

Policy Review Series

# 25 Years of Policy, Politics, and Progress



## Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI), 1999–2026

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*Nonpartisan review informed by policy practice and lived experience*

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 EHDI Annual Meeting 2026

Overview

# Agenda

A simplified roadmap through 25 years of legislative history and future directions.

-  **Foundation (1999 & IDEA)**
-  **Timeline of Key Milestones**
-  **EHDI Evolution: 2010, 2017, 2022**
-  **The 1-3-6 Benchmarks**
-  **GAO 2024 Study Findings**
-  **Looking Ahead to 2027 and beyond**
-  **Interactive Q&A**

# Historical Foundation: IDEA + 1999 Act

**Two distinct policy foundations:** IDEA established the early intervention framework (1986), which the 1999 EHDI Act built upon for hearing-specific screening.

## Part C Added 1986

### IDEA (Parts C & B)

- **Part C (0-3):** Early Intervention services
- **Part B (3-21):** Special Education (FAPE)
- Created **service delivery system**



## 1999 Act

### Newborn Hearing Screening Act

- **Nationwide screening** implementation
- Authorized HRSA, CDC, & NIDCD support
- Built **identification pipeline** on IDEA



### State Leadership Context

**Early 1990s:** Hawaii & Rhode Island were first states with UNHS legislation. **By 2003:** 37 states had enacted UNHS laws.

# Where IDEA Meets EHDI



## IDEA Part C

Birth to Age 3

- **Immediate Handoff** from EHDI
- **IFSP Development**
- **Service Coordination**



## IDEA Part B

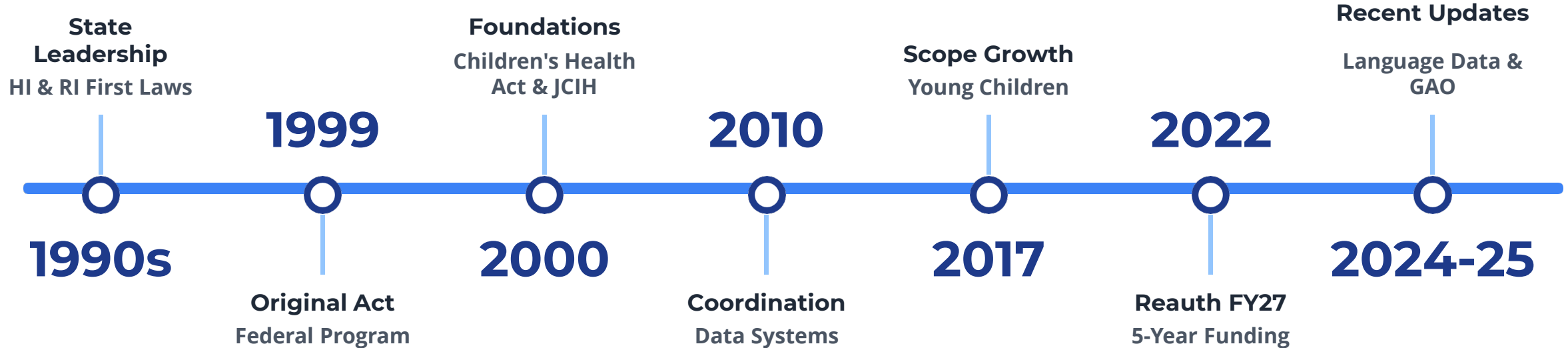
Age 3 to 21

- **Transition at Age 3 (IEP)**
- **Language & Communication focus**
- **LRE** (Placement options)



Coordination: EHDI timeliness + IDEA service quality = Improved Outcomes

# Timeline of Key Milestones



# The 1-3-6 Benchmarks

JCIH 2000 Position Statement established Principles & Guidelines for state EHDI programs - still relevant 25+ years later

 **Established 2000**  
by JCIH

**1**

Month

**Screen**

Newborn Hearing  
Screening

**3**

Months

**Diagnose**

Audiologic Evaluation

**6**

Months

**Intervene**

Early Intervention  
(Part C)

Legislative Update

# EHDI Act 2010: Highlights

## Public Law 111-337

Reauthorization of Federal Support

## Key Focus

From Screening to Intervention



**Strengthened Service Linkages**



**Reinforced Data Surveillance**



**Reduced Loss to Follow-up**



**Family-Centered Support**

Legislative Update

# EHDI Act 2017: What Changed

Public Law 115-71

Expanded Scope

Now includes "Young Children"



Refined Program  
Scope



Improved Data  
Interoperability



Elevated Family  
Support



Involvement of  
Deaf/HH  
Professionals



Resources in Both  
Modalities Required



Language  
Acquisition Data  
Mandated

Latest Update

# EHDI Act 2022

Key changes in the most recent reauthorization.



**Public Law  
117-241**



**Authorized  
Through FY2027**



**\$235,000  
Per State**



**GAO Study  
Mandate**

# EHDI Act 2022: Before vs. After

POLICY AREA	 BEFORE 2022	 AFTER 2022
 <b>Funding Levels</b>	Varied up to \$250k	<b>Standardized \$235k</b>
 <b>Period</b>	3-4 years	<b>5 years (through FY2027)</b>
 <b>GAO Study</b>	None mandated	<b>Mandated Study</b>
 <b>Outcomes</b>	1-3-6 outcomes only	<b>Language acquisition required (2017+)</b>
 <b>Metrics</b>	Older metrics	<b>Updated 2021+ metrics</b>

# GAO 2024–25: Key Findings

Released Jan 2025

## Measurement Changes

New metric counts **all infants** with possible hearing loss.

**Impact: More accurate, inclusive data tracking.**

## Workforce Gaps

Shortage of pediatric audiologists remains a critical barrier.

## Language Data

New FY2024 requirement to measure acquisition outcomes.

## Equity Issues

Diversity plans lacked measurable goals to track disparity reduction.

## Family Support

Parent guides and deaf mentors improve family follow-through.

# Language Acquisition Data



Effective  
FY2026



## FY2026 Submission Deadline

States must submit aggregate language outcomes data by FY2026.



## Implementation Timeline

2017 Mandate → Planning Phase → FY2026 Aggregate Submission.



## Track Language Development

Monitor progress in ASL and English acquisition to improve outcomes.



## Building State Capacity

Strengthening infrastructure for consistent data collection and reporting.

# State Challenges & Federal Support

## Challenges



### Workforce Gaps

Pediatric audiologist scarcity



### Access Barriers

Rural & follow-up issues



### Data Capacity

System interoperability needs



## Federal Support



### TA Centers

Technical assistance support



### Targeted Funding

Data & family grants



### IDEA Coordination

HRSA, CDC & ED alignment

# Resources & Technical Assistance

## Federal

- HRSA (Grants)
- CDC (Data/Benchmarks)
- NIDCD (Research)

## State / Local

- State EHDI Programs
- Early Intervention (Part C)
- Family Centers

## Community

- Advocacy Groups
- Deaf Mentor Programs
- Parent support organizations

## Tools



- National Beacon Center/network
- Telehealth Guides
- Reporting Templates

# Looking Ahead to 2027

## Framework for Positive Outcomes



*"From Screening to Success: A Hopeful Pathway"*



**Stable Funding for All States**



**Thriving Language Outcomes**



**Workforce Development**



**Evidence-Based Practices**



**Family Partnership & Support**

# Interactive Q&A

 Open Floor



## Your Turn

Let's discuss challenges & opportunities.

### Presenter

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01

**What prevents us from shifting from 1-3-6 to 1-2-3?**



02

**How are you implementing language outcomes measurement?**



03

**What is your #1 priority for 2027 Reauthorization?**

