



🔄 EHDI 2026 UPDATE

ALL ABOUT ASSESSMENTS!

Effectively Using Language Assessments for D/HH Children



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Updated to reflect new HRSA & CDC language acquisition data reporting requirements



OVERVIEW



Legal Requirements & Qualifications



Types and Purposes of Assessments



Key Considerations for Young D/HH Children



Using Assessment Information Effectively



Recommendations and Takeaways



Resources & Trainings

CRITICAL UPDATE

NEW FOR 2026

HRSA Language Acquisition Data Requirement

New federal mandate requires states to collect and report language acquisition outcomes data to the CDC. We will cover how this impacts your assessment protocols and reporting workflows.

Legal Requirements



EHDI Act 2017

(42 USC 280g-1)

Mandates statewide systems for screening, diagnosis, and intervention.

- ✓ Requires language acquisition data collection



IDEA Part C

(34 CFR §303.321)

Assessment by qualified personnel to identify unique strengths and needs.

- ✓ Includes personal observation & family input



NAEYC Principles

(P-5.6 & P-4.5)

Use appropriate strategies and interpret results accurately to families.

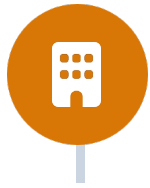
- ✓ Culturally sensitive & clear communication

Data Reporting Workflow



Providers Assess

Providers use validated tools to assess language acquisition (ASL/English).



States Collect

State EHDI programs aggregate outcomes data from Part C & schools.



Report to CDC

States submit aggregated language data to CDC for national monitoring.

1-3-6 Benchmarks Retained

1

Month
Screen

3

Months
Diagnose

6

Months
Intervention

Your Action Items

- Use validated assessment tools across all modalities.
- Align documentation with IFSP/IEP reporting cycles.
- Establish data-sharing workflows with Part C coordinators.

Assessment: Purposes (Why)

Why We Assess



Compare to Milestones

Evaluate child's development against established language milestones for their age.



Monitor Growth

Track progress over time to ensure interventions are effective and adjust strategies.



Develop Outcomes

Inform IFSP/IEP goals and create individualized language plans based on strengths/needs.



Establish Baseline

Determine starting point for service intensity and guide initial intervention decisions.

Assessment: Types (What)

What We Use



Parent/Caregiver Input

Interviews, questionnaires & checklists (e.g., milestone tools).



Naturalistic Observation

Play-based language sampling in natural environments.



Direct Elicitation

Structured probes and curriculum-based measures.



Functional Listening

Auditory access measures to contextualize performance.



Standardized Tests

Use with caution: **paired with professional judgment** regarding norms and modality bias.



Progress Monitoring

Frequent, brief checks for shorter intervals to track responsiveness to intervention.

Qualifications for Assessors



Language Fluency

Fluent in child's primary language/mode (ASL/Spoken).



Cultural Competence

Respect for Deaf culture & family language choices.



Child Development

Deep understanding of D/HH developmental milestones.



Tool Training

Reliability on specific measures (e.g., VCSSL, PLS-5).



Family Communication

Explain results clearly without jargon.



Team Collaboration

Work with SLPs, TODs, audiologists & Deaf mentors.

Effective Use of Assessment Data



01

Synthesize Data

Combine parent input, observations, test scores & access data.



02

Identify Needs

Pinpoint specific strengths and gaps across all modalities.



03

Create Goals

Set family-centered outcomes for IFSP/IEP and language plans.



04

Monitor Progress

Track growth every 3-6 months and adjust services.

And publish/make public for community awareness including families

Assessment Tools: Key Examples



VCSL Checklist

Visual Communication & Sign Language checklist for ASL development (0-5 years).



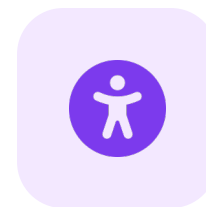
Parent Questionnaires

MacArthur-Bates (CDI) & specialized D/HH parent reporting tools.



