

Schools for All Children

Fall 2016

The Los Angeles Unified School District's Position Paper Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) services are provided for eligible students with a documented hearing loss that negatively impacts communication skills and/or access to the core curriculum. They include students with an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating but not temporary, that adversely affects his/her educational performance as well as those with a hearing impairment so severe that, with or without amplification, he/she is impaired in processing linguistic information.

Students with Low Incidence Disabilities

A hearing loss is a low incidence disability.

California Education Code Section 56026.5 defines a low incidence disability as "...a severe disabling condition with an expected incidence rate of less than one percent of the total statewide enrollment in kindergarten through grade 12. For purposes of this definition, severe disabling conditions are hearing impairments, vision impairments, and severe orthopedic impairments, or any combination thereof." Additionally, Section 56000.5 (a)(2) finds and declares that "...Pupils with low incidence disabilities require highly specialized services, equipment, and materials."

BACKGROUND

"Communication is at the heart of everything human beings do; it defines and gives meaning to our emotions, beliefs, hopes, creativity, and life experiences. The effective development, understanding, and expression of language are fundamental to any educational experience and are particularly crucial for deaf and hard-of-hearing children" (DHH Guidelines, 1994). Hearing loss is a low incidence disability that significantly impacts the development of language. The general education curriculum is designed with the assumption that students come to school with a language. However, many students with hearing loss enter preschool with significant language delays that place them at a disadvantage when attempting to access the educational curriculum and activities.

California Education Code § 59001.2 (2011) related to the education of DHH students acknowledges the following:

- It is essential for the well-being and growth of deaf and hard-of-hearing pupils that educational programs recognize the unique nature of deafness and ensure that all deaf and

hard-of-hearing pupils have appropriate, ongoing, and fully accessible educational opportunities.

- It is essential that a deaf or hard-of-hearing pupil obtain an education in which teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, assessors, administrators, and other school personnel understand the unique nature of deafness and are trained to work with a deaf or hard-of-hearing pupil.
- It is essential that a deaf or hard-of-hearing pupil obtain an education in which his/her special education teachers are proficient in the primary language mode of that pupil.
- It is essential that a deaf or hard-of-hearing pupil obtain an education in which his or her parents are involved in determining the extent, content, and purpose of [educational] programs.
- It is essential that a deaf or hard-of-hearing pupil, like all pupils, have programs in which his or her unique vocational needs are provided for, including appropriate research, curricula, programs, staff, and outreach.
- Each deaf or hard-of-hearing pupil should receive an education that allows him or her to master a primary language.

DHH Itinerant services are provided in public schools as a related service. As defined by the federal government in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2007 (IDEA), related services are described as "...such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education."

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Division of Special Education defines DHH related services as follows:

The DHH program serves eligible students with a documented hearing loss that negatively impacts communication skills and/or access to the core curriculum. Services are provided to students from ages 3 to 22 through the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Itinerant or special day program. A major focus of DHH services is on the development of receptive and expressive language skills with emphasis on the use of residual hearing and amplification when appropriate. DHH students receive specially designed instruction and services in the general education classrooms, special day programs (other than a DHH special day program) and special school. DHH special day programs promote academic progress by developing language and literacy skills utilizing oral communication, total communication, or dual language methodologies. Many students utilize the services of sign language interpreters to participate in general education classes and extra-curricular activities. Collaboration with general education teachers, school staff, and parents is essential. (LAUSD website: <http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/2155>)

DHH related services extend not only to students with frequency specific digital hearing aids but also to those with cochlear implants, a prosthetic device, both of which have revolutionized the ability of students with significant hearing loss to access sound within mild to normal hearing ranges. DHH services provide education in the use of hearing technology as well as strategies to utilize the technology that are essential to attain the best listening and spoken language outcomes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to identify program guidelines that clarify the array of DHH services provided to students with hearing impairments within LAUSD. Service delivery models for DHH will be described and aligned with the three-tiered models of prevention and intervention. In addition, this paper will describe DHH intervention strategies within special education.

