

A Blueprint For Closing The Gap

*Developing a Statewide System of Service
Improvements for Students who are
Deaf and Hard of Hearing*



The Report of The Colorado Deaf Education Reform Task Force

**Commissioned by The Colorado Department of Education and
The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind**



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Commissioner of Education

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Deputy Commissioner

Message from the State Director Special Education

On behalf of the Special Education Services Unit, I want to acknowledge the members of the Colorado Deaf Education Reform Task Force who devoted many hours to developing this "Blueprint for Closing the Gap" in learning for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. This plan for the future reflects the experiences, concerns, and new ideas of the educators, parents, agency leaders, and community members who support deaf and hard of hearing youth.

The plan reflects the importance of attending to a student's communication development because it is a personal right and a prerequisite for access to learning opportunities that will lead to high academic achievement. It also addresses the uniqueness of education in Colorado. The data shows that we have some challenges that must be met on behalf of our students. I believe that with the collaboration of all of the agencies that serve students in Colorado, and specifically the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, we will meet these challenges. I personally want to thank the Task Force that has provided such clear direction for us in this comprehensive blueprint.

Lorrie Harkness
State Director Special Education

Message from the Superintendent of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB)

I have been involved in the education of students who are deaf and hard of hearing in Colorado for more than 25 years. My varied positions have afforded me the opportunity to know many former students who now lead full and successful lives. However, as the current Superintendent of CSDB, I am also acutely aware that the educational data in Colorado on students who are deaf and hard of hearing is very concerning. For example, data from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) has shown that, on the average, 70% of these students are performing in the unsatisfactory or partially proficient range. Even more alarming is the fact that the scores from the CSAP have worsened over the last several years.

A statewide task force was organized in 2000 under the direction of CSDB and the Colorado Department of Education to address this problem. The charge to the task force was to identify root causes related to low student achievement and to make recommendations to improve educational outcomes, as well as the overall quality of education, for all students who are deaf and hard of hearing in Colorado.

The task force worked diligently for over two years and expertly defined the problems these students face in receiving the quality education that they deserve. The most important issue is that they lack necessary communication skills. This causes them to fall further and further behind academically. This deficit is critically important given the fact that communication is basic to the educational needs of all students. If communication does not occur, literacy cannot be achieved.

Equally important, the task force has offered a series of recommendations that must be addressed to improve the quality of education for these students. Key to all the recommendations is the idea that a variety of educational options must be made available to meet their unique communication needs. Although this fact is easy to understand and accept, it is difficult to achieve for a number of reasons. The report addresses these reasons and offers remedies.

I want to thank the task force for the many hours spent in researching and preparing this report. I know the job was arduous and I greatly appreciate your dedication. Now your job is finished and it is time for Colorado's educators and policy makers to "step up to the plate" and move forward to implement the recommendations. This is particularly timely given the mandates of the new federal law "Leave No Child Behind," which requires educators to increase literacy levels for all students.

When I think of the job ahead, I recall the words of William Shakespeare: "*Hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear.*" You have my commitment that the work will continue to assure that a quality education is available to all students who are deaf and hard of hearing in Colorado regardless of where they live and go to school.

Marilyn Jaitly, Ph.D.
Superintendent

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The under-achievement of students who are deaf and hard of hearing has been an enigma to professionals and parents for decades. This Task Force recognizes that there are no simple solutions to the problem. However, we believe that we can do better and that we must continue to pursue any and all avenues that will result in every D/HH student receiving an education that is not limited by communication barriers as a result of hearing loss or deafness. This report is the result of many hours of thought, discussion, input from experts, investigation of programs in other states, and deliberation. Our goal is to close the achievement gap while preserving the dignity of each student. We proudly present our plan. We will persist until our goal has been met.

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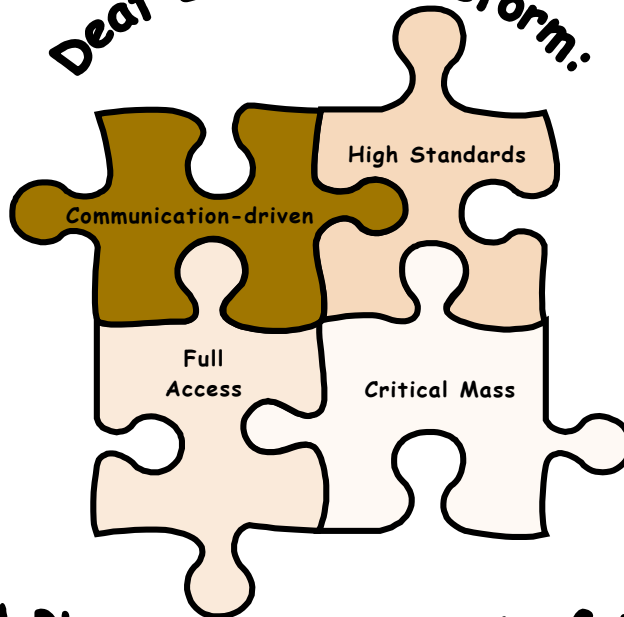
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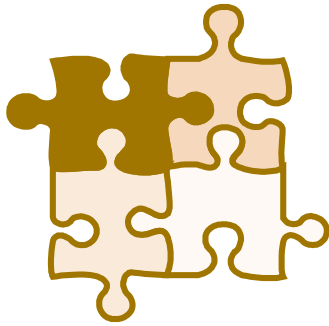
A Blueprint for Closing the Gap

VISION

Colorado education reform for D/HH students will result in communication-driven educational programming that meets the state's high academic standards and supports the social and emotional development of learners.

Rationale

Communication access is a fundamental human right . Every D/HH child must have full access to all educational services and school sponsored activities . Families are paramount in a child's success and must be involved in their children's education programs . A child's needs determine service delivery; needs must be monitored as they are continually changing . D/HH children must have the opportunity to maximize their potential . D/HH children must have opportunities to interact directly with their peers and with adults . D/HH students must develop age-appropriate self-advocacy skills . Least Restrictive Environment is communication-driven and reflected in accessible, language-rich surroundings

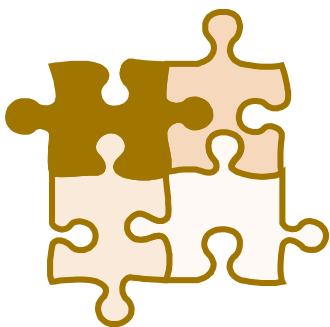


A BLUEPRINT FOR CLOSING THE GAP:

Developing a Statewide System of Service Improvements for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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Executive Summary

Children who are deaf and hard of hearing have unique communication needs that directly affect their personal development and their educational achievement capability. Research data clearly show that change within the current educational system is necessary to improve outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children. We must close the gap.

Every child is entitled to a free and appropriate educational experience. But, in order to realize this goal for students who are deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH), the State of Colorado must recognize and accept its obligations and responsibilities as follows:

- Grant D/HH students *full access* to their educational environments
- Expect D/HH students to achieve the same high standards in place for all students and provide the appropriate support that will allow them to attain those standards
- Place D/HH students in programs based on their communication needs
- Provide opportunities for D/HH students to participate in all educational and social experiences, including activities with normal hearing students and adults
- Provide opportunities for D/HH students to participate in education and social experiences with other D/HH peers and adults
- Acknowledge that these rights fall within the realm of equal expectations for all students and accept the government's burden to guarantee that they are met.

Contrary to these goals, facts identified by the National Deaf Education Project (Siegel, 2000) show that the target group falls below minimum standards:

- Deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) children graduate with 3rd grade reading aptitude
- D/HH children gain only 1.5 years in literacy skill between the ages of 8 and 18;
- D/HH children are overwhelmingly unprepared for college evidenced by a graduation rate of just 8%
- The earning capacity of D/HH children is, on the average, 40-60% below that of their hearing counterparts. We must close the gap.

And in Colorado:

- On average, 70% of D/HH students are performing in the unsatisfactory/partially proficient range on tests of the Colorado Student Assessment Program; alarmingly the number of students in the unsatisfactory range has increased over the past 3 years (Johnson, 2001)
- On average, D/HH students perform 2-3 years below their hearing peers (Johnson, 2000)

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- The number of D/HH students who receive the majority of their education mainstreaming in the general school classroom is 26% higher than the national average (US Department of Education, 2002).

Other factors in Colorado which contribute to poor achievement of D/HH students include:

- Lack of access to qualified educational interpreters despite legislation mandating minimum qualifications
- Lack of current statewide program guidelines to promote standards of practice, staffing patterns, and caseload recommendations
- Lack of district-level leadership from specialists in educating children who are D/HH
- Lack of a statewide system to promote teacher inservice, current research, and standards of practice
- Lack of effective teacher evaluation, which largely is the result of evaluators being unfamiliar with the education of students who are D/HH
- Recruitment and retention problems, particularly in rural areas struggling with a declining economy, coverage of large geographical areas, a broad range of hearing disabilities, and a disability that receives inadequate attention because fewer students are affected. We must close the gap.

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and the Colorado Department of Education have taken steps to study these issues in order to make recommendations for improvement. From 2000 through 2001, the Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Services Unit collected data from the following sources:

- A statewide assessment of the performance of D/HH children in Colorado's public schools including demographic and academic data on a 150-student sample enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 (Appendix B)
- An analysis of 1998 through 2001 Colorado Student Assessment Program scores for D/HH students (Appendix C)
- An analysis of more than 300 Colorado young children (birth – age 5) who are D/HH (Appendix D)

"If communication goes awry, it affects the intellectual growth, social intercourse, language development and emotional attitudes, all at once, simultaneously and inseparably."

Oliver Sacks, author, Seeing Voices.

- An analysis of current demographic information regarding number and location of D/HH students, educational placements, and services (Appendix E)
- A report describing attributes of successful deaf students in statewide general education classrooms (Appendix F)
- The results of focus groups held in 3 regions of the state to determine education concerns for D/HH children (Appendix G)
- Existing federal and state legislation guiding policy for D/HH students (Appendixes A, H, & I)
- A review of other pertinent professional reports (Appendix J).

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The Colorado Department of Education established a Deaf Education Reform Task Force, which met regularly throughout the 2000-2001 school year. Membership of the Task Force represented special education, regular education, school administration, members of the D/HH community, parents, the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, university training programs, organizations supporting deaf and hard of hearing constituents, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, and the Colorado Department of Education. Consultants from California and Arizona also assisted the Task Force. The Task Force addressed the following missions:

- Analyze the changing demographics and needs of children who are D/HH in the state of Colorado
- Improve educational outcomes for D/HH children
- Recommend an effective communication-based service delivery system for D/HH children in Colorado.

As a result of the evidence researched, collected, analyzed, and discussed, the Task Force made the following recommendations (each recommendation is discussed fully in Section 4):

1. Colorado should implement a coordinated statewide regional education system as an educational option that will effectively and efficiently meet the needs of D/HH children.
2. D/HH students should have access to quality academic and extracurricular programs that are communication-driven. Criteria for establishing these programs should be implemented.
3. Communication-driven programs serving D/HH students should be subject to on-going assessment to assure full access, student achievement, and high standards.
4. On-going training, mentoring, and a full spectrum of professional development activities should be implemented statewide to support and improve proficiency for specialty providers, general educators, administrators, and families.
5. The Colorado Department of Education should collaborate with national and state agencies and higher education programs to recruit, train, and encourage retention of staff providing services to D/HH students.
6. A system of community and parent education that leads to meaningful involvement that will result in full access and collaboration so that each child will have opportunities to maximize potential and achieve high standards should be implemented.
7. Colorado should develop and implement a funding system that will provide sufficient resources for a quality education for D/HH children.

The Task Force has developed goals and a timeline for implementation of a statewide regional system of education and support (see Section 5). However, the program should begin with a pilot program in one region. The pilot should be maintained in accordance with the new statewide system and should be coordinated by a regionally-appointed advisory council working with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. Of utmost importance is that the pilot program reflects the unique characteristics and needs of its

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region while, at the same time, adhering to the high standards and basic tenants upon which the statewide system is founded.

Specific follow-up activities to implement this plan are identified below:

- Determine funding structure
- Report regularly to stakeholders (Colorado Department of Education, State Board of Education, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, special education directors, local service providers, other pertinent state agencies and advocacy groups) through meetings facilitated by Task Force members
- Report progress to the state legislature
- Establish regional advisory councils
- Determine regional administrative structures
- Develop criteria for student eligibility for regional programs
- Determine regional educational and support services
- Develop accountability, compliance, and evaluation components
- Determine regional center staffing
- Hire regional coordinators and establish offices.

Current challenges and solutions to meet the needs of D/HH children are summarized below:

<i>Current Challenges</i>	<i>Blueprint for Change</i>
<p>1. Outcomes and Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsatisfactory outcomes: 75 percent of D/HH students demonstrate unsatisfactory/partially proficient performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program. • Colorado Student Assessment Program assessments begin in the 3rd grade which is too late to make substantive program changes that will result in positive outcomes for D/HH children. • Research shows poor compliance with D/HH statewide accountability assessment. • Low expectations of academic and social performance for D/HH students continue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication-driven programs will have standards commensurate with hearing peers, provide on-going assessment, and maintain accountability for student achievement. • Assessment will include the Colorado Student Assessment Program and other evaluations that include bodies of evidence that consider communication and social and emotional functioning, in addition to academic performance. • Community and parent education programs and professional training and development will raise expectations for success and motivate adults to encourage children to maximize their potential.

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<i>Current Challenges</i>	<i>Blueprint for Change</i>
<p>2. Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical shortage of trained providers (teachers and specialists), especially in rural areas denies equal access to education for D/HH children. • Lack of trained specialists (speech-language pathologists, mental health providers) results in a failure to address the communication needs of infants, toddlers, and D/HH children and their families. • Current methods for professional development and training serve a limited number of professionals and utilize an only marginally effective format. • Current methods have failed to bring about substantive improvements in student outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statewide regional education system will deliver a new model of educational service to address the unique issues of rural communities. • The Colorado Department of Education will collaborate with national and state agencies and higher education programs to recruit, train, and encourage retention of staff to provide continuity of services to D/HH children. • The Colorado Department of Education will seek out professionals who are cross-trained in deaf education, communication disorders, and early childhood in order to address the communication needs of all D/HH children. • Under the improved system, professional development and training opportunities will expand, emphasizing individual (professional or parent) needs and providing on-going mentoring to specialty providers, general educators, administrators, and families.
<p>3. Funding and Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing funding is locally-based and insufficient to meet the needs of D/HH students. • Unfair treatment of D/HH children exists from district to district because of inequitable services and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statewide regional education system will provide sufficient resources to fund quality education for D/HH children. • A coordinated statewide regional education system will promote practices and support funding that will result in improved performance of students.
<p>4. Access to programs and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D/HH students have limited access to quality academic and extracurricular programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an upgraded program for D/HH students, activities are communication-driven, not available-resources driven.