Spoken Language Tools

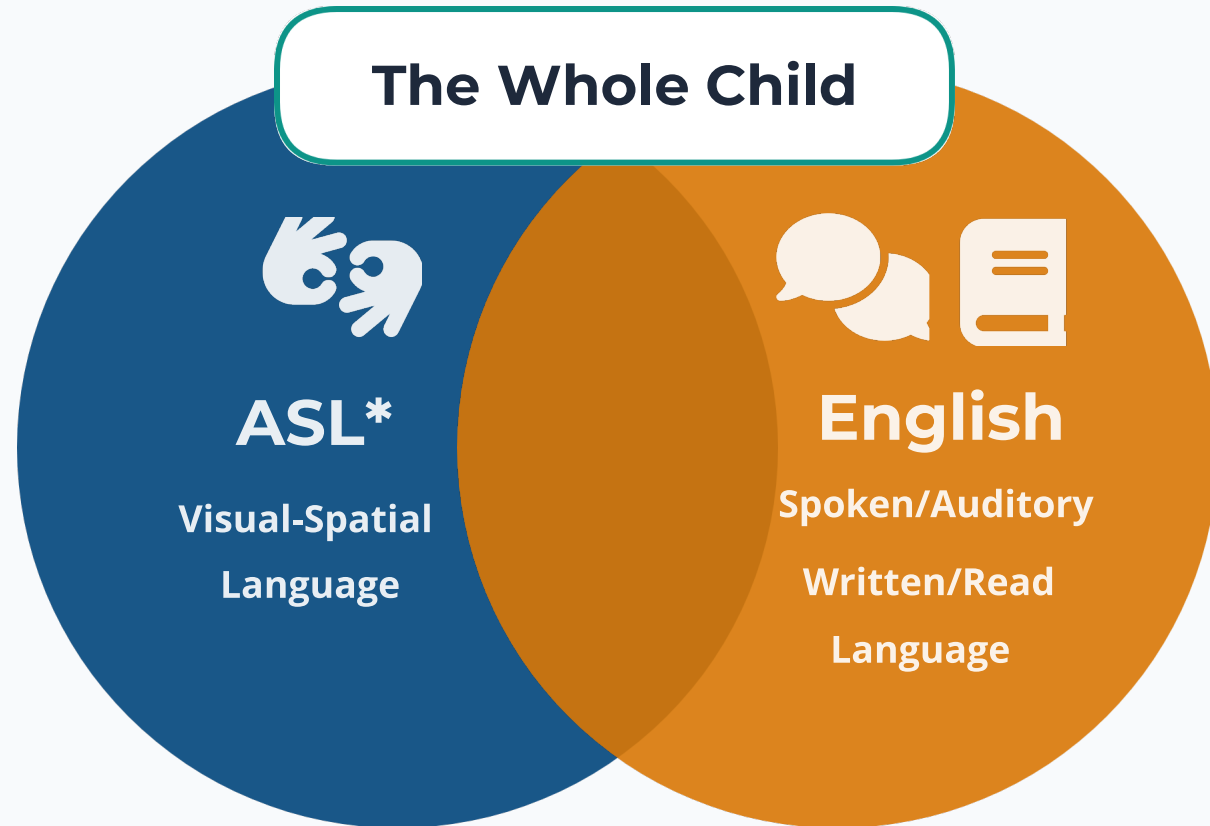
Standard measures (PLS-5, CELF-P) used with caution & accommodations.



Functional Access

ELF, FLE, and other functional listening/visual access evaluations.

Bilingual–Bimodal Development



Track **BOTH** languages separately & together.



Do **NOT** penalize for modality differences or justify by age of technology usage

Key Takeaways



Assessment is an **ONGOING PROCESS**, not a one-time event.



D/HH assessment is **UNIQUE**—match tools to modality.



The **BRAIN** doesn't discriminate, but systems do.



Value **VISUAL ABILITIES** as key drivers of progress.



Maintain **AGE-APPROPRIATE** expectations for growth.



Align data with **2026 REPORTING** requirements.

Resources & Trainings



Clerc Center

"Learning Through the Eye and Ear" & training webinars.

clerccenter.gallaudet.edu



VL2 & VCSSL

Visual Communication Checklist & family resources.

vl2.gallaudet.edu



HRSA EHDI Network

National Network Centers: ICC, FL3, and PEC. Language Acquisition 101, directories, and EHDI Program Map.

<https://beaconforehdi.org/ehdi-national-network/>



LEAD-K

State level model bill for establishing a process to disseminate milestones and track acquisition assessment

<https://www.lead-k.org/>

Thank You!



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