

Statewide Language Outcomes Tracking: Challenges and Collaborative Solutions



University of Colorado
Boulder



National EHDI Conference
March 16, 2026

Supporting Programs and States in Collecting and Documenting Language Outcomes

Allison Sedey, Ph.D., CCC-SLP/A
Early Language Outcomes lab (ĒLO)
University of Colorado-Boulder



University of Colorado
Boulder

Allison.Sedey@Colorado.edu

Early Language Outcomes lab (ĒLO) at CU-Boulder

Currently partnering with 12 early intervention and/or EHDI programs across the U.S.

Supporting programs in the collection and documentation of language outcomes

Contract model with additional support from REAL at Gallaudet University

Programs/states determine which services would be beneficial

Contracting with a 3rd party with an established infra-structure may be more cost effective

Logistics: State/Program's Role

- **State/program determines:**
 - **Who will work with the child/family to complete the assessment(s)**
 - **How often the assessment will be completed**
 - **When the assessment will be completed**
 - **What assessments will be used (from list of possible options)**

Logistics: State/Program's Role

- **State/program:**
 - **Completes:**
 - Brief coversheet
 - One or more developmental/language assessment(s)
 - Demographic form (can be adapted to suit program's needs)
 - **Sends completed forms to ELO via:**
 - Email attachments
 - Uploaded to a shared folder

Services Provided by ELO at CU-Boulder

- Training on assessment administration
- Assessments scored
- Written report of child's results provided (within 1 to 2 weeks)
 - Narrative report
 - Graphic display of results
 - Summary sheets
- Training on interpreting and using assessment results to guide intervention

Services Provided by ELO at CU-Boulder

- **Maintain a database of program's/state's language outcomes**
- **Provide an accountability report characterizing state's/program's demographic characteristics and language outcomes**
- **Present side-by-side comparison to average performance across other ELO programs**
- **Explore health disparities**
- **Share a CSV data file (can be used as is or uploaded to other databases – e.g., EHDI database, student information system)**

South Dakota: Growing Language



Shelby Hintze Jepperson, MPH, CPH ~ USD

Liz DeVelder, MA, CCC-SLP ~ USD

Kami Van Sickle, MA ~ SDSD



Shelby.Jepperson@usd.edu

Liz.Develder@usd.edu

Kami.Vansickle@sdsd.sdbor.edu

Growing Language Project

Language acquisition outcomes for DHH children up to age three in South Dakota

- Assess infrastructure ability to support the long-term goal to improve language acquisition outcomes for DHH children
 - Determine language assessment test battery
 - Developmental Assessment of Young Children 2nd Edition (DAYC-2)
 - MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories (MB-CDI)
 - LittleEars Auditory Questionnaire
 - Determine language outcome collection means
- Build capacity to collect and report language acquisition assessment results for DHH children up to age three
- Plan mechanisms to increase access to language support for DHH children

Assessment Administration

- **Partnership established with Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of South Dakota (USD)**
- **Assessments are administered by trained USD faculty, staff, or graduate students**
- **Evaluators partner with parents throughout the assessment process**
- **South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD) staff are also involved providing support to the process.**

Assessments

Developmental Assessment of Young Children, 2nd Edition (DAYC-2)

- 5 domains:
 - Cognitive
 - Communication
 - receptive language
 - expressive language
 - Social-emotional
 - Physical development
 - gross motor
 - fine motor
 - Adaptive behavior
- Administered by interviewing the parent and observing the child

MacArthur-Bates Comm Development Inventories (MB-CDI) (available in English & Spanish)

- Words and Gestures (WG)
 - Ages 8 to 18 months
- Words and Sentences (WS)
 - Ages 19 to 30 months
- Level 3
 - Ages 30 to 36 months
- Can be sent to the parent to complete and then reviewed by the person administering the assessments

LittleEars Auditory Questionnaire (available in English & Spanish)

- Skills must be demonstrated in an auditory *only* condition
 - Can be sent to the parent to complete and then reviewed by the person administering the assessments, or administered by interviewing the parent and observing the child

Timing (+/- 2 months)

16 months:

- DAYC-2
- MacArthur-Bates CDI Words and Gestures
- LittleEars

24 months:

- DAYC-2
- MacArthur-Bates CDI Words and Sentences
- LittleEars

34 months:

- DAYC-2
- MacArthur-Bates CDI Level 3

Challenges and Strengths

EHDI data

Change

Contracting processes

Partnerships

Unsuccessful efforts

Resourcefulness

Attrition

Funding

North Dakota: Collecting and Documenting Language Outcomes

Lana Zimbelman~ NDSD

Jerusha Olthoff, MSM ~ ND EHDI



North Dakota Early Hearing Detection and Intervention

Nicole.Swartwout@k12.nd.us

Jerusha.Olthoff@minotstateu.edu

Background of Language Assessment in ND

- When did the PIP program start administering language assessments?
- When did the collaboration with ELO start?
- Are there specific timelines for administering language assessments?
- How are the assessments used/shared internally and externally?
- How/where is the information (data) stored?
- Future plans/hopes for system changes?