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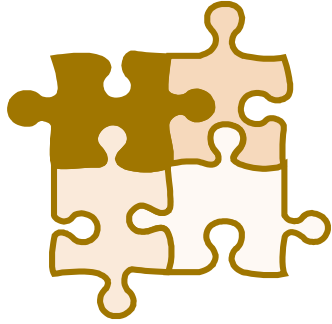
<i>Current Challenges</i>	<i>Blueprint for Change</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services are driven by administrative constraints and a lack of resources rather than the communication needs of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regionalized system will allow children access to any programs that best meet their needs, regardless of school district boundaries.
<p>5. Parent and Community Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational systems are not always conducive to equal partnerships between parents and professionals. • Under the current system, few opportunities exist for input from the D/HH community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statewide regional education system will establish parent liaison positions to bridge home-school communication, and to participate in decision-making at the program development level. • The statewide regional education system will establish D/HH role model/mentors to work with children, parents, and professionals.

In conclusion, D/HH students are being short-changed by the current educational system, and are ill-prepared to contribute meaningfully to society. Further, many of the same issues identified in a 1990 report, *Statewide Plan for Delivery of Educational Services to Children who are Hearing Impaired/Deaf or Visually Impaired/Blind*, remain today (CDE/CSDB, 1990). The identified number of D/HH children has increased during the past several years due to earlier detection, more accurate reporting, and the increased availability of technology (e.g., computers, digital amplification, cochlear implants, assistive listening devices). More children are in general education classrooms and need appropriate management and support services. There is a prevailing challenge to prescribe, manage, and monitor the educational program for each child. Administrators, educators, other school personnel, parents, and the deaf and hard of hearing students themselves need training regarding the unique needs of children with hearing loss.

The Deaf Education Task Force recommends implementing a pilot program based on its research, findings, analysis and conclusions. This pilot program, which will parallel the proposed statewide program, offers the best opportunities for success for our D/HH children. We owe it to them to close the gap.

"The problem is not that the students do not hear. The problem is that the hearing world does not listen."

The Reverend Martin Luther King in reference to deaf and hard of hearing children.

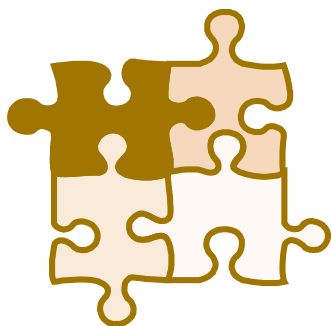


Vision Statement

Colorado education reform for D/HH students will result in communication driven educational programming that meets the state's high academic standards and supports the social and emotional development of motivated learners.

Rationale

- Communication access is a fundamental human right. The development of language and communication skills is essential to a child's academic and social success in the educational environment.
- Every D/HH student must have full communication access and unrestricted involvement in all educational services and school-sponsored activities.
- Family involvement is paramount to the success of D/HH children. Care must be taken to include parents in the education programs of their sons and daughters.
- A child's individual needs determine service delivery; because needs are affected by many variables, services must be monitored continuously.
- D/HH children must have the opportunity to maximize their potential.
- D/HH children and youth must have opportunities to interact with hearing and non-hearing peers and adults.
- D/HH children should be encouraged to develop age-appropriate self-advocacy skills.
- The least restrictive environment is communication-driven and reflected in accessible, language-rich surroundings.



Statement of the Problem

***Susie** is an active 3rd grader with above-average intelligence, but her language delay has resulted in an inability to read. As a result, she is not progressing with her classmates and may be held back. This will make her older and physically larger than any of her classmates and likely not accepted by them.*

***Johnny**, a kindergartner, has difficulty communicating verbally with classmates. He often displays aggressive behavior and is disruptive in class. His general classroom teacher doesn't feel comfortable communicating with him and sends him to the principal regularly, because she doesn't know what else to do.*

***Ben** is a high school sophomore making good grades who's been recommended for advanced coursework. Since he shares the only available sign language interpreter with two other deaf students who aren't at that academic level, he won't be able to pursue the opportunity. And since he's making good grades, his school district's position is that he is receiving an appropriate education.*

In 1975 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandated that children with disabilities were entitled to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE), e.g., the environment where their typical peers were educated. With the goal that children with disabilities were not to be isolated, *inclusion* has been the conceptual basis of an educational system designed to provide equal opportunity for all students, with or without disabilities. Over time, it has become clear that while inclusion has served many children with disabilities very well, that is not always the case for many children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Communicating “differently” or without direct conversation with teachers and peers can create the *most* restrictive environment for many D/HH students in a classroom of hearing peers. Legally, “LRE” has been interpreted and implemented without sensitivity to, or acknowledgement for, the special communication needs presented by deaf children that often go unmet in the “least restrictive environment.” The outcome has been isolation and academic underachievement. Until the conceptual basis of education (and all supporting mandates) is understood to be communication-driven for D/HH students, the system will continue to discriminate against this population. In fact, it is the inequity of our present educational system that has resulted in the further disabling of D/HH children.

At the federal level, the importance of communication as a starting point for identifying appropriate services for a child was first acknowledged in “Deaf Students Education Services: Policy Guidance” 57 Fed. Reg. 49274 (1992) (reprinted in Appendix I). This report stated that “The (U.S. Department of Education) Secretary believes that communication and related service needs of many children who are deaf have not been adequately considered in the development of the IEP.” Moreover, it points out that the child’s communication needs,

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linguistics needs, and social and emotional needs must be primary factors in considering the least restrictive environment for each child.

The general classroom does not adequately serve all D/HH students because it frequently denies full communication access. As long as communication is perceived as secondary to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA) "core" concept of LRE, the specific and systematic problems that are unique to educating D/HH children will continue. The intent of IDEA, is to decrease, not increase, a child's isolation.

In 1989, a performance review and management study of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind was conducted by the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado State Legislature (H.B. 91-1171) (CDE/CSDB, 1990). The performance audit recommended that the school re-examine its role and staffing pattern to better support students in local school districts. In 1991, legislation was passed that gave the school statutory authority to expand its role as a statewide resource center and provide outreach services. In addition, this study identified several issues and recommendations that have still not been sufficiently addressed and are, therefore, incorporated into this report (see Appendix J, CDE/CSDB Statewide Plan, Executive Summary).

In 1996, the Deaf Child's Bill of Rights (DCBR Public Law 96-1041, Appendix A) recognized the unique needs of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. The bill requires that the Individual Education Program (IEP) team consider the child's communication needs, including communication with peers, and the proficiency of the staff in the child's

Analysis of the 2001 CSAP scores indicated that the number of D/HH students scoring in the unsatisfactory category increased in 6 of the 8 assessments where more than one year's data was available, and the number of D/HH students in the proficient and advanced categories decreased in 4 of these 8 assessments.

communication mode or language. Drawing largely from the Policy Guidelines for Deaf Students published by the U.S. Department of Special Education Programs in 1992, it spelled out areas for specific consideration in the case of students who were deaf or hard of hearing. The DCBR's implementation guidelines established the creation of a "Communication Plan" that is an additional document included with every IEP for D/HH students in Colorado.

In 1997, the Colorado legislature passed HB 1146, which established minimum qualifications for interpreters who work with D/HH children (Appendix A). This bill responded to children who were denied communication access in their educational environment because of poor interpreting quality.

Problems associated with lack of communication access include the following important areas:

- **Academic Success.** The most glaring indications of problems in deaf education are the academic achievement scores of this student population (Appendix B: Assessment Summary, Appendix C: CSAP Summary). Statistics alone cannot report a child sitting alone in a classroom struggling to form ideas and express feelings with language. Statistics cannot explain the struggle to learn concepts while hampered by inadequate communication skills. However, statistics do reveal how profound and widespread this

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problem is. In the state of Colorado, which has emphasized performance-based educational outcomes for all children, research shows that D/HH children—even those with normal or above-average potential—fall far behind their hearing peers in academic achievement. In the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), scores for students with hearing loss are poor. Overall, the 2000 scores indicated that, at the seventh grade level, less than 20 percent of the D/HH students were rated as proficient. By comparison, nearly 60% of the overall student population was rated proficient or above. An analysis of the 2001 CSAP scores indicated that the number of D/HH students scoring in the unsatisfactory category increased in 6 of the 8 assessments where more than one year's data was available, and the number of D/HH students in the proficient and advanced categories decreased in 4 of these 8 assessments.

These statistics are not unique to Colorado. The academic achievement for students at a national level is no better and hasn't changed significantly over time:

- ✓ Between the ages of 8 and 18, D/HH children gain only 1.5 years in reading skills (Allen, 1986)
- ✓ 30% of D/HH children graduate from high school functionally illiterate (Waters & Doehring, 1990)
- ✓ The average performance on tests of reading comprehension is roughly six grade equivalents lower than hearing peers at age 15 (Allen, 1986; Traxler, 2000)
- ✓ Less than half of 18 year old D/HH students leaving high school reach a 5th grade level in reading and writing (Traxler, 2000).

Clearly, these problems are not the result of a single school district failing its children. Rather, the statistics reveal systemic problems evident in the majority of schools. Behind these statistics are real children becoming adults with poor literacy and academic skills. Approximately one third of all deaf adults rely on some form of governmental assistance, and the average income of deaf adults is only 40-60% of their hearing counterparts (Siegel, 2000). In addition, D/HH adults have a higher rate of mental illness and other health difficulties (Scheslinger, 1972). Therefore, it is clear that the problem associated with the education of D/HH children eventually become society's problems compounded by long-term monetary implications (Siegel, 2000).

- **Access to learning for all D/HH students is a complex process, based on individual communication needs that involve a wide spectrum of communication options (e.g., American Sign Language, Pidgin Signed English, Simultaneous (Total) Communication, Cued Speech, Auditory-Verbal, Auditory-Oral.** D/HH students utilize a variety of devices and technologies, including amplification systems, communication devices, assistive devices, and computerized notetaking. Educational interpreters (sign language and oral) are necessary for some students. Considering the variety of communication options and technologies available and/or required, it is often impossible for each school district or administrative unit to provide all of them. However, because by law services must be delivered according to individual student needs, school districts or administrative units

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are inadvertently forced to compromise quality in order to provide the range of services along with the necessary supports.

- **Communication Proficiency.** Communication impacts all aspects of human functioning, from academic to social, from work to pleasure, from social-emotional to intellectual. The ability to understand and produce language defines us as humans and provides us with the means to become literate adults. The unique nature and consequence of deafness or hearing loss is that it can separate deaf or hard of hearing children from communication with others, and subsequently starve the student from active and passive learning of both academic and social skills. Our laws need to recognize communication as a fundamental human right, and to make it a priority in our educational system.
- **Early access to communication has lifelong impacts.** Research has shown that when a child is denied early access to communication, the impact can be felt long into adulthood. Studies have shown that delayed language skills in deaf children also delay thinking skills (Marshark, 2001; Sacks, 1989). A student cannot easily overcome the effects of poor communication access early in life.
- **Assumption that current performance is acceptable.** For too long, the performance of D/HH children has been measured within the context of other D/HH children. This practice has resulted in low expectations for D/HH children. We must recognize that D/HH children are not mentally disabled and, given proper tools and instruction, have enormous potential to succeed commensurate with their hearing peers.
- **Application to children who are hard of hearing.** Children who are hard of hearing are not deaf; they have partial hearing and they are able to use the auditory skills they have to participate to some degree in daily communication. The perception, therefore, is that they are hearing and, as such, they are asked to compete with classmates with normal hearing. Typically, hard of hearing children are not provided with the accommodations necessary for them to access communication fully. Because they must work harder, they experience more fatigue, more isolation, and more depression than their hearing peers. As a result, these children are the least understood and the most disadvantaged among all those with hearing loss (Ross, 2001).

Unique Educational Concerns

Many factors unique to deaf education must be considered when developing an educational program.

- **Limited Program Options.** It is difficult, particularly in smaller school districts, to provide quality programs for each D/HH child. Typically, a school is able to provide perhaps only one communication option (e.g., oral, American Sign Language, or English-signing), and the child must comply with that option. If the school is able to offer multiple options, rarely is the district capable of maintaining quality due to lack of funds. Providing a full range of educational options for a small number of children represents a financial hardship for even the best endowed districts.