- Section I: Pre-referral Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²)
- Section II: Assessment and Need for DHH Services
- Section III: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Intervention Strategies within Special Education
- Section IV: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Completion Guidelines

POSITION

The District believes that in an effort to ensure a successful school experience for all children:

1. Students will be able to access their educational environment with or without appropriate accommodations.
2. Students will be able to participate successfully within their educational program.
3. Students will be empowered to take an active role to participate in their educational program and to attain the skills to be able to successfully participate in community and postsecondary education.
4. All students eligible for DHH services will be provided with strategies for successful attainment of goals and objectives.
5. Students with disabilities will develop functional/academic skills, and participate in meaningful daily school activities.
6. Students receiving DHH services will have the opportunity to participate with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.

SECTION I

PRE-REFERRAL AND RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION (RTI²)

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) is a systemic multi-tiered framework that guides the development of a well-integrated and seamless system of instruction (e.g. literacy, numeracy, language development, and positive behavior support across content areas), and intervention that is matched to student need and directed by student outcome data from multiple measures. (BUL-4827.1 Multi-Tiered Framework for Instruction, Intervention, and Support)

The RtI² framework establishes a process for providing increasing levels of instructional time and intensity whereby the needs of all learners are identified, supported early and effectively, and high performing students have access to acceleration in learning. The RtI² framework is based on the provision of good, quality, first instruction and the use of data to identify students for appropriate acceleration and interventions. RtI² implementation is everyone's responsibility and advances achievement through frequent progress monitoring, ongoing data collection and analysis, as well as the provision of immediate evidence-based intervention for students who need it.

The five essential components of RtI²:

- Multi-tiered framework to instruction and intervention
- Problem-solving process
- Data based decision-making
- Academic engaged time
- Professional development

In a multi-tiered approach to instruction and intervention, teachers provide instruction at each tier of service that is differentiated, culturally responsive, data based and aligned to the Common Core Standards. All students should have universal access to high-quality instruction. The DHH itinerant teacher is an integral part of the RtI² process in the general education setting. By participating in this intervention approach, the DHH itinerant teacher contributes expertise to the problem-solving process and provides strategies for any student who may evidence challenges in the areas of listening and communication. The problem-solving process requires a step-by-step focus to define the problem, analyze the problem, implement intervention strategies, and evaluate the response to the instruction and intervention.

Tier 3: Intensive Instruction and Intervention

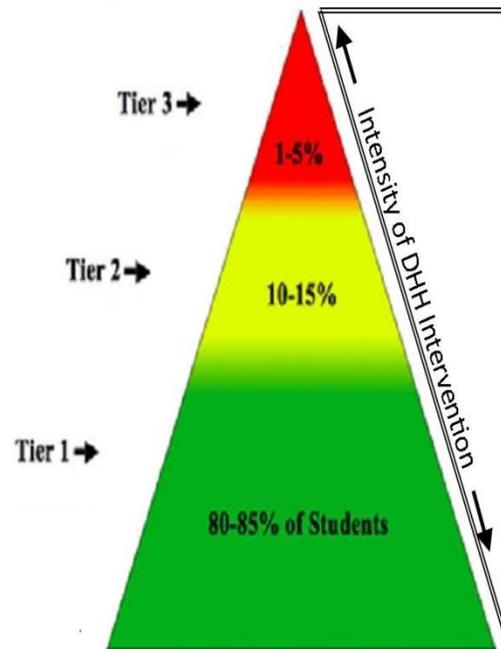
“Intensive Intervention,” is for an estimated 1-5% of students that need individualized and/or very small-group instruction that is highly focused, in addition to Tiers 1 & 2, and designed to accelerate student progress.

Tier 2: Strategic or Supplemental Instruction

It is expected that 10-15% of students will need additional time and type of instruction to learn successfully.

Tier 1: Core Instruction

It is expected that of all of the students receiving core instruction, 80-85% of students will be proficient when good first instruction is delivered.



A Problem Solving Cycle in General Education

Identification

DHH itinerant teachers may be called upon to assist in the identification of listening and communication access issues students may be experiencing.

Problem Analysis

DHH itinerant teachers are highly trained experts in the identification of listening and communication deficits and/or access issues students may be experiencing.



Intervention Design

DHH itinerant teachers will assist the educational team with strategies and accommodations for students with suspected hearing loss.