Assessments required:

For 0–3-year-olds

- DAYC-2
- MacArthur CDI
- LittleEars (Med-EI) up to 24 mos.
- Cincinnati Auditory Skills Checklist 2-5 years
- Ski-Hi LDS may be included

For 3–5-year-olds

- DAYC-2
- Cincinnati
- SKI-HI
- Pragmatics



For non-verbal with significant global delays:

- DAYC-2
- Communication Matrix





CHALLENGES

- Getting the referrals of children with hearing differences
- Families not wanting to participate in ELO
- When families only want visits once a month or less

Language Acquisition: *Shifting from Co-Existing to Collaborating*

In 2023, Supplemental funding focusing on Language Acquisition.

- Strengthening collaboration-engage local and state early childhood providers
- Build state EHDI system capacity to track and assess language acquisition
- Develop a plan to analyze data and respond to identified disparities

In 2024, EHDI Innovation Project-ND focused on using Peer learning collaboratives (7 ECHO sessions)

- Need to improve statewide education
- Improve understanding of the EHDI system, language acquisition, and increase collaboration from ND EHDI stakeholders
- Develop and document statewide policies and procedures for language acquisition.



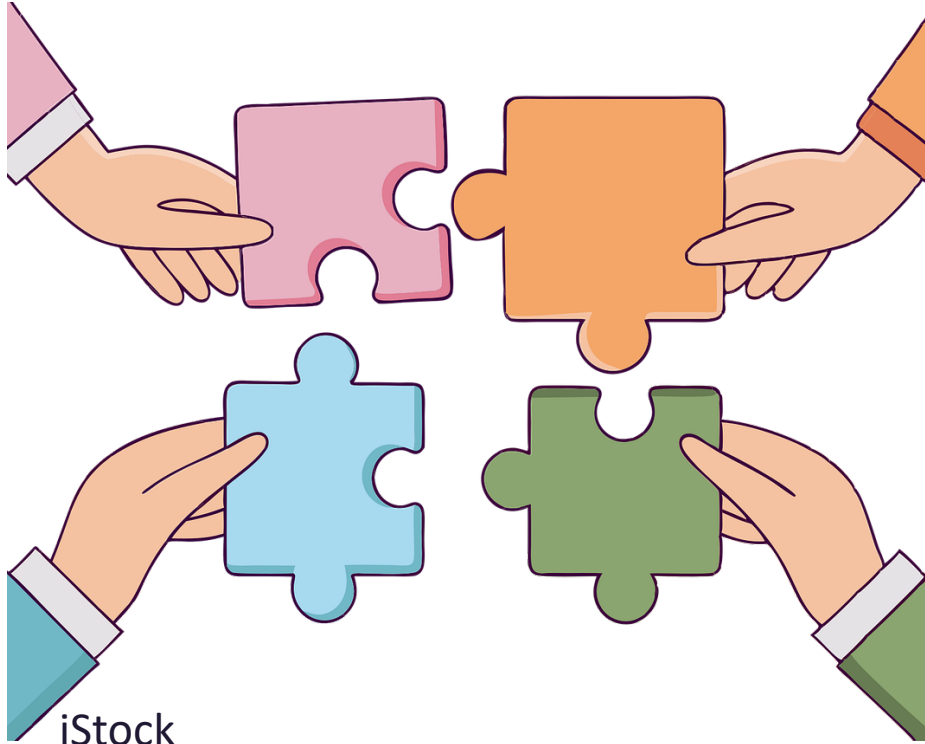
Key Developments

- Began developing an MOA among key partners
- ECHO Sessions to address statewide education on LA and the EHDI system
- Documented statewide policies and procedures for ND LA processes
- Regular meetings with strategic partners forming a community of practice (NDHHS Newborn Screening Program, Part C EI, NDSD PIP)

Future Goals

- Continue the current collaboration with strategic partners to explore issues and implement system changes
- Continue to build capacity to track and assess language acquisition
- Address barriers - parent refusals, data storage and use
- Engage more strategic partners in the community of practice - currently focuses on EI

Collaboration in North Dakota



- ❖ **Department of Health and Human Services-
Newborn Bloodspot
Screening Program and
Part C EI**
- ❖ **Parent-Infant Program for
Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Children and their
Families**
- ❖ **ND Early Hearing
Detection and
Intervention**