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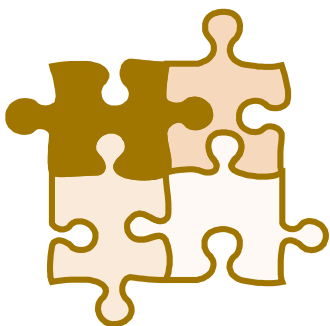
- **Lack of Administrative Support & Expertise.** Curiously, special education administrators with the responsibility for services to students who are D/HH often lack expertise with this population. As a result, standards and continuity of programming across grade levels lack consistency. Teacher evaluations are ineffective because frequently they are conducted by administrators unfamiliar with D/HH students. In-service opportunities are not always relevant for teachers of the D/HH.
- **Additional ‘Labels’.** Data indicate that more than 40% of children with a hearing loss also have another disability (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2002). This situation compounds the challenges of educating these youngsters. Staff members need special training to be able to address the unique needs of this group of students.
- **Unqualified, Under-staffed Interpreter Support.** At least 87 percent of D/HH children in Colorado attend classes in regular public schools, and most of these students receive at least part of their education in the general education classroom (OSEP, 2002). For many of these children, this practice is possible only with the use of an interpreter. However, research shows that the interpreters sometimes lack the proficiency to provide students with a competent interpretation of the classroom content. A study conducted in the state of Colorado showed that fewer than half of the interpreters had even the minimal level interpreting skills required by law (Schick, Williams & Bolster, 2000). The Colorado interpreters were communicating less than 60 percent of the classroom content according to the report. If the interpreters perform at a minimal level, it is unlikely that they are conveying all the information occurring in the classroom. In addition to interpreting tasks, interpreters often are expected to tutor D/HH students, even though they are not trained as educators.
- **Lack of Direct Communication.** Deaf adults also report that an interpreted education is a poor substitute for direct contact with teachers and peers. Every time the child wants to communicate with anyone in the classroom, he or she must do so through an adult interpreter. This interferes with the educational dynamic - the give and take that stimulates learning. And, when children do not communicate directly with one another, the social experience suffers as well.
- **Staffing Challenges.** The low incidence of hearing loss affects the ability of a school district to hire and retain qualified professionals to work with these children. Colorado is currently experiencing serious shortages of teachers and support staff to work with D/HH children in rural areas. The knowledge required to teach D/HH children is specialized and not easily acquired, even if a teacher is trained in special education. Further, the communication methodologies that are available to teach D/HH children involve many different skills, making it difficult to find a single professional who is capable of offering the full range of communication methods. This problem becomes even more difficult when a school district has only a few D/HH children, and when the ages range from preschool to high school.
- **Family Support.** Research shows that parents of D/HH children often do not receive the training and support they need to become communication and language role models for their children. Eighty four percent of children with hearing loss are born to hearing parents (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2002). About 72 percent of

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families with children who use sign language do not sign with their children (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2002). Further, families are often ill-prepared to fulfill their role as an equal member of their child's educational planning team and lack the knowledge of what constitutes appropriate, effective, educational programs. As the long term "case managers" of their child's academic experience, this can result in a loss of quality control over their child's program and progress.

- **Deaf Insensitivity.** Professionals who can hear normally generally do not understand how non-hearing persons function in a hearing society. Moreover, D/HH students often graduate without knowing the basic technology and services available to all deaf people.
- **Failure-Based Education Model.** Special education is built on a system where children must first demonstrate that they are not succeeding in their education program. In addition, many children receive services from professionals who are not qualified to serve children with hearing loss. As a result, they may not recognize the child's needs until it is too late for support services to succeed in keeping the student at grade level. This hampers a student's progress and may prevent him or her from ever reaching full potential.
- **Acoustical Accommodations.** The acoustical characteristics of a classroom can play a major role in a D/HH student's ability to access communication. The invisible barriers created by noisy air exchange, heating, and refrigeration systems, along with reverberating sound from walls and ceilings that distorts speech, are exacerbated by the busy noise of the classroom. Standards exist (ANSI, 2002) that need to be implemented to assure that classroom acoustics do not interfere with a D/HH student's ability to learn.
- **Current Technology.** Technology options are increasing at such a fast pace that many school districts simply cannot afford to keep up. Yet, for students who are D/HH, technology plays a key role in supporting both auditory and visual learning. Reliance on technology—including assistive listening devices, classroom captioning units, distance video equipment, and computers—can spell the difference between success and failure.

In summary, children with deafness or hearing loss are not receiving an adequate education. They do not have access to a full range of program options nor educational opportunities that match their needs. School districts are trying, but the combination of low incidence and high cost is derailing even the best intentions. Academic outcomes statewide and nationwide prove that the present system is failing these students. It is time to rethink education for D/HH children in order to close the gap.



Recommendations

In order to address the issues raised in Section 3, Statement of the Problem, the Task Force recommends the following:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Colorado should implement a coordinated statewide regional education system as an educational option that will effectively and efficiently meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children.

A coordinated regional educational system for deaf and hard of hearing students will provide eligible students with access to all placement options, including neighborhood schools, center-based schools, special day classes, state-sponsored special schools, regional programs, and non-public programs. Regional programs will not reduce current placement options, nor are they incompatible with the continuation of current programs. Each student’s individual needs will become the determinant for program and placement decisions.

"The need and right to communicate is the most fundamental of human rights. To deny it is to harm the human spirit; to foster communication is to reveal all the possibilities of life."

**Lawrence M. Siegel,
Esq., Director, National
Deaf Education
Project.**

A regionalized system will unite students within a region, creating a critical mass of language peers. Regionalization establishes a system that improves functionality, even in the midst of a dwindling pool of human resources. Regionally-based, appropriately-trained administrators and a professional staff with demonstrated proficiency in the students’ communication mode or language can effect service delivery with greater efficiency and cost effectiveness. This system benefits from better utilization of scarce resources, from greater potential for higher levels of academic achievement, and from more comprehensive, communications-based academic, career, and vocational programming. Ultimately, a regionalized educational system will increase, rather than diminish, options for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

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Steps to implement a regional model include:

A. Colorado should enact legislation that creates regionalized programs as an educational option for D/HH children under the administration of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. A regionalized system administered by a statewide entity with expertise and understanding of children who are deaf and hard of hearing will increase accountability for student outcomes.

- Currently, the school has authority to provide outreach services but by law it cannot implement and manage regional programs. If the law is amended to include regional programs as part of the school's responsibilities, the name should be modified to include the concept of regional programs.
- New legislation would allow school districts to develop agreements with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and its regional programs for services, including placement of students at the regional centers and technical assistance to teachers and students within their resident school districts. The Colorado Department of Education should review agreements periodically to assure quality control and conformity to the law.
- Existing regional programs with demonstrated effectiveness should be identified as models and incorporated into practices for other regions.

B. The Colorado Deaf Education Reform Task Force will initiate development of the statewide regionalization plan.

- A protocol will be developed to define the regions, the population, and the general structure of a plan for implementation along with a timeline for initiation of services. The administrative structure will include:
 1. A governance structure and any necessary administrative support such as contractual agreements or memorandums of understanding. In any one region, one or more administrative units might be directly involved in regionalization, with one district housing the administrative agency for the entire region. Each region will develop its own governance structure addressing relationships between the district administrative office, the special education services unit, the regional program staff, and involved administrative units, including a plan for effective use of resources.
 2. The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind shall act as the overall administrative body and shall serve as the fiscal agent overseeing regional programs statewide which include, minimally, a regional coordinator trained in deafness for each regional program hired by the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. This position will require Colorado administrator's credentials, as well as credentials in deaf and hard of hearing education.
- An Advisory Council will be formed. The council will be comprised of parents, deaf and hard of hearing consumers, students, staff credentialed in deaf and hard of hearing education, general education teachers serving this population, administrators, and support service staff. Each region will also create its own

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advisory council. All advisory councils will participate in the selection and evaluation of regional coordinators, and will provide counsel and guidance regarding all aspects of the regional delivery system. The first task of the Advisory Council will be to develop a statewide regionalization plan.

C. The Colorado Department of Education must provide leadership, technical assistance, and support by qualified, knowledgeable, professional staff.

- The Colorado Department of Education will support the senior consultant to programs for the D/HH with staff and resources sufficient to assure the implementation of responsibilities as described within this report.
- The Senior Consultant, staff, and Advisory Council will oversee the development, implementation, and on-going operation of regionalized programs. They will serve as a clearinghouse for current research, best practices, model programs, innovative instructional methods, and other information.
- Parent education programs will be developed and implemented.
- Interagency collaboration should address transition to higher education, vocational and technical training programs, and other post-secondary education opportunities. The Colorado Department of Education will establish service delivery standards to maintain full communication access for those programs.

D. The Colorado Department of Education will adopt policies requiring communication-driven programming in the development and education of students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

- The State Board of Education should adopt a clear statement of purpose that recognizes D/HH students as a population entitled to an education in which their communication needs--whether visual or oral/aural--are central and essential to a free and appropriate education. This statement shall address the following broad parameters:
 1. Communication is the conceptual starting point for any educational system serving the deaf and hard of hearing population.
 2. A regionalized educational system should include appropriate, early, and on-going communication assessment; appropriate, early, and on-going communication development, and communication access, which means a critical mass of age and language peers, staff proficient in the child's mode of communication, opportunities for direct instruction in the child's communication mode, and access to all school-sponsored extracurricular activities.
 3. The State Board of Education should recognize the unique nature of hearing loss.
 4. The State Board of Education should recognize the unique cultural and linguistic needs of D/HH children.
 5. The State Board of Education should guarantee that each program provides communication-related services, including qualified sign and oral interpreters,

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Cued Speech transliteration, electronic notetaking, assistive listening devices, and extracurricular activities based on guidelines established with the programs.

6. The State Board of Education must also see that English-language acquisition is the paramount factor in the design of programs, curricula, materials, assessment instruments, and professional and parent training.
7. American Sign Language is an acceptable and distinct language of deaf adults and can be an educational option that satisfies the high school graduation requirement for foreign language.
8. Sign language instruction, when indicated, is to be provided by proficient staff on a continuous basis to D/HH students, their parents, siblings, other family members, and peers, as needed.
9. The State Board of Education must see that auditory-oral and/or auditory-verbal methods are taught by proficient staff and supported with appropriate and current assistive technology, and that the language needs of oral deaf and hard of hearing students are fully met.
10. Finally, the State Board of Education must oversee the individualized education program team to assure placement is based on the child's identified communication needs and goals.

E. An interagency, multidisciplinary Task Force should be established immediately to address the service and program needs for D/HH students with other disabilities. This Task Force should:

- Study the population, needs, and existing programs
- Identify action plans and appropriate programming based on a communication-driven philosophy of equal access to quality services.

F. An early identification and referral system, early intervention services, and a seamless transitional process between Part C and Part B must exist for all infants, toddlers, and preschool children who are deaf and hard of hearing. This process should include:

- Universal screening of all newborns
- Referral, information, support, and networking among parents
- Interagency collaboration
- Coordination of services by specialists in deafness
- Specialists to work with the families of D/HH children
- Family-centered early intervention services provided by individuals with specific knowledge and skills in hearing loss and its implications for communication and language development.

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RECOMMENDATION 2:

Criteria for quality academic and extracurricular programs that are communication-driven should be implemented for D/HH children.

The Task Force recognizes that existing programs may meet the following requirements and that these programs should serve as models for the region.

Criteria for Quality Programs

A. Criteria should be established to assure that the regional programs contain or provide access to these components:

- A full continuum of communication options for D/HH children, including auditory-verbal, oral/aural, spoken English in combination with sign language, American Sign Language, Cued Speech, and tactile communication.
- A full continuum of placement, program, and service options in the region to serve D/HH students more effectively, including deaf and hard of hearing students with additional disabilities or exceptionalities. The continuum should include, but not be limited to:
 1. Regional programs that provide the critical mass of age and language-appropriate opportunities for direct instruction and communication with staff, peers, personnel, and services.
 2. A State School for the Deaf.
 3. General education placements with all necessary support services, such as itinerant teachers credentialed in D/HH education, interpreters, and assistive listening technology.
 4. Special day classes and resource programs, as required by federal and state laws, which may include reverse mainstreaming, partial mainstreaming, and team teaching opportunities.
 5. Nonpublic schools, virtual schools, home instruction, hospital instruction, and institutions required by federal and state laws to meet the needs of students with disabilities that cannot be met within the traditional public school setting.

“It must be emphasized that a regional or area-wide delivery system is not the same as a regional program. Some may focus on the latter rather than the former and assume that such a paradigm really means the elimination of existing program options such as local or mainstreamed programs and/or center schools for deaf and hard of hearing children. Any new system cannot and must not reduce or debilitate existing options.”
Siegel, 2000, p. 38.

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B. Instruction

Instruction must include core and specialized curriculum, appropriate procedures, and facilities, as follows:

- Ongoing language development as a central part of the daily program
- Access to the core curriculum with appropriate accommodations and modifications
- Facilities that are acoustically and visually appropriate
- Procedures for communication between and/or among programs, educational levels, schools, and classes
- Deaf studies curriculum.

Designated instruction and services as defined by the Colorado Exceptional Children's Education Act include, but are not limited to the following:

- Speech therapy, speechreading, cochlear implant (re)habilitation, and auditory skill development
- Instruction in oral, sign, and written language
- Adaptation of curricula, methods, media, and the environment to facilitate the learning process
- Specially designed school-to-career-to-work and transition services
- Access to technology that enhances communication, such as the use of the Internet for distance learning, virtual classrooms, videophones, and teleconferencing
- Class size that is structured to the age and needs of D/HH students; class size may have to be modified to accommodate other service delivery considerations such as team teaching or mainstreaming; class size guidelines may be necessary when the composition of the D/HH peer group is influenced by age span and/or additional disability conditions that dictate the need for a unique classroom situation
- Specialized preservice and inservice training and technical assistance for general education and special education staff that provide services to D/HH students
- Access to deaf and hard of hearing role models.

C. Staffing

- Availability of a full range of related services in all placement and program options is to be provided by an individual who holds an appropriate credential, who is competent to provide the specific services, and who has training, experience, and proficient communication skills to serve D/HH.
- Staff must include appropriately trained, certified, and credentialed teachers and other staff, including instructional aides and educational interpreters, who understand the communication and language needs of D/HH children and who can communicate directly and proficiently with these children.
- Staff must be sensitive to the students' ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Caseloads for itinerant teachers and other support personnel (e.g., interpreters, speech and language pathologists) must be limited to levels that facilitate effective

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teaching and learning and that consider the distance traveled and number of sites served.

- Training must be provided to the general education staff in areas that focus on awareness of what constitutes communication- based services and language-rich environments.

D. Support Services and Assessment

- Provide appropriate assessments by trained multidisciplinary assessment team members who are knowledgeable and experienced in educating and assessing D/HH students. Such assessments should be completed in a timely manner, and should include an early and timely assessment of communication needs as well as academic, social, linguistic, emotional, physical, vocational, and other unique needs, such as:
 - ✓ Interpreters (oral and sign), Cued Speech transliterators, notetakers, and real-time/classroom captioners
 - ✓ Audiological services and assistive listening devices
 - ✓ Psychological services
 - ✓ Extracurricular opportunities.
- Supply specialized services and equipment, including interpreters, notetakers, electronic notetaking, speech to text software, assistive listening devices, televisions with captioning capability, captioned videos, teletypewriters (TTY's), and amplified telephones, as appropriate, at every site where D/HH programs exist.
- Offer related services, such as transportation and parent counseling and training.
- Arrange extracurricular services, including social and leadership opportunities.
- Seek out collaborations with institutions of higher education, businesses, and community agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Communication-driven programs serving D/HH students should be subject to on-going assessment to assure full access, student achievement, and high standards.

