



Michigan Communication Plan for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH)

Introduction

Communication and language are the foundations of learning. Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) communicate in a variety of ways. Language is a system of using words (spoken, written, or signed) with grammatical, syntactical, and pragmatic structures and rules. Communication modalities are techniques, strategies, and philosophies that support the acquisition of a language and/or provide more complete access to language. Communication modalities are not languages in and of themselves. This communication plan is a tool that can facilitate meaningful discussion around a student's unique needs.

Several federal and state regulations exist to guide the development of individualized education programs (IEPs) for students who are DHH. [Section 300.324](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2010/07/26/300-324) (bit.ly/2WVXLCf) of the *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) directs educational teams to consider special factors for students who are DHH. These special factors make the framework for this document:

Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode; and consider whether the child needs assistive technology devices and services.

Please note, this Communication Plan is a tool for guiding discussions and is not intended as a determiner of service. Service determination is the responsibility of the Individualized Family Service Plan team (IFSP) or IEP team.

Instructions

Read each item, consider how each factor may impact the child/student, and refer to existing information to answer questions. Engage in meaningful discussion on next steps to address identified needs.

Resources

For additional information about the education of children and students who are DHH, please refer to the following resources:

- [Michigan-Department of Education - Low Incidence Outreach \(MDE-LIO\)](https://mdelio.org) (mdelio.org) provides consultation, guidance, training, and resources to families and educational teams serving students who are Blind or Visually Impaired and/or Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education \(MARSE\)](https://www.michigan.gov/mar-se) outlines specific requirements regarding how special education is to be implemented in Michigan.
- [Michigan Hands & Voices](https://mihandsandvoices.org) (mihandsandvoices.org) supports families of children who are DHH regardless of communication mode or language.

1. The language and communication needs of the child have been identified through: (check all that apply)

- Assessments/evaluations
- Developmental scales
- Input from parents/family
- Other input (provider reports, medical/clinical evaluations)
- Observations/checklists

Other:

2. The child's primary language is one or more of the following: (check all that apply)

Receptive:

- Spoken English
- American Sign Language
- Minimal language skills and/or no primary language
- Spoken language other than English

Other:

Expressive:

- Spoken English
- American Sign Language
- Minimal language skills and/or no primary language
- Spoken language other than English

Other:

3. The child also uses the following communication modalities in addition to the language(s) checked above (check all that apply)

Receptive:

- Auditory
- Cued Speech/Cued English
- Augmentative alternative communication
- Fingerspelling
- Sign language systems (e.g., Pidgin Signed English, Signed Exact English)
- Gestures
- Speech reading
- Tactile/objects

Other:

Expressive:

- Auditory
- Cued Speech/Cued English
- Augmentative alternative communication
- Fingerspelling
- Sign language systems (e.g., Pidgin Signed English, Signed Exact English)
- Gestures
- Speech reading
- Tactile/objects

Other:

4. What language(s) and communication modalities do the parents/family members use with the child?

5. Do parents/family members feel they are able to communicate effectively with the child at home?

If yes, what supports are available to continue effective communication at home?

If no, what supports are available to improve effective communication at home?

6. Is the child developing language competency at approximately the same rate as peers with typical hearing?

If yes, what supports are needed to continue proficiency?

If no, what supports are needed to increase proficiency?

7. Is the child developing communication modality skills to support language development?

If yes, what supports are needed to continue proficiency?

If no, what supports are needed to increase proficiency?

8. Is the child meeting grade-level benchmarks and expectations?

If yes, what supports are needed for the child to continue meeting expectations?

If no, what supports are needed for the child to meet expectations?

9. Does the child have opportunities for direct instruction using his/her primary language and communication modality (see boxes checked above)?

If yes, these opportunities include the following:

If no, what supports are needed to improve opportunities?

10. Does the child have opportunities for direct communication with peers and school personnel using his/her primary language and communication modality?

If yes, these opportunities include the following:

If no, what supports are needed to improve direct communication?

11. What personal hearing device(s) does the child use (e.g., hearing aid, cochlear implant, bone anchored hearing aid, tactile aid)?

Left side:

Right side:

Other :

None

12.

What assistive technology devices and services does the child need to access language, communication, and instruction? Considerations may include hearing assistive technology (HAT), classroom amplification, and daily check of personal hearing devices. (See Appendix for additional considerations)

13.

What accommodations does the child need to access language, communication, and instruction?
(See Appendix.)

14. Consider the child's full range of needs:

Child's social-emotional needs are:

Child's access to extracurricular activities include:

Child's self-advocacy needs are:

Child's needs during emergency situations (e.g., fire alarms, lockdowns):

Other:

Appendix

This list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. Heading and items listed are meant to support team discussions around possible ways districts can address a child's unique needs.

Daily Practices and Environmental Supports

- Obtain student's attention prior to communicating
- Reduce visual distraction (e.g., remove clutter, reduce visuals on walls)
- Enhance visual access (e.g., eliminate barriers to facial expressions and speech-reading, reduce backlighting, face student when speaking, enunciate clearly)
- Reduce background noise (e.g., carpet and other sound-absorption materials)
- Check for understanding
- Repeat or rephrase information

Hearing Assistive Technology (potential options to consider):

- Frequency Modulated (FM) system
- Digitally Modulated (DM) system
- Classroom amplification systems
- Alerting devices (visual and/or auditory)
- Videophone/captioned phone

Other Accommodations and/or Services (potential options to consider):

- Captioning services (real-time, remote)
- Captioned/signed media
- Speech to text
- Educational interpreter
- Cued speech transliterator
- Note-taker
- Strategic seating arrangements
- Extra time for processing information
- Listening breaks
- Access to announcements via visual and auditory means (general information, emergency)