Response to Instruction and Intervention

DHH itinerant teachers will assist the educational team with progress monitoring and ongoing data collection and evaluation to determine the success or failure of the intervention. Results are utilized to determine the level and intensity of support necessary for individual students.

Intervention Strategies

Tier 1: Core Instruction

Within the Tier I level of universal access to core curriculum and instruction for all students, the DHH itinerant teachers act as consultants to the teachers, school staff, and parents. Consultation may be formal or informal and focuses on increasing the knowledge base of teachers and parents regarding hearing and communication and their relationship to curriculum and function within the school environment. At this level of service, students have not been identified as requiring DHH services. Support is provided by the following means:

- Distribution of literature, provision of resources, as well as in-service presentations to school personnel, and parent groups
- General suggestions for the general education classroom
- General suggestions for seating and positioning to maximize access to aural information

Tier 2: Strategic or Supplemental Instruction and Intervention

During Tier 2, it is the responsibility of the DHH itinerant teacher to observe a student for possible listening and communication delays. Observations are conducted in a natural environment to elicit a representative sample of the student's listening and communication abilities. Observations may include a student in a peer group if the observation does not in any way identify or single-out the student as the one who is being observed.

DHH itinerant teachers may function as a school team participant to provide one or more of the following activities:

- Observes the student in the classroom and/or other environments
- Consults with parents, teachers, and other school staff regarding concerns about the student
- Review teacher data regarding the outcomes of the classroom accommodations from Tier 1
- Provides follow-up observation, as appropriate

The DHH itinerant teacher's observation and evaluation may result in the following outcomes:

- Provide information to the teacher, school staff or parent(s) to support the determination that the student's listening and communication abilities are adequate to access their educational opportunities
- Provide recommendations for targeted interventions or program accommodations to be implemented and documented by the classroom teacher and/or parents

- Schedule a Student Support and Progress Team (SSPT) meeting to address student's needs, accommodations that have been implemented, progress made with those accommodations, and next steps

For the benefit of the student's health and to prevent any further delay of services, it may be recommended that the student be referred for a hearing test.

Tier 3: Intensive Instruction and Intervention

If the student does have a hearing loss that is not significant enough to meet the criteria for referral for DHH Assessment, during Tier 3 the DHH itinerant teacher can provide follow-up consultation and monitoring to the classroom teacher, staff, and parent(s) to support SSPT identified needs. The purpose is to focus on specific listening and communication skills required for the student to access the educational program.

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to implement and document progress for the recommended targeted interventions. It is the responsibility of the DHH itinerant teacher to consult with the classroom teacher and parent on a regular basis to monitor the recommended supports and accommodations and to adjust those recommendations as needed. Tier 3 continues as long as the student continues to make progress in the development of the targeted skills.

A 504 plan might be considered at this point to ensure the child has the appropriate accommodations to continue accessing and progressing in his curriculum when DHH services are not required.

If a student continues to struggle with listening and communication skills after targeted interventions and accommodations are in place, and documented as determined by the SSPT, a referral for a special education evaluation in all areas of suspected disability should be made.

SECTION II ASSESSMENT AND NEED FOR SERVICES

The mission of the Division of Special Education is to provide leadership, guidance, and support to the school community in order to maximize learning for all students within an inclusive environment so that each student will contribute to and benefit from our diverse society.

Once a hearing loss is identified and confirmed by the LAUSD Audiologic Resource Unit, a DHH assessor may be called upon to determine whether there is a need for service. For additional information on audiologic services, refer to the Audiology Position Paper.