The Deaf Child's Bill of Rights requires identification of each child's primary mode of communication. Assessment data consistently indicates a significant discrepancy between achievement scores of D/HH students and their peers.

Closing the Gap

- Coordinate the implementation of rigorous content and performance standards in all areas of instruction, including communication and school-to-career preparation and transition, consistent with state and local frameworks and content standards.
- Coordinate the development and implementation of assessment procedures at each program site to provide valid and reliable information about (1) the

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achievement of every student according to established standards; and (2) the steps necessary to increase levels of student achievement over time. The Colorado Student Assessment Program does not provide assessment in language, communication, or social and emotional areas, nor does it provide sufficient data for Individual Education Program goal development.

- Develop, implement, and monitor goals for addressing a child’s initial and on-going communication needs. The goals should address academic and social communication, academic language and literacy skills, expressive and receptive language, the student’s degree of hearing loss, and the student’s ability to use residual hearing.
- Determine types of information to be gathered and reported to school, staff, students, parents, administrators, the Advisory Council, the Colorado Department of Education, and the community, including, but not limited to:
 - ✓ Types and location of programs in the region
 - ✓ Number of deaf and hard of hearing students in the program
 - ✓ Current levels of achievement based on multiple assessment measures
 - ✓ Status of transition planning and achievement of Individual Education Program goals
 - ✓ Levels of communication proficiency, including expressive and receptive spoken and written English and sign language skills.
- Require accountability plans that reflect student achievement, program improvement, and timelines for improving student achievement, including target achievement levels and intervention techniques as well as staff development.
- Require regions to report student achievement results and progress annually.
- Conduct a fiscal audit and program quality review of each region every other year.
- Establish a management information system to aggregate, analyze, and report accountability information.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

On-going training, mentoring, and a full spectrum of professional development activities should be implemented statewide to support and improve proficiency for specialty providers, general educators, administrators and families.

The quality of educational programs serving D/HH students depends on the specialized knowledge, skills, and attributes of administrators, teachers, educational interpreters, support service personnel (e.g., psychologists, audiologists, speech/language pathologists), and other staff (e.g., notetakers, real-time captionists). Activities to support this goal include recruitment, preservice training, ongoing inservice training, and mentoring activities.

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Professional Development Activities

A. A Guide for Educators of the D/HH

- Collaborate with institutions of higher education and the Colorado Teacher Certification/Licensing Board to develop and implement professional standards and evaluation procedures for teachers serving D/HH students. Standards should include the skills required to meet the unique educational, communication, and diverse multicultural needs of D/HH students, some of whom have additional disabilities or problems.
- Collaborate with institutions of higher education to ensure that standards are a core part of professional preparation and graduation requirements. Teacher preparation programs should have education certification standards as stringent as the standards set by the appropriate professional organizations, including the Council on Education of the Deaf and state certification agencies.
- Work with teacher preparation programs to assure that personnel are knowledgeable about all modes and languages used by D/HH students and that personnel maintain an objective, philosophically neutral position on specific modes and languages.
- Support preservice and in-service training for teachers who serve D/HH students to enhance student achievement. The use of technology, such as distance learning, videoconferencing, and networking through computers, to enhance ongoing in-service opportunities and support teacher preparation programs should also be promoted.
- Enhance opportunities to develop proficiency in signing skills for those children using sign language.

B. A Guide for Administrators

- Collaborate with institutions of higher education to develop leadership training programs to assure administrators in general education programs and educational programs for D/HH students are appropriately prepared and trained to oversee and manage programs for the D/HH.
- Provide professional development to administrators to assure they are knowledgeable about all modes and languages used by deaf and hard of hearing students and maintain an objective, philosophically neutral position on specific modes and languages.
- Assign teachers with skills appropriate for the population they are serving.

C. A Guide for Support Service Personnel

- Collaborate with institutions of higher education and the Colorado Teacher Certification/Licensing Board to develop and implement professional standards and evaluation procedures for support service personnel serving D/HH students. Standards should include the skills required to meet the unique educational, communication, and diverse multicultural needs of D/HH students, some of whom have additional disabilities.

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- Provide professional development to support service personnel to make them knowledgeable about all modes and languages used by deaf and hard of hearing students and to assure they maintain an objective, philosophically neutral position on use of specific modes and languages.
- Provide preservice and inservice training for support service personnel who serve deaf and hard of hearing students. Use technology, such as distance learning, videoconferencing, and networking through computers, to increase access to inservice opportunities and to support teacher preparation programs.
- Develop proficiency in signing skills for use with those children using sign language.

D. A Guide for Educational Interpreters

- Work with educational interpreter training programs to assure that personnel are knowledgeable about all modes and languages used by D/HH students, and that personnel maintain an objective, philosophically neutral position on specific modes and languages.
- Work with consumers, professionals, and staff in educational interpreter training programs to support established standards, and to assure that educational interpreters meet these standards.
- Develop proficiency in signing skills for those children using sign language.

E. A Guide for General Educators

- Support preservice and in-service training for general and special education classroom teachers who serve D/HH students to enhance their understanding of the needs of D/HH students. The use of technology, such as distance learning, videoconferencing, and networking through computers, to enhance ongoing inservice opportunities and support teacher preparation programs should also be promoted.
- Whenever possible develop proficiency in sign skills to be able to communicate directly with those children using sign language.

F. A Guide for Staff

- Provide professional development to staff members to be sure they are knowledgeable about all modes and languages used by D/HH students, and to be sure all staff members maintain an objective, philosophically neutral position on specific modes and languages.
- Work with consumers, professionals, and educational interpreter training programs to develop standards to assure that instructional aides and support staff are adequately prepared, trained, and certified, to work with D/HH students.
- Establish a system of ongoing training and evaluation for instructional aides and support staff.
- Support preservice and inservice training for certificated staff who serve D/HH students to enhance student achievement. The use of technology, such as distance learning, videoconferencing, and networking through computers, to enhance

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ongoing in-service opportunities and support teacher preparation programs should also be promoted.

- Develop proficiency in signing skills for those children using sign language.

G. Parent Training and Parent Support

- Parents of D/HH children need access to information, support services, and training to help their children.
- Parents need to be empowered as full participants in developing the Individualized Family Service Plan or the Individualized Education Program required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

The Colorado Department of Education should collaborate with national and state agencies and higher education programs to recruit, train, and encourage retention of staff that will provide services to D/HH students.

More trained staff with higher level skills are needed to work with D/HH children. With the advent of universal newborn hearing programs, more children are being identified with hearing loss at a younger age. In addition, it is now known that even mild and unilateral hearing loss may negatively impact a child's ability to learn. We are currently experiencing a shortage of providers to work with D/HH children. Due to the special needs of the children and their relatively low numbers in programs, it is critical for the Colorado Department of Education to spearhead collaboration with national and state resources in order to increase the numbers of properly prepared professionals.

Quality Staffing

A. Training Professionals:

- Training programs need to attract greater numbers of qualified individuals by strategic recruiting of:
 - ✓ Teachers
 - ✓ Interpreters
 - ✓ Speech/Language Pathologists
 - ✓ Audiologists
 - ✓ Psychologists
 - ✓ Counselors.
- Training programs need to recruit larger numbers of D/HH individuals and ethnically diverse individuals; regional programs, especially rural programs, might consider plans for recruiting local individuals.
- Training programs and school programs need to infuse the parent perspective into their preservice and inservice training to better prepare professionals who will partner with parents.

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- Professionals need inservice training that provides current information specific to D/HH students.

B. Training D/HH Role Models

- School-based and home-based programs need to create a unified system to recruit, train, and maintain a D/HH role model program.
- Role models need to be knowledgeable about all modes and languages used by D/HH students and maintain an objective, philosophically neutral position on specific modes and languages.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

A system of community and parent education that leads to meaningful involvement that will result in full access and collaboration so that each child will have opportunities to maximize potential and achieve high standards should be implemented.

Parents of D/HH children need practical information about deafness, support services, and training so that they can participate in and monitor their children's language and academic growth. More than 90 percent of D/HH children have hearing parents, and historically these parents have limited knowledge regarding hearing loss, deafness, deaf culture and/or communication and language development.

Parent Education

Parents need to be recognized as equal partners and full participants in the Individual Family Service Plan, the Individualized Education Program, and the individual transition plan process as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Parents must have a say and participate in the choices they and others are making on behalf of a child's education. Professionals must respect each family's unique perspective and must understand and respond to the issues and concerns most important to each family. Parent education is particularly important in a communication-driven education system. Each education program should have one staff member assigned the responsibility of facilitating parent/community education. Programs should include the following:

- Guidelines and procedures to assure that appropriate, unbiased, and realistic information is provided to parents about hearing loss, communication and language development, and available services. Information should be disseminated in a variety of ways and from a variety of sources including reading materials, oral communication, videotapes, workshops, professional lectures, and research-driven material, and should be available in a family's native language.

Research studies have shown that children make greater progress and maintain those gains when parents provide language for their child at home rather than depend solely on the instruction the child receives in his or her educational program.

California Department of Education, 2000, p. 90.

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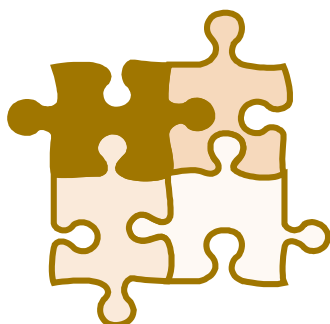
- Ongoing parent support and parent training should include parents' rights, advocacy strategies, grade-level expectations for student achievement, knowledge of assessments, the importance of communication and language development, awareness of program options, support services available for students from birth to age 21, and the opportunity to learn sign language.
- A process that assures that parents are full and equal participants on the Individual Education Program team and in other decisions made regarding the education and placement of D/HH students.
- Opportunities for parent involvement to include volunteer activities, participation in education and training, utilization of D/HH role models, the establishment of a network of community-based job sites, and a connection with post-secondary education resources and adult service agencies.
- A system that promotes parental access to local, state and national organizations for parents of D/HH children, adult education programs at community colleges and universities, state special schools, and other programs that provide parent support.
- A system that provides the opportunity for meaningful parent input at the state and local levels regarding the implementation of educational reform.
- Guidelines and procedures to assure parent perspectives are represented in professional forums (e.g. publications, conferences, workshops, media).

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Develop and implement a funding system that will provide sufficient resources for a quality education for D/HH children.

Funding options for regional programs that will expand statewide services to D/HH students are being developed through the budget review process with the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. A Targeted Base Review of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind to be conducted in 2002 will offer recommendations, and implementation of those recommendations, if approved, will commence in 2003. This review process will serve as an efficiency study in selected areas and will allow the Department of Education to identify budget shortfalls and to make recommendations for improvement. A report will be sent to the Office of State Planning and Budget for potential action, which likely also will include some type of legislative action.

Funding models are being explored that consider various cost-sharing options between school districts, the state and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind.



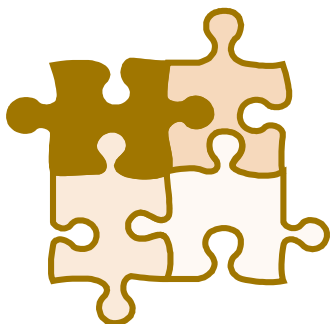
Implementation Goals and Timeline

Implementation Goals

1. Implement a coordinated statewide regional education system as an option that will effectively and efficiently meet the needs of D/HH children.
2. Establish criteria for high quality, communication-driven academic and extracurricular programs for D/HH children.
3. Collaborate with national and state agency and higher education programs to recruit, train, and encourage retention of staff that will provide services to D/HH children.
4. Provide on-going training, mentoring, and a full spectrum of professional development activities to support and improve proficiency for specialty providers, general educators, administrators, and families.
5. Develop a series of community and parent education programs that will provide meaningful involvement and that will result in full access in order to maximize each child's potential to achieve high standards.
6. Develop and implement a funding system that will provide sufficient resources for a quality education for D/HH children.
7. Dedicate the energy, intelligence, personnel, resources, funding and drive to assure that the Colorado program will stand as a definitive model program that closes the learning gap between its hearing and non-hearing children.

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Timeline	
2001-02	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop funding structure.• Complete and publish Task Force Report.
Fall 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report plan to stakeholders (Colorado Department of Education, State Board of Education, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, special education directors, local service providers, other pertinent state agencies, parent and advocacy groups) through meetings facilitated by Task Force members, and elicit their support.• Disseminate report to administrative units.
2002-03	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disseminate report to state legislature and secure legislative support to increase funding of Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind's mission to include administration of regional services.• Establish regional advisory councils.• Determine regional administrative structures.• Develop criteria for student eligibility for regional programs.• Develop an accountability and evaluation component.• Determine regional educational and support services.
2003-04	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine regional center staffing.• Hire regional coordinators and establish offices.



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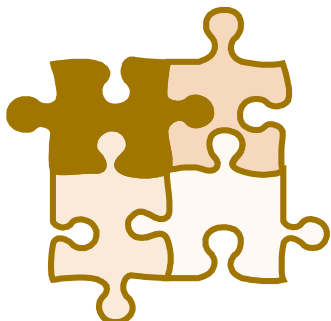
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Appendix A. Colorado Statutes and Rules Regarding Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Concerning the Education of Children who are Deaf and Hard Hearing; House Bill 96-1041 (1996); ECEA 4.02(4)(k)

The Deaf Child’s Bill of Rights “recognizes the unique nature of deafness and ensures that all deaf and hard of hearing children have appropriate, on-going, and fully accessible educational opportunities” [Sec.(2)(a)]. In addition to this commitment, the bill identifies nine essential features of education programs for children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. These features are (1) that each child’s “unique communication mode is respected, utilized, and developed to an appropriate level of proficiency”, (2) that teachers and other providers who work with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are specifically trained for this population, including proficiency in the primary language mode of the children with whom they work, (3) that an education with a sufficient number of language mode peers with whom direct communication is possible and who are of same age and ability level is available, (4) that parent involvement and, where appropriate, people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, determine the extent, content, and purpose of educational programs, (5) that children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing benefit from an education in which they are exposed to Deaf and Hard of Hearing role models, (6) that programs provide direct and appropriate access to all components of the educational process, including but not limited to recess, lunch, and extra-curricular activities, (7) that programs provide for the unique vocational needs, including appropriate research, curricula, programs, staff, and outreach, (8) that the least restrictive environment for each child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing takes into consideration the legislative findings and declarations of this law, and (9) that due to the unique communication needs of children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the development and implementation of state and regional programs would be beneficial.

