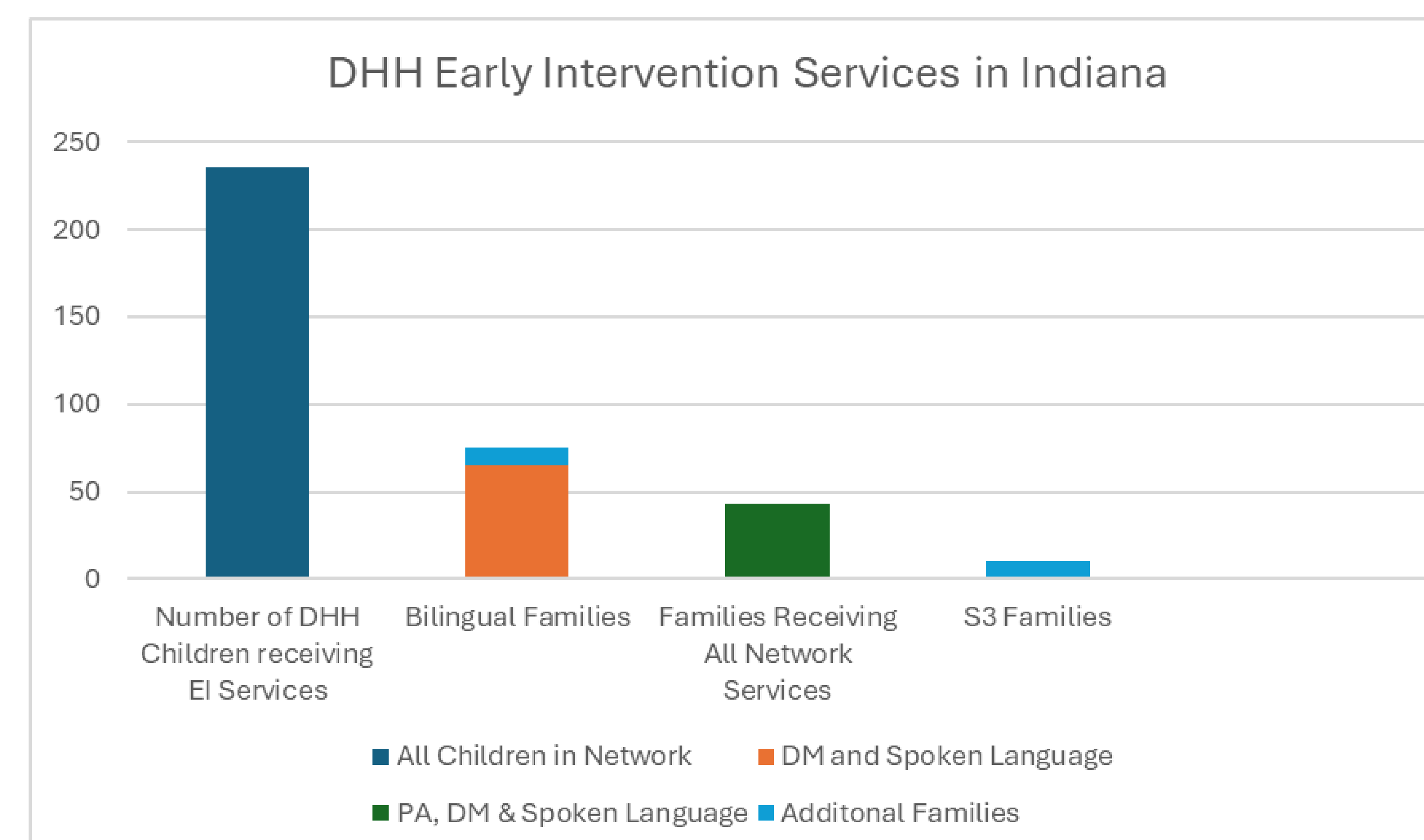
Language Allocation: the deliberate distribution of when and how each language is used in a learning or communication setting. "Our parent advisor, deaf mentor, iHear, and VIPs provider worked so well together and would even come in home often together to cotreat. It was so beautiful . "1

Sharing Information

Families of deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers in Indiana receive information on the CDHHE Early Intervention Network roles and services early on in their early intervention journey (e.g. during intake or initial IFSP meeting). The purpose of this is to ensure families are aware of all specialized services available to them during their time in early intervention, helping them make informed decisions for their child. CDHHE Network services include parent advisor (PA), spoken language (listening and spoken language or bilingual SLP), visual language (Deaf mentor) and audiology services. All providers within the CDHHE Network are highly trained professionals with knowledge of embedding language into everyday routines, language needs for DHH children and a variety of assessment tools including the Indiana Deaf Education and Assessment of Language (IDEAL) parent document to track each DHH child's bimodal language acquisition.

Indiana EI data

Based on our CDHHE Network data from January 2025, of the 236 unique children receiving services, 65 families were documented to receive both spoken language and visual language services with IFSP goals for both ASL and spoken language development. Of the 65 families, 48 families also have parent advisors who have been trained on language allocation. Forty-three families with bilingual goals for both ASL and spoken language in their child's IFSP are receiving all three CDHHE Network services (parent advisor, spoken language, visual language) to provide a language rich environment for their DHH child in ASL and English. Through our data collection, we found at least 10 additional families who are using English and ASL but not receiving Deaf Mentor services. These families attend our monthly virtual bilingual story time, Signs, Snacks and Stories (S3).



Visit our website for more information about IDEAL:



Strategies & Tools

There is a plethora of resources for families learning about American Sign Language and listening and spoken language (LSL) strategies. However, there are fewer resources when it comes to allocating each language in the home. Here are some strategies and tools to assist in language allocation in addition to the language milestones and parent documents in our IDEAL website:

- SKI-HI curriculum and handouts
- Diagnostic Record and Intervention Plan Early Years, RIPPLE Language, LLC
- Family Guided Routine Based Intervention (FGRBI)
- CDHHE Appendix V: Considerations of Special Factors Worksheet



Acknowledgments

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1. Parent testimonial from family who received all three EI services as well as vision services. 2. Wilkinson E, Morford JP. How bilingualism contributes to healthy development in deaf children: a public health perspective. *Maternal Child Health J* 2020;24 (11):1330-1338. 3.. National Association of the Deaf. Position Statement: Implications of Language Deprivation for Young Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and Hard of Hearing Children, 2024. 4. The NCHAM eBook Chapter 21: Language Acquisition for the Bilingual Child: A perspective on Raising Bilingual Children in the U.S. Lucia Quinonez Summer, MA.