The purpose of an initial DHH assessment is to determine whether a child with a diagnosed hearing loss is in need of special education and related services as identified as a student with a DHH eligibility (34 CFR 300.15). Upon receipt of a signed assessment plan, the DHH itinerant teacher will assess the child's strengths and needs as they relate to listening and the communication domains. The components of the DHH assessment may include:

- **Auditory Skills:** Assessment components may include: discrimination, memory sequencing, auditory feedback, and figure-ground
- **Receptive and Expressive Language Function:** Assessment components may include: vocabulary, grammar, expanded sentences, and conversational skills
- **Academic Skills:** Assessment components may include: school readiness or reading, writing, and mathematics skills
- **Teacher Interview**
- **Parent Interview**
- **Observation in the school setting**

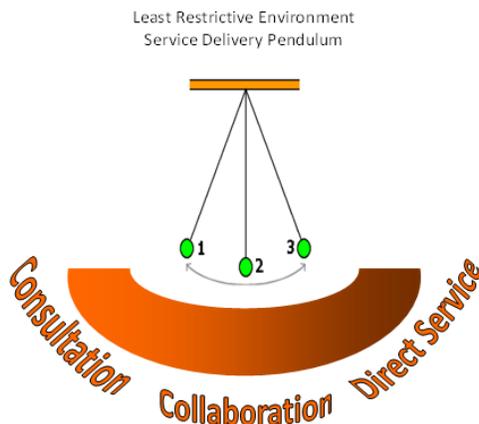
The DHH itinerant teacher will analyze the components within the context of the student’s environment and curriculum.

If needs related to the hearing loss are identified in accessing and progressing in the student’s curriculum, DHH services are recommended as a related service. Based on the student’s assessed needs, the DHH itinerant teacher uses his/her professional expertise to recommend the intensity and frequency of service. If the student’s need is significant and supports, services, accommodations and/or modifications in the student’s IEP cannot be implemented in a general education setting, placement in a more restrictive environment may be considered (i.e., a special day program).

SECTION III SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS WITHIN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The District supports a variety of strategies for the delivery of DHH services. Services may fall into the following 3 categories and like a pendulum, service delivery may swing back and forth between being more intense to less intense depending on the level of support needed at any given time to meet the student’s core academic program needs. Time and frequency of service is based on the student’s need.

- **Consultation** is a service provided directly and indirectly to the student consisting of regular review of student progress, student observation, accommodations and modifications of core material, monitoring hearing technology, developing and modeling of instructional practices through communication between the general education teacher, the special education teacher, parent, and/or related service provider.



- **Collaboration** is a service by which general education teachers, special education teachers, and/or related service providers work together in the classroom to teach and support students with hearing loss to meet their goals and objectives and to access the curriculum.

- **Direct Service** is instruction or service by a single DHH provider designed to support, bridge, and strengthen student skills. It is an opportunity to provide specific skill instruction, re-teach, pre-teach, and scaffold instruction to support student goals and objectives to access the curriculum.

All related services providers are expected to report progress of the students with disabilities on their caseloads toward meeting their IEP goals and objectives.. Providers should coordinate with the school site to ensure they are following the school site procedures for reporting.

SECTION IV DHH SERVICE COMPLETION GUIDELINES

Best practices require that expected outcomes and service completion guidelines are discussed with the IEP team upon the initiation of DHH services and upon change in services. The recommendation for continuation or discontinuation of DHH services is determined by the expertise of the DHH professional in collaboration with the IEP team. There are several factors the IEP teams should consider when making decisions regarding DHH service changes.

1. The student's needs being addressed by DHH services no longer negatively affect his/her educational performance in the regular education or special education program.
2. The student no longer requires DHH as a related service in order to benefit from his/her special education program.
3. The student's needs are better served by an alternative program and/or service, as determined by the IEP team.
4. Service is contraindicated because of the change in medical or physical status.
5. The student/parent refuses DHH services.
6. The student graduates from high school.
7. The student reaches the age of 22 years.

RELATED RESOURCES

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the DHH (<http://listeningandspokenlanguage.org/>)

California Deaf Education Resource Center – South (<http://cdercsouth.org/>)

California Education Code Sections 56026.5 and 56000.5(a)(2)

California Educational Law - (<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>)

Erber, N. (1982) Hierarchy of Listening Skills: A Continuum

<http://idea.ed.gov/>

Los Angeles Unified School District, Division of Special Education. 2007. Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual. Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles Unified School District

Los Angeles Unified School District Website (<http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/2155>)

Mormer, E & Palmer, C. (1997) Developmental Index of Audition and Listening (DIAL)

REF-4984.1 Implementing a Multi-Tiered Framework for Instruction, Intervention, and Support dated March 19, 2010, issued by Los Angeles Unified School District Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support