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Concerning Standards for Educational Interpreters for The Deaf House; Bill 97-1146 (1997); ECEA 3.04(1)(f)

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Article 20 of title 22, Colorado Revised Statutes, 1995 Repl. Vol., as amended, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

22-20-116. Minimum standards for educational interpreters for the deaf in the public schools - committee to recommend standards - rules - repeal.

- (1) the general assembly hereby finds that interpreting services in the public schools for students who are deaf or hard of hearing need to be improved and that the absence of state standards for evaluating educational interpreters allows for inconsistencies in the delivery of educational information to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The general assembly recognizes that educational interpreters in the public school setting must not only interpret the spoken word but must also convey concepts and facilitate the student's understanding of the educational material. The general assembly also finds that standards should be based on performance and should be developed with input from the deaf community and from persons involved in instructing deaf students. Therefore, the general assembly enacts this section for the purpose of developing appropriate standards for persons employed in the public schools as educational interpreters.
- (2) for purposes of this section, "educational interpreter" means a

person who uses sign language in the public school setting for purposes of facilitating communication between users and nonusers of sign language and who is fluent in the languages used by both deaf and non deaf persons.

- (3) (a) there is hereby created, within the department of education, an interpreter standards committee, which shall consist of seventeen members appointed by the commissioner of education, for the purpose of making recommendations to the state board on the minimum standards for educational interpreters for the deaf in the public schools. (b) the commissioner of education shall make appointments to the committee on or before July 1, 1997. Members shall be appointed as follows: one member shall be an instructor in an interpreter preparation program offered by an institution of higher education in this state; two members shall be teachers of the deaf, one of whom is deaf; two members shall be deaf adults who are consumers of interpreter services, one of whom is a member of the Colorado Association of the Deaf; one member shall be a high school student who is deaf and is currently receiving interpreter services in a public school; three members shall be parents of deaf students whose children are receiving interpreter services in a public school; four members shall be persons who are working as educational interpreters in the public schools, one of whom shall be a member of the Colorado Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

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- and one of whom is employed by a Board of Cooperative Educational Services; one member shall be a certified interpreter not employed in an educational setting; one member shall be a representative of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind; one member shall be a public school special education director or his or her designee; and one member shall be a member of a school board in this state. (c) members of the interpreter standards committee shall serve voluntarily without compensation. (d) this subsection (3) and the interpreter standards committee created in this section shall be repealed, effective July 1, 1998.
- (4) the study by the interpreter standards committee created in subsection (3) of this section shall include but need not be limited to an examination of the following:
- (a) the minimum standards for educational interpreters for the deaf who are employed as educational interpreters on a full-time or part-time basis in public schools. In making recommendations on the appropriate minimum standards, the committee shall examine:
 - (i) what is the most appropriate and feasible instrument for evaluating the proficiency and performance of educational interpreters for the deaf;
 - (ii) the minimum performance on the instrument recommended pursuant to subparagraph (i) of this paragraph
 - (a) that would satisfy the requirement for employment in a public school to provide interpreter services;
 - (b) the minimum standards for the persons who evaluate the skills, proficiency, and performance of educational interpreters;
 - (c) the availability and adequacy of educational and training programs in interpreting in this state, especially in rural areas of the state;
 - (d) the availability of appropriate curriculum for teaching persons who will be serving as educational interpreters;
 - (e) the use of interdistance learning and techniques to teach interpreting skills;
 - (f) the availability of funds or grants from federal and private sources to develop new educational programs in interpreting for the deaf, especially educational programs designed to assist people in meeting the minimum standards for educational interpreters to be established by the state board as provided in subsection (6) of this section, and to provide financial assistance to persons wanting to take such courses;
 - (iii) the minimum standards for educational interpreters relating to their knowledge and understanding of:
 - (A) child development;
 - (B) language development;
 - (C) curriculum;
 - (D) teaching and tutoring methods for working individually and as part of a team in teaching or tutoring deaf children in a classroom setting;
 - (E) deafness;
 - (F) the educational process for deaf children;

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- (g) the delivery of interpreter services in public schools in rural communities;
 - (h) recruitment and retention of educational interpreters in public schools.
- (5) the interpreter standards committee shall submit a preliminary report detailing its progress to the state board on or before October 1, 1997. The committee shall submit its final report to the state board on or before December 31, 1997, containing its findings and its recommendations.
- (6) after review and study of the recommendations of the interpreter standards committee, the state board, on or before July 1, 1998, shall promulgate rules setting minimum standards for educational interpreters for the deaf employed by or in the public schools in this state. The state board may revise and amend such minimum standards as it deems necessary. The state board shall promulgate rules that set forth the documentation that a person seeking employment as an educational interpreter for the deaf in a public school must submit to the school district.
- (7) on or after July 1, 2000, in addition to any other requirements that a school district establishes, any person employed as an educational interpreter for deaf students on a full-time or part-time basis by or in a school district shall meet the minimum standards for educational interpreters for the deaf as established by rules of the state board.

SECTION 2. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Approved: March 24, 1997

Statutory Authority: Article 20 of Title 22, C.R.S., Sections 22-20-104, 22-2-107 (1) (a), 22-2-107(1) (c), 22-2-107 (1) (q), 22-20-109 and 22-20-116.

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Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

COLORADO REVISED STATUTES ARTICLE 22-80-102. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

- (1) The Colorado school for the deaf and the blind, located in the city of Colorado Springs, in the count of El Paso, is declared to be one of the educational institution of the state of Colorado, and has for its object the education of the children of the state who, by reason of the impairment of their sense of hearing or of sight, cannot be advantageously educated in the other schools or educational institutions of the state. Said school shall not be regarded or classed as a reformatory or charitable institution.
- (2) In addition to being a long-term residential school, the Colorado school for the deaf and the blind shall be a resource to school districts, state institutions, and other approved education programs. Resource services shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:
 - (a) Assessment and identification of educational needs;
 - (b) Special curricula;
 - (c) Equipment and materials;
 - (d) Supplemental related services;
 - (e) Special short-term programs;
 - (f) Program planning and staff development;
 - (g) Programs for parents, families, and the public;
 - (h) Research and development to promote improved educational programs and services.

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Colorado Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) – Rules

HEARING LOSS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

DISABILITY ECEA 2.02(3):

Audiologic criteria for a deficiency in hearing sensitivity which is educationally significant is one of the following:

1. An average pure-tone hearing loss in the speech range (500-2000 Hz) of at least 20dBHL in the better ear which is not reversible within a reasonable period of time.
2. An average high frequency, pure-tone hearing loss of at least 35dBHL in the better ear for two (2) or more of the following frequencies - 2000, 4000, or 6000 Hz.
3. A unilateral average pure-tone hearing loss of 35dBHL (500-2000Hz) or greater, which is not reversible within a reasonable period of time.

ELIGIBILITY ECEA 2.02(3)(b):

Criteria for a hearing disability which prevents the child from receiving reasonable educational benefit from regular education shall include one or more of the following:

1. Soundfield word recognition (unaided) of less than 75% in quiet as measured with standardized open-set audiometric word recognition (speech discrimination) tests presented at the level of typical conversational speech (50-55dBHL); interpretation must be modified for closed-set tests.
2. A receptive and/or expressive language delay as indicated below, determined by standardized tests.
 - Under age 3: less than one-half of expected development for chronological age
 - 3 to 8 years: one (1) year delay or more
 - 9 to 13 years: two (2) years delay or more
 - 14 to 21 years: three (3) years delay or more
3. An impairment of speech articulation, voice, and/or fluency.
4. Significant discrepancy between verbal and non-verbal performance on a standardized intelligence test.
5. Delay in reading comprehension due to language deficit.
6. Poor academic achievement.
7. Inattentive, inconsistent, and/or inappropriate classroom behavior.

or, is eligible by variance from standard criteria according to the following rationale:

COMMUNICATION PLAN

ECEA 4.02(4)(k) The written IEP for each child with a hearing disability shall also include a Communication Plan as developed by the IEP team. The development and implementation of the Communication Plan, however, shall not require the administrative unit to expend additional resources or hire additional personnel. The Plan shall include the following:

ECEA 4.02(4)(k)(i) A statement identifying the child's primary communication mode as one or more of the following: Aural, Oral, Speech-based, English Based Manual or Sign system, American Sign Language. Further, there should be no

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denial of opportunity for instruction in a particular communication mode based on:

- Residual hearing,
- The parent's inability to communicate in the child's communication mode or language, nor
- The child's experience with another mode of communication or language.

ECEA 4.02(4)(k)(ii) A statement documenting that an explanation was given of all educational options provided by the school district and available to the child.

ECEA 4.02(4)(k)(iii) A statement documenting that the IEP team, in addressing the child's needs, considered the availability of deaf/hard of hearing adult role models and a deaf/hard of hearing peer group of the child's communication mode or language.

ECEA 4.02(4)(k)(iv) The teachers, interpreters, and other specialists delivering the communication plan to the student must have demonstrated proficiency in, and be able to accommodate for, the child's primary communication mode or language.

ECEA 4.02(4)(k)(v) The communication-accessible academic instruction, school services, and extracurricular activities the student will receive must be identified.

EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

ECEA 3.04(1)(f) Educational Interpreters

As of July 1, 2000, any person employed as an Educational Interpreter by an administrative unit or eligible facility on a full-time or part-time basis shall meet the following minimum standards, and documentation for meeting these standards must be renewed every five years:

3.04(1)(f)(i) Demonstration of a rating of 3.5 (average) or better in the four areas of the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA).

3.04(1)(f)(ii) Documented content knowledge in these areas:

child development, language development, curriculum, teaching and tutoring methods, deafness and the educational process for deaf children.

The Colorado Department of Education will provide guidelines for the implementation of these minimum standards.

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Appendix B. Assessment Summary

CIPP Results for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students – June 2000

Cheryl Johnson,
Senior Consultant, Colorado Department of Education

During the spring of 2000, teachers of D/HH students were asked to submit completed Colorado Individual Performance Profiles (CIPP) on their students who were receiving initial and triennial IEP evaluations. The data was requested by the Colorado Department of Education to obtain information on the performance of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in Colorado and to prepare a baseline report as part of the deaf education reform effort. Data was submitted on 166 students representing a variety of hearing, communication, placement, and geographical variables. The data indicate that:

- The average academic delay of this group of students 2-to-3 years.
- Functional skills, as perceived by the students' teachers in the areas of physical, cognitive/behavioral/social/life skills, and communication, were normal to near normal.
- The level of special education service that students were receiving generally matched their needs.
- Social skills, based on the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS), were at the low end of the average range, problem behaviors occurred somewhat more frequently than average, and academic competence was below average.
- Ninety percent of teachers reported that the current delivery system adequately met the students' needs.

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Demographic Report

Of the 166 reports submitted:	53% were male 47% were female 67.5% were in elementary school 32.5% were secondary
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Part 1: Hearing Loss

Type of hearing loss:	84% bilateral, 10% high frequency, 6% unilateral 86% sensorineural, 10% conductive, 4% mixed
Age of onset:	75% < 12 months, 12% @ 1-2 years, 7% @ 3-4 yrs, 6% @ 5yrs or older
Age of identification	5% at birth, 12% @ 3-6 mo, 12% @ 6-12 mo, 20% @ 1-2 yrs, 27% 3-4 yrs, 25% 5 yrs or older
Age of amplification	2.3% < 6 mo, 8.5% @ 6-12 mo, 21% @ 1-2 yrs, 34% @ 3-4 yrs, 34% 5 yrs or older; 34% - use no amplification
Type of amplification	2.3% < 6 mo, 8.5% @ 6-12 mo, 21% @ 1-2 yrs, 34% @ 3-4 yrs, 34% 5 yrs or older; 34% - use no amplification
Etiology of hearing loss:	38% congenital, 23% acquired, 39% unknown, .7% combination

Part 2: Language and Modality

Primary language with student in the home	69.9% English, 7.2% Spanish, 2.4% ASL, 19.3% combination, 1.2% other
Primary language with student in school	68.5% English, 16.4% ASL, 14% combination, 1.2% other
Primary language used by student:	63.9% English, 5.7% ASL, .6% Spanish, 17.5% combination, 2.4% other
Primary mode of communication used with student in the home:	70.2% spoken, 23.6% spoken and signed, 4.3% signed, 1.8% combination
Primary mode of communication used with student at school:	60.6% spoken, 20% spoken and signed, 18.8% signed, .6% combination
Primary mode of communication used by student:	63.5% spoken, 15.7% spoken and signed, 19.5% signed, 1.2% combination

Part 3: Student Services

Use of interpreter:	23.4% sign language, 5.8% oral, .6% combination, 70% none (57.8% of sign language interpreters meet minimum Educational Interpreters Performance Assessment standard)
Other access services	76% none, 11.5% notetaker, 5.1% computer assisted notetaker, 1% CART, 3.1% augmentative communication device (other than auditory), 3.1% combination

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Service Delivery	1.2% indirect services- monitored by Deaf Ed teacher 15.5% indirect services- consultative by deaf ed tchr 35.4% direct service- 1-4 hrs/wk from deaf ed tchr 4.3% direct services- 1-2 hrs daily from deaf ed tchr 16.8% direct services- 30 or more hrs/day from deaf ed tchr with academic instruction in regular classroom, 25.5% direct services- all academics from deaf ed tchr and other special ed professionals in Deafness 1.2% other
Time in regular classroom	54.8% > 5 hrs/day, 17.8% 3-5 hrs/day, 11.5% 1-2 hrs/day, 7.6% < 1 hr/day, 8.3% none
Transition Services (14 yrs and older):	27.9% work experience, 11.6% vocational rehabilitation, 13.9% post-secondary education, 6.9% medical/audiological, 11.6% independent living, 58% recreational/social activities, 6.9% adult systems connections, 4.6% other
Access to D/HH peers	85.1%; Access to D/HH role models: 72.1%
Does current service delivery system adequately meet student needs?	Yes- 90.6%, No- 9.4%
Participation in Colorado Student Assessment Program:	Yes- 75.5%, No-19.4%, Exempt- 4.9%

Part 4: Other Information

29% were enrolled in early intervention program
39% received free and reduced lunch

Assessment Report

- ◆ **Functional Assessment** [Scale: 1 = functions normally, 2 = mildly limited, 3 = severely limited]:
 - Mean score for cognitive/behavioral/social/life skills functioning: 1.5
 - Mean score for communication functioning: 1.56
 - Mean score for physical functioning: 1.09
- ◆ **Standardized Academic Assessment:**
 - Mean %ile rank for reading comprehension: 44th%ile
 - Mean %ile rank for English language: 35th%ile
 - Mean %ile rank for math: 41st%ile
- ◆ **Social Skills Rating System (SSRS):**
 - Mean %ile rank for social skills- teacher: 42nd%ile; parent: 46th%ile; student: 51st%ile
 - Mean %ile rank for problem behaviors- teacher: 61st%ile; parent: 55th%ile
 - Mean %ile rank for Academic Competence: teacher: 30th%ile

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Appendix C. Colorado Student Assessment Program: Summary of CSAP Scores- D/HH students

Summary Report of Scores 1998-99 to 2000-01 as Compared to all Students

Assessment	% Unsatisfactory				% Partially Proficient				% Proficient				% Advanced				% Proficient /Advanced				# D/HH tested
	98-99	99-00	00-01	All stds 00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	All stds 00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	All stds 00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	All stds 00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	All stds 00-01	
3 rd Reading	29%	36%	42%	5%	32%	25%	29%	17%	19%	30%	21%	66%	1%	1%	0%	10%		31%	21%	77%	106
4 th Reading	25%	25%	48%	9%	42%	34%	26%	23%	18%	22%	22%	60%	1%	1%	0%	8%		23%	22%	67%	108
4 th Writing	40%	37%	44%	10%	29%	30%	38%	47%	9%	9%	11%	38%	2%	0	1%	3%		9%	12%	41%	108
5 th Math		26%	30%	10%		35%	37%	33%		19%	18%	41%		3%	3%	14%		22%	21%	55%	111
5 th Reading			38%	9%			24%	21%			23%	60%			1%	8%			23%	68%	111
6 th Reading			36%	8%			28%	22%			21%	59%			2%	8%			23%	68%	103
7 th Writing	13%	22%	7%	1%	55%	54%	71%	51%	11%	10%	2%	43%	0%	2%	0%	0%		11%	2%	44%	107
7 th Reading	38%	45%	43%	7%	27%	27%	26%	22%	17%	17%	18%	60%	1%	1%	0%	8%		18%	18%	68%	107
8 th Math		47%	60%	24%		18%	21%	33%		9%	11%	26%		3%	3%	14%		11%	14%	40%	97
8 th Science		48%	50%	15%		22%	24%	30%		16%	20%	46%		2%	0%	6%		15%	20%	52%	92
8 th Reading			42%	8%			27%	22%			22%	59%			2%	8%			24%	67%	98
9 th Reading			32%	6%			28%	22%			29%	59%			1%	8%			31%	67%	78
10 th Reading			36%	7%			32%	22%			19%	59%			0%	8%			19%	67%	81
10 th Writing			19%	2%			54%	45%			10%	32%			0%	14%			10%	46%	81
10 th Math			56%	40%			23%	42%			2%	12%			0%	2%			2%	13%	84

Prepared by C. Johnson, CDE; 9/2001

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Number Students Tested, No Scores, and Accommodations

Assessment	# Tested	# No Scores Reported	Accommodations			
			Oral/Tchr read directions	Sign	Asst Com Device	Extra Time
3 rd Reading	106	8	802	26	9	3438
4 th Reading	108	4	933	16	5	7057
4 th Writing	108	6	1012	16	9	4512
5 th Math	111	13	2019	25	5	2157
5 th Reading	111	14	1166	22	29	2723
6 th Reading	103	13	1071	19	41	2131
7 th Reading	107	13	1102	22	39	1822
7 th Writing	107	20	1147	17	40	1561
8 th Math	97	5	950	14	2	1366
8 th Science	92	7	990	12	4	854
8 th Reading	98	7	883	12	19	1111
9 th Reading	78	9	708	21	22	1037
10 th Reading	81	14	509	30	29	1022
10 th Writing	81	17	453	10	30	881
10 th Math	84	19	231	24	21	986

Note: Accommodations are not broken down by disability and represent only the primary accommodation used by a student. Those reported here are used typically by D/HH students.

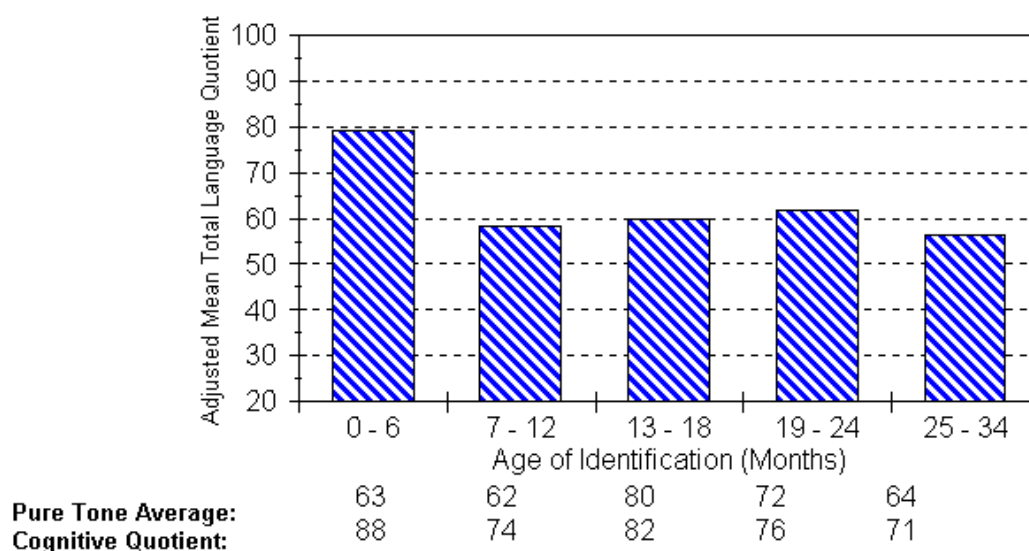
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Appendix D. Early Childhood D/HH Report:

Summary of Assessment Data for Children Birth Through Four Years

Source: Christine Yoshinaga-Itano, Ph.D., University of Colorado

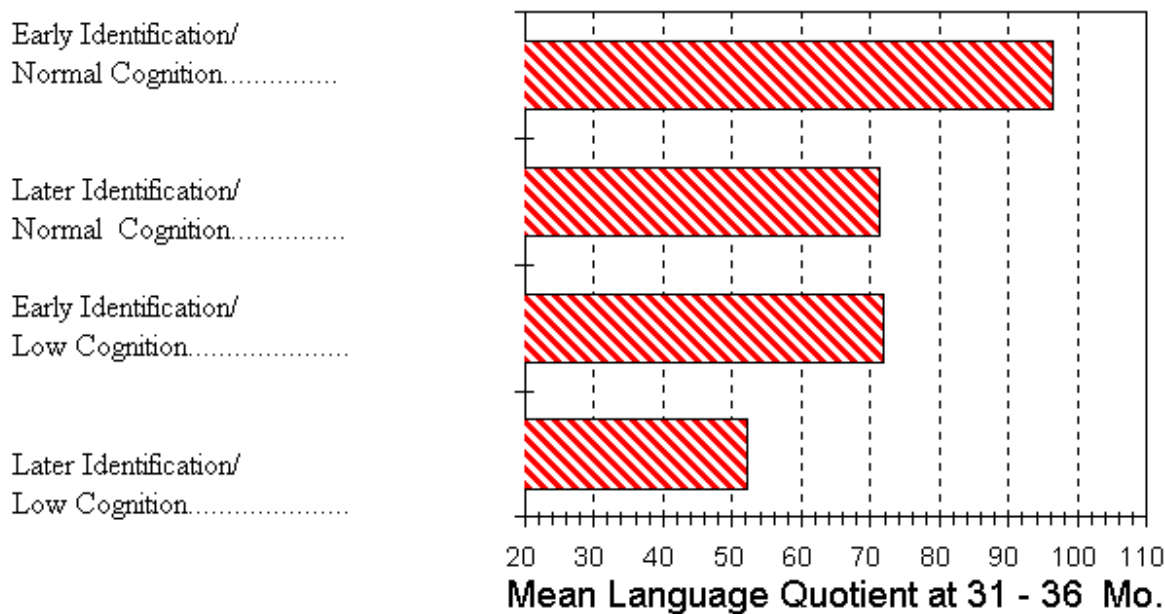
1. Colorado children with hearing loss identified with hearing loss prior to six months of age had language development within the normal range of development between 12 months and 36 months of age ¹
2. Colorado children with later-identified hearing loss (7-34 months) had language development that did not significant differ by age of identification group: 7-12, 13-18, 19-24, 25-34 and was at about 60% of chronological age¹.



Adjusted mean total language quotients for groups based on age of identification of hearing loss.

3. Colorado children with early-identified hearing loss (0-6 mo.) and multiple disabilities had language development similar to children with later-identified hearing loss (7-34 mo.) and no additional disabilities ².
 - Early-identified Colorado children with all degrees of hearing loss, from all socio-economic levels, of both genders, of all races, at all test ages between 12 and 36 months had language development at the low average level.
 - Early-identified Colorado children maintained early-identification language development advantage through 4 years of age.

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**Mean total language quotient scores at 31 to 36 months
by age of identification of hearing loss and cognition.**

4. Children with hearing loss born in a hospital with universal newborn hearing screening in Colorado have an 80% probability of language development within the normal range of development.³

¹Yoshinaga-Itano, C., Sedey, A., Coulter, D., & Mehl, A. (1998). Language of early- and later- identified children with hearing loss. *Pediatrics*, 102(5), 1161-1171.

²Stevens, C. (2002). Stability of language development from 36 to 48 months in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Colorado, Boulder.

³Yoshinaga-Itano, C., Coulter, D., & Thomson, V. (2000). The Colorado Hearing Screening Program: Effects on speech and language for children with hearing loss. *Journal of Perinatology (Supplement)*, 20(8), S132-142

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Appendix E. Demographic Data – D/HH Students

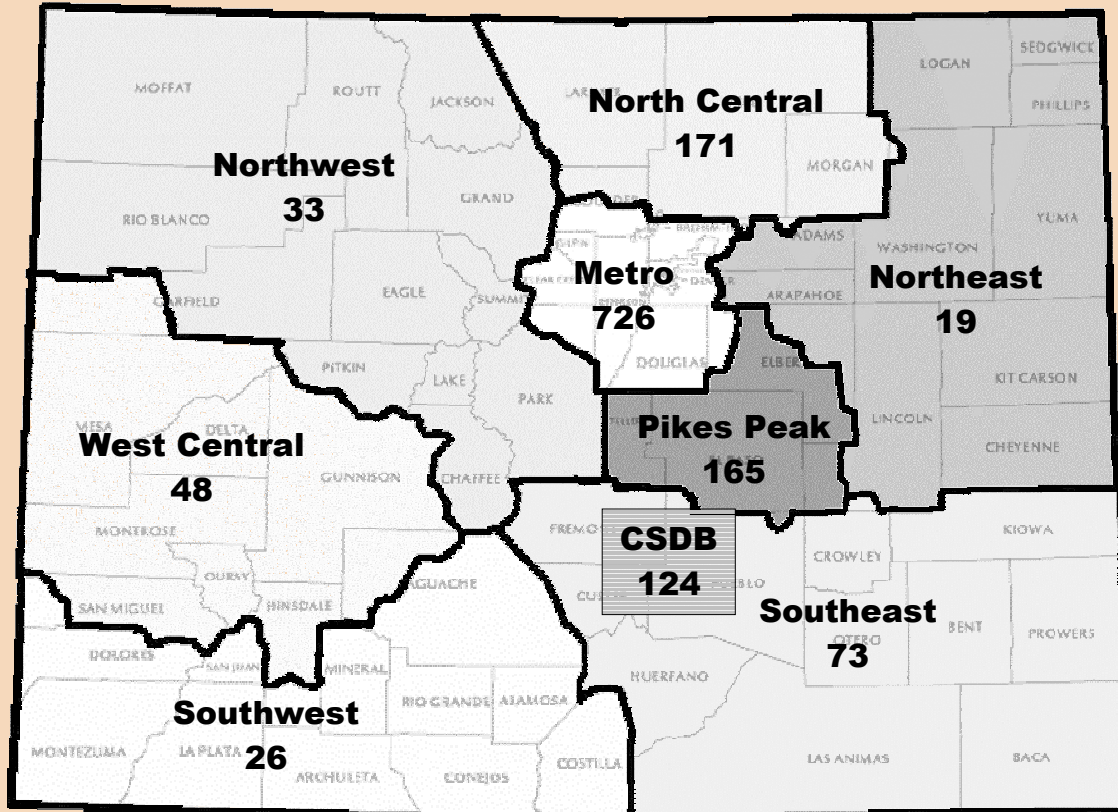
Colorado Administrative Unit Membership: Students with Hearing Disabilities, Birth to Age 21

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Unit, December 1 Counts 1999-2001; asterisk indicates that there are fewer than 16 students in reported category.

Administrative Units	12/1/99	12/1/00	12/1/01	Administrative Units	12/1/99	12/1/00	12/1/01
Adams 1, Mapleton	*	*	*	Logan RE-1, Sterling	*	*	*
Adams 12, Northglenn	75	66	65	Mesa 51, Grand Junction	32	25	31
Adams 14, Commerce City	*	16	16	Moffat RE 1, Craig	*	*	*
Adams 27J, Brighton	*	*	18	Montrose RE-1J, Montrose	*	*	*
Adams 50, Westminster	16	18	19	Morgan RE-3, Fort Morgan	*	*	*
Arapahoe 1, Englewood	*	*	*	Pueblo 60, Pueblo (urban)	23	27	32
Arapahoe 2, Sheridan	*	*	*	Pueblo 70, Pueblo (rural)	*	*	*
Arapahoe 5, Cherry Creek	52	55	60	Weld RE-4, Windsor	*	*	*
Arapahoe 6, Littleton	*	20	24	Weld 6, Greeley	76	70	68
Adams-Arapahoe 28J, Aurora	70	75	93	Centennial BOCES, La Salle	*	*	*
Boulder RE1J, Longmont	37	25	25	East Central BOCES, Limon	*	*	*
Boulder RE2, Boulder	52	53	51	Mount Evans BOCES, Idaho Springs	*	*	*
Delta 50J, Delta	*	*	*	Mountain BOCES, Leadville	29	28	29
Denver 1, Denver	145	147	143	Northeast Colorado BOCES, Haxtun	*	*	*
Douglas RE 1, Castle Rock	55	59	59	Northwest Colorado BOCES, Steamboat Springs	*	*	*
El Paso 2, Harrison	25	26	22	Pikes Peak BOCS, Colorado Springs	25	34	36
El Paso 3, Widefield	*	*	*	Rio Blanco BOCS, Rangely	*	*	*
El Paso 8, Fountain	*	*	*	San Juan BOCS, Durango	*	*	*
El Paso 11, Colorado Springs	55	56	57	San Luis Valley BOCS, Alamosa	*	*	*
El Paso 20, Academy	18	20	26	Santa Fe Trail BOCES, La Junta	*	*	*
El Paso 49, Falcon	*	*	*	South Central BOCS, Pueblo	*	*	*
Fort Lupton/Keenesburg	*	*	*	South Platte Valley BOCES, Fort Morgan	*	*	*
Fremont RE-1, Canon City	*	*	*	Southeastern BOCES, Lamar	*	*	*
Gunnison RE1J, Gunnison	*	*	*	Southwest BOCS, Cortez	*	*	*
Jefferson R-1, Lakewood	133	148	150	Uncompahgre BOCES, Telluride	*	*	*
Larimer R-1, Fort Collins	36	40	34	Elbert C0	NA	NA	*
Larimer R-2J, Loveland	26	22	24	CSDB	131	123	124
Larimer R-3, Estes Park	*	*	*				
TOTALS					1,315	1,353	1,385

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2001 Colorado D/HH Student Membership by Region



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Staffing Patterns – 2001 December Count

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Services Unit

Students with Hearing Disability by Setting	#	%
Home School/General Classroom with Support: <21%	240	17.3%
Home School/General Classroom with Support: 21-60%	49	3.5%
Home School/General Classroom with Support: >60%	45	3.2%
Home School/Outside General Classroom: <21%	376	27.1%
Home School/Outside General Classroom: 21-60%	86	6.2%
Home School/Outside General Classroom: >60%	37	2.7%
Center or Other School/General Classroom with Support: <21%	58	4.2%
Center or Other School/General Classroom with Support: 21-60^	38	2.7%
Center or Other School/General Classroom with Support: >60%	71	5.1%
Center or Other School/Outside General Classroom: <21%	19	1.4%
Center or Other School/Outside General Classroom: 21-60%	57	4.1%
Center or Other School/Outside General Classroom: >60%	78	5.6%
Public School Separate Facility (CSDB)	62	4.4%
Public Residential Facility (CSDB)	61	4.4%
Other Separate Facility	12	.9%
Early Childhood: Part-time EC/Part-time Special Education	9	.6%
Early Childhood: Special Education	37	2.7%
Early Childhood: EC Setting	37	2.7%
Early Intervention: Classroom/Center	2	.1%
Other	11	.8%
TOTAL	1385	

Educational Placements

Source: US Department of Education, 23rd Annual Report to Congress Appendix A, Table AB2, 2002

	< 21 % of time out of regular class	21-60% of time out of regular class	> 60% of time out of regular class	Separate Facility
Colorado: 1998-99	65.8%	7.4%	14.2%	12.5%
US: 1998-99	39.6%	18.7%	25.3%	16.03%

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Appendix F. Attributes of Successful Students

*Successful Students who are Deaf in General Education Settings*¹

The study identified successful students who were deaf and were receiving most of their educational services in general education settings, in order to examine factors contributing to their success. Teachers in a western state [Colorado] were asked to nominate students who were deaf who were in the upper elementary through high school grades and were receiving most of their educational services in general education classroom. Qualitative procedures were used to gather information on 20 successful students who were deaf. Inquiry focused on observation of the student in general education settings and interviews to gather perceptions of (a) the success students themselves, (b) deaf education teachers, educational interpreters, and paraprofessional note takers serving these students, (c) general education teachers working with these students, and (d) parents. The students' primary communication modes were closely divided between sign language and spoken English; communication mode did not seem to be a salient factor in success. Results of the interviews with each group, a summary of observations, and theme that emerged across groups are provided in the article.

The list of factors below is not predictive but rather is a compilation of the common qualities of the students, families, and educational staff interviewed in the study. It is important to note that within each attribute there was a lot of variety exhibited among the students. More importantly, it is critical to remember that while each successful student in the study exhibited each of these characteristics, each student and his or her family followed their own path to success. Educational program staff and families can use this information as a catalyst for discussions about the quantity and quality of current and future services for students who are deaf.

- ◆ **Family Involvement**
- ◆ **Self-Determination**
- ◆ **Extra-Curricular Involvement**
- ◆ **Friendships & Social Skills**
- ◆ **Self-Advocacy**
- ◆ **Collaboration & Consultation**
- ◆ **Pre-teach, Teach, Post-teach**
- ◆ **Early Identification & Early Intervention**
- ◆ **Reading**
- ◆ **High Expectations**

¹Reprinted from J. Luckner and S. Muir (2001). *American Annals of the Deaf* 146 (5), pp 435-445.

Appendix G. Focus Group Report

Western Slope – FOCUS Group on Regional D/HH Program and Services – 4/27/2001

What are current unmet needs in your district for D/HH students?	What services would your school district want from a regional program? What are the benefits of a regional program?	What are the barriers to a regional D/HH program?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for peer interactions (daily/periodic) • Direct instruction by D/HH teacher (as compared to all instruction through an interpreter) • Time restraints due to itinerant model in rural areas • Insufficient service providers (audiologists, SLPs, mental health, ASL teachers and interpreters, deaf ed teachers) • Insufficient inservice opportunities on western slope (most occur on front range) • Insufficient inservice training for parents, general ed teachers, and other related service providers (SLPs, psychs) • D/HH specialist to coordinate local and regional services (social, inservices, technical assistance) as well as to attend IEP meetings to represent D/HH needs of student • Opportunities for teacher collaboration across districts/BOCES • Opportunities for parents to collaborate, interact, participate • Training for interpreters • Awareness of needs (especially communication/social) by administrators • Access to appropriate D/HH adult role models • Caseload guidelines • Expertise for Spanish-speaking families (& other foreign languages), including cultural awareness • Reasonable salaries for educational interpreters (can't compete with front range salaries) • Sufficient substitutes for teachers and interpreters • Equity and access to services for all D/HH students regardless of geographical location and local resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional program for ASL students • Regional coordinator to coordinate services, attend IEP meetings • Mental health services • Opportunities for sign language instruction • Regional meetings • More training for parents, general ed teachers and related service providers • Access to more FM, assistive listening devices, and other assistive technology (and new technologies) • Support for Cochlear Implant mapping • More awareness about <i>individual</i> needs of D/HH kids (different types of hearing loss, communication needs) • Parent advocacy to support child's needs and services • Increased parent education and parent organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography • Family culture of western slope (families more independent) • Financial resources

Northeast Colorado – FOCUS Group on Regional D/HH Program and Services- 2/21/2001

What are current unmet needs in your district for D/HH students?	What services would your school district want from a regional program?	What are the benefits of a regional program?	What are the barriers to a regional D/HH program?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of social activities • Sign language classes for families (English and Spanish) • Continuum of options within a program • Auditory-verbal training • Personnel – lack of interpreters, deaf ed teacher substitutes • Family support groups (including Spanish) • Support for cochlear implants • Mental health support for students and families • Trained speech/language specialists and other specialists • Equipment – supply, servicing & maintenance • Middle school and high school ongoing networking opportunities • Access to adult deaf community – role models • Transportation - need busses, money for events • Lack of training for interpreters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of those in column 1 • Option for residential component • Outreach – ability to share what program can do • Assessment expertise • Extracurricular activities • District specialization in specific populations, ex: Ft Collins (moderate needs), Greeley (spanish) • -Define focus and philosophy – other services then follow • Cluster preschools, e.g. Loveland/Ft.Collins (transportation still a barrier) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of resources • Building of community (deaf, family) • More opportunities for teaming, collaboration, and training between deaf ed teachers • Data collection consolidation • More communication among families • Data collection – could assist district and higher ed; address training needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Who decides philosophy and focus? • Transportation • Site • Location • Job security – effect on existing program • Need criteria for placement • How do changing numbers affect stability of regional program as well as district programs? • Ability of regional program to offer a full continuum of services

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Appendix H. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Definitions Pertaining to Hearing Loss and D/HH Disabilities

IDEA-PART B DEFINITION OF AUDIOLOGY (34CFR300.24[b])¹

- | | |
|---|--|
| i. Identification of children with hearing loss; | iv. Creation and administration of programs for prevention of hearing loss; |
| ii. Determination of the range, nature, and degree of hearing loss, including referral for medical or other professional attention for the habilitation of hearing; | v. Counseling and guidance of pupils, parents, and teachers regarding hearing loss; |
| iii. Provision of habilitation activities, such as language habilitation, auditory training, speech reading, (lipreading), hearing evaluation, and speech conservation: | vi. Determination of the child's need for group and individual amplification, selecting and fitting an appropriate aid, and evaluating the effectiveness of amplification. |

IDEA-PART C DEFINITION OF AUDIOLOGY (34CFR303.12[d])

- | | |
|---|--|
| i. Identification of children with impairments, using at risk criteria and appropriate audiological screening techniques; | iv. Provision of auditory training, aural rehabilitation, speech reading and listening device orientation and training, and other services; |
| ii. Determination of the range, nature, and degree of hearing loss and communication functions, by use of audiologic evaluation procedures; | v. Provision of services for the prevention of hearing loss; and |
| iii. Referral for medical and other services necessary for the habilitation or rehabilitation of children with auditory impairment; | vi. Determination of the child's need for individual amplification, including selecting, fitting, and dispensing of appropriate listening and vibrotactile devices, and evaluating the effectiveness of those devices. |

IDEA-PART B PROPER FUNCTIONING OF HEARING AIDS (34CFR300.303)

Each public agency shall ensure that the hearing aids worn in school by children with hearing impairments, including deafness, are functioning properly.

IDEA-PART B DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW, AND REVISION OF IEP (34CFR300.346[a])

- | | |
|--|---|
| (2) Consideration of special factors. | mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode; and |
| (iv) 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 | (v) Consider whether the child requires assistive technology devices and services. |

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IDEA-PART B & PART C: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (34CFR300.5-6; 34CFR303.12)

Assistive technology devices and services are necessary if a child with a disability requires the device and services in order to receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE); the public agency must ensure that they are made available.

“Assistive technology device” means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities.

“Assistive technology service” means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. The term includes:

- (a) The evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child’s customary environment;
- (b) Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by children with disabilities;
- (c) Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, retaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices;
- (d) Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
- (e) Training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child’s family; and
- (f) Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of children with disabilities.

IDEA-PART B DEFINITIONS (34CFR300.7[b])

- [2] “Deaf-blindness” means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.
- [3] “Deafness” means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.
- [5] “Hearing impairment” means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section.

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Appendix I. US Department of Education Policy

Deaf Students Education Services: Policy Guidance

4000-01

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AGENCY: Department of Education

ACTION: Notice of Policy Guidance

SUMMARY: The Department provides additional guidance about Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section SW) as they relate to the provision of appropriate education services to students who are deaf. This guidance is issued in response to concerns regarding Departmental policy on the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students who are deaf. Many of these concerns were expressed in the report of the Commission on Education of the Deaf. This guidance is intended to furnish State and local education agency personnel with background information and specific steps that will help to ensure that children and youth who are deaf are provided with a free appropriate public education. It also describes procedural safeguards that ensure parents are knowledgeable about their rights and about placement decisions made by public agencies.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT:

Jean Peelen or Parma Yarkin,
U.S. Department of Education,
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Rooms 5046 and
3131, Switzer Building, respectively,
Washington, D.C. 20202-2524.
Telephone: (202) 205-8637 and
(202) 205-8723, respectively.
Deaf and hearing impaired individuals may
call (202) 205-8449 or (202) 205-8723,
respectively, for TDD services.

SUPPLEMENTARY

INFORMATION:

Background

In the past twenty-five years, two national panels have concluded that the education of deaf students must be improved in order to meet their unique communication and related needs. The most recent of these panels, the Commission on Education of the Deaf (COED), recommended a number of changes in the way the Federal government supports the education of individuals who are deaf from birth through postsecondary schooling and training.

With this notice, the Secretary implements several COED recommendations relating to the provision of appropriate education for elementary and secondary students who are deaf.

The COED's report and its primary finding¹ reflect a fundamental concern within much of the deaf community that students who are deaf have significant obstacles to overcome in order to have access to a free appropriate public education that meets their unique educational needs, particularly their communication and related needs.²

The disability of deafness often results in significant and unique educational needs for the individual child. The major barriers to learning associated with deafness relate to language and communication, which, in turn, profoundly affect most aspects of the educational process. For example, acquiring basic English language skills is a tremendous challenge for most students who are deaf. While the Department and

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others are supporting research activities in the area of language acquisition for children who are deaf, effective methods of instruction that can be implemented in a variety of educational settings are still not available. The reading skills of deaf children reflect perhaps the most momentous and dismal effects of the disability and of the education system's struggle to effectively teach deaf children: hearing impaired students “level off” in their reading comprehension achievement at about the third grade level.³

Compounding the manifest educational considerations, the communication nature of the disability is inherently isolating, with considerable effect on the interaction with peers and teachers that make up the educational process. This interaction, for the purpose of transmitting knowledge and developing the child's self-esteem and identity, is dependent upon direct communication. Yet, communication is the area most hampered between a deaf child and his or her hearing peers and teachers. Even the availability of interpreter services in the educational setting may not address deaf children's needs for direct and meaningful communication with peers and teachers.

Because deafness is a low incidence disability, there is not widespread understanding of its educational implications, even among special educators. This lack of knowledge and skills in our education system contributes to the already substantial barriers to deaf students in receiving appropriate educational services.

In light of all these factors, the Secretary believes that it is important to provide additional guidance to State and local education agencies to ensure that the needs of students who are deaf are appropriately identified and met, and that

placement decisions for students who are deaf meet the standards of the applicable statutes and their implementing regulations. It is the purpose of this document to (1) clarify the free appropriate public education provisions of IDEA for children who are deaf, including important factors in the determination of appropriate education for such children and the requirement that education be provided in the least restrictive environment, and (2) clarify the applicability of the procedural safeguards in placement decisions.

Nothing in this notice alters a public agency's obligation to place a student with a disability in a regular classroom if FAPE can be provided in that setting.

The provision of a free appropriate public education based on the unique needs of the child is at the heart of the IDEA. Similarly, the Section 504 regulation at 34 CFR sections 104.33-104.36 contains free appropriate public education requirements, which are also applicable to local educational agencies serving children who are deaf. A child is receiving an appropriate education when all of the requirements in the statute and the regulations are met. The Secretary believes that full consideration of the unique needs of a child who is deaf will help to ensure the provision of an appropriate education. For children who are eligible under Part B of the IDEA, this is accomplished through the IEP process. For children determined to be handicapped under Section 504, implementation of an individualized education program developed in accordance with Part B of the IDEA is one means of meeting the free appropriate public education requirements of the Section 504 regulations.

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As part of the process of developing an individualized education program (IEP) for a child with disabilities under the IDEA, State and local education agencies must comply with the evaluation and placement regulations at 34 CFR Sections 300.530-300.534. In meeting the individual education needs of children who are deaf under Section 504, LEAs must comply with the evaluation and placement requirements of 34 CFR Section 104.35 of the Section 504 regulation, which contain requirements similar to those of the IDEA. However, the Secretary believes that the unique communication and related needs of many children who are deaf have not been adequately considered in the development of their IEP's. To assist public agencies in carrying out their responsibilities for children who are deaf, the Department provides the following guidance.

The Secretary believes it is important that State and local education agencies, in developing an IEP for a child who is deaf, take into consideration such factors as:

1. Communication needs and the child's and family's preferred mode of communication;
2. Linguistic needs;
3. Severe of hearing loss and potential for using residual hearing;
4. Academic level; and
5. Social, emotional, and cultural needs, including opportunities for peer interactions and communication.

In addition, the particular needs of an individual child may require the consideration of additional factors. For example, the nature and severity of some children's needs will require the consideration of curriculum content and method of curriculum delivery in determining how those needs can be met.

Including evaluators who are knowledgeable about these specific factors as part of the multidisciplinary team evaluating the student will help ensure that the deaf student's needs are correctly identified.

Under the least restrictive environment (LRE) provision of IDEA, public agencies must establish procedures to ensure that 'to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.'⁴ The section 504 regulation at 34 CFR SECTION 104.34 contains a similar provision.

The Secretary is concerned that the least restrictive environment provisions of the IDEA and Section 504 are being interpreted, incorrectly, to require the placement of some children who are deaf in programs that may not meet the individual student's educational needs. Meeting the unique communication and related needs of a student who is deaf is a fundamental part of providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the child. Any setting, including a regular classroom, that prevents a child who is deaf from receiving an appropriate education that meets his or her needs, including communication needs, is not the LRE for that individual child.

Placement decisions must be based on the child's IEP.⁵ Thus, the consideration of LRE as part of the placement decision must always be in the context of the LRE

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in which appropriate services can be provided. Any setting which does not meet the communication and related needs of a child who is deaf, and therefore does not allow for the provision of FAPE, cannot be considered the LRE for that child. The provision of FAPE is paramount, and the individual placement determination about LRE is to be considered within the context of FAPE.

The Secretary is concerned that some public agencies have misapplied the LRE provision by presuming that placements in or closer to the regular classroom are required for children who are deaf, without taking into consideration the range of communication and related needs that must be addressed in order to provide appropriate services. The Secretary recognizes that the regular classroom is an appropriate placement for some children who are deaf, but for others it is not. The decision as to what placement will provide FAPE for an individual deaf child—which includes a determination as to the LRE in which appropriate services can be made available to the child—must be made only after a full and complete IEP has been developed that addresses the full range of the child's needs.

The Secretary believes that consideration of the factors mentioned above will assist placement teams in identifying the needs of children who are deaf and will enable them to place children in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their needs.

The overriding rule regarding placement is that placement decisions must be made on an individual basis.⁶ As in previous policy guidance, the Secretary emphasizes that placement decisions may not be based on category of disability, the configuration of the delivery system, the availability of educational or related

services, availability of space, or administrative convenience.

States and school districts also are advised that the potential harmful effect of the placement on the deaf child or the quality of services he or she needs must be considered in determining the LRE.

The Secretary recognizes that regular educational settings are appropriate and adaptable to meet the unique needs of particular children who are deaf. For others, a center or special school may be the least restrictive environment in which the child's unique needs can be met. A full range of alternative placements as described at 34 CFR Section 300.551(a) and (b)(1) of the IDEA regulations must be available to the extent necessary to implement each child's IEP. There are cases when the nature of the disability and the individual child's needs dictate a specialized setting that provides structured curriculum or special methods of teaching. Just as placement in the regular educational setting is required when it is appropriate for the unique needs of a child who is deaf, so is removal from the regular educational setting required when the child's needs cannot be met in that setting with the use of supplementary aids and services.

Procedural Safeguards

One important purpose of the procedural safeguards required under Part B and the Section 504 regulations is to ensure that parents are knowledgeable about their rights and about important decisions that public agencies make, such as placement decisions. Under the Section 504 regulations at 34 CFR Section 104.36, a public agency must establish a system of procedural safeguards that includes, among other requirements, notice to parents with respect to placement decisions. Compliance with the Part B

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procedural safeguards is one means of meeting the requirements of the Section 504 regulations. Under Part B, before a child is initially placed in special education the child's parents must be given written notice and must consent to the placement. The Part B regulations at 34 CFR Section 300.500(a) provide that consent means that parents have been fully informed of all information relevant to the placement decision. The obligation to fully inform parents includes informing the parents that the public agency is required to have a full continuum of placement options available to meet the needs of children with disabilities, including instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions. The Part B regulations at 34 CFR §§300.504-300.505 also require that parents must be given written notice a reasonable time before a public agency proposes to initiate or

change the identification, evaluation, educational placement or provision of a free appropriate public education to the child. This notice to parents must include a description of the action proposed or refused by the agency, an explanation of why the agency proposes or refuses to take the action, and a description of any options the agency considered and the reasons why those options were rejected. The requirement to provide a description of any option considered includes a description of the types of placements that were actually considered, e.g., special school or regular class, as well as any specific schools that were actually considered and the reasons why these placement options were rejected. Providing this kind of information to parents will enable them to play a more knowledgeable and informed role in the education of their children.

Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1411–1420; 29 U.S.C. 794.

Dated:

Lamar Alexander, *Secretary*

Source: From *Federal Register* (57) October 30, 1992, pp. 49274 – 49276.

¹ “The present status of education for persons who are deaf in the United States is unsatisfactory. Unacceptably so. This is the primary and inescapable conclusion of the Commission on Education of the Deaf.” Commission on Education of the Deaf: *Toward Equality: Education of the Deaf*. (February 1988)

² As stated in IDEA, the purpose of the Act is: “. . . to assure that all children with disabilities have available to them . . . a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs . . .” 20 U.S.C. sec. 1400(c). In addition, the Section 504 regulations state: “A recipient [of federal financial assistance] that operates a public elementary or secondary education program shall provide a free appropriate public education to each qualified handicapped person . . .” 34 CFR Section 104.33(a).

³ Thomas E. Allen, “Patterns of Academic Achievement Among Hearing Impaired Students: 1974 and 1983,” in *Deaf Children in America* 162-164 [Arthur N. Schildroth and Michael A. Karchmer, Eds. San Diego: College-Hill Press (1986)]

⁴ 20 U.S.C. sec. 1412(5)(B).

⁵ 20 U.S.C. sec. 1401(18); *see also* 34 CFR section 300.552(a)(2), and 34 CFR section 104.33(b)(2).

⁶ 34 CFR section 300.552 *Comment*. *See also* Appendix A to 34 CFR Part 104 at section 24.

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Appendix J. Other Supporting Documents

*Bill of Rights for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing*¹ (1992)

Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to appropriate screening and assessment of hearing and vision capabilities and communication and language needs at the earliest possible age and to the continuation of screening services throughout the educational experience.

- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to early intervention to provide for acquisition of solid language base(s) developed at the earliest possible age.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to their parents'/guardians' full informed participation in their educational planning.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to adult role models who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to meet and associate with their peers.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to qualified teachers, interpreters, and resource personnel who communicate effectively with the child in the child's mode of communication.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to placement best suited to their individual needs including, but not limited to, social, emotional, and cultural needs; age; hearing loss; academic level; mode(s) of communication; styles of learning; motivational level; and family support.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to individual considerations for free, appropriate education across a full spectrum of education programs.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to full support services provided by qualified professionals in their educational settings.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to full access to all programs in their educational setting.
- Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are entitled to have the public fully informed concerning medical, cultural, and linguistic issues of deafness and hearing loss.

¹Council of Organizational Representatives, 1992

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Commission on Education of the Deaf (1988)¹

In 1988, the Commission on Education of the Deaf published its report *Toward Equality: Education of the Deaf*, which was submitted to the President and the Congress of the United States. The report focused on the unsatisfactory educational performance of deaf students and in particular the problems associated with inappropriate mainstreamed placements (least restrictive environment [LRE] interpretation issues). In all, 52 recommendations were made regarding prevention and early identification, language acquisition, appropriate education, least restrictive environment, parents' rights, evaluation and assessment, program standards, quality education, American Sign Language, federal postsecondary education systems, research, evaluation, outreach, professional standards and training, technology, clearinghouses, and committees on deaf/blindness. Many of these recommendations were addressed in a U.S. Department of Education Notice of Policy Guidance statement by the Director of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Robert Davila, and the Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander (U.S. Department of Education, October 30, 1992). The establishment of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders within the National Institutes of Health was another outcome of the Commission Report. Recognizing that the problems identified in the Commission Report exist for many deaf and hard-of-hearing students, it should be noted that the report did not differentiate degree of hearing loss, using the term deaf to refer to all persons with hearing impairment, including those who are hard-of-hearing and those deafened later in life.

The National Agenda for Deaf Education Reform (2002)

Since 2000, a group of deaf educators and advocates representing schools for the deaf and other agencies serving children and their families who are deaf and hard of hearing (AGBell, American Society for Deaf Children, National Association of the Deaf, Council On Education of the Deaf, National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Council of American Instructors of the Deaf, ACE-DHH, National Deaf Education Project) began meeting to develop a white paper about needed changes in deaf education across the US. Proposed goal areas of the Advisory Group of the National Agenda include early intervention, communication and language, partnerships, accountability audits and high stakes testing, placement, programs and services, technology, personnel preparation, and research. In addition to focusing attention on the continuing need for students who are deaf and hard of hearing to have access to appropriate educational services, the National Agenda will also provide a vital and unified voice in the 2002 re-authorization of IDEA.

¹ Reprinted with permission from C.D. Johnson, P. Benson, and J. Seaton (1997). *Educational Audiology Handbook*, p. 12. San Diego: Singular Publishing Group.

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Colorado Department of Education 2001-02 State Improvement Plan for Special Education Services

The US Office of Special Education Programs requires each state's department of education to develop an annual plan for improvement of services and supports to students with disabilities. The Colorado State Improvement Plan for Special Education is a working document of on-going comprehensive needs assessment and is designed to guide the Special Education Services Unit to improve those systems that affect the education of children and youth with disabilities. The Special Education Services Unit advocates for, implements, and monitors the services required for all individuals with disabilities, thus supporting these individuals in achieving maximum independence upon exiting from the Colorado School system.

Key outcomes and performance indicators in the State Improvement Plan were identified by the Colorado Department of Education Special Education Advisory Committee for 2001-02. Specific strategies within the plan have been identified based on the Colorado Deaf Education Reform Task Force recommendations (2001) and the declining Colorado Student Assessment Program performance for D/HH students.

Strategies for Improving Outcomes for D/HH Students:

Key Outcome 1:

Appropriate Identification: Exceptional children are appropriately identified for individualized programs and services.

Strategies:

Specific strategies for D/HH students are yet to be identified.

Key Outcome 2:

Active Family Involvement: Families will receive the information and training they need to increase their participation in their children's education and services.

Strategies:

1. The Colorado Department of Education will insure stipends are available for parents of D/HH children to attend workshops and parent/family activities.
2. The Colorado Department of Education will establish a series of community and parent education programs to promote full access and meaningful involvement for parents of D/HH children.

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Indicators:

1. An increasing percentage of parents/ families will be involved in decision-making.
2. More parents will take advantage of stipends provided to access training and technical assistance.

Key Outcome 3:

Meaningful Participation: All exceptional children will receive the services identified in individual family service plans and individual education plans to allow them meaningful participation in their education and development.

Strategies:

- In conjunction with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, the Colorado Department of Education is implementing a coordinated statewide regional education system to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of D/HH children.
- In conjunction with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind the Colorado Department of Education is developing regional cooperative programs with local school districts to assure program and placement options determined by the communication needs of the child. These options will promote high standards and full access to the curriculum, and will offer educational environments that contain a critical mass of students for increased communication and social opportunities.
- The Colorado Department of Education will implement criteria for quality academic and extracurricular programs that provide communication-driven services for D/HH children.
- The Colorado Department of Education will draft alternative funding systems and options to increase support for school districts providing services to D/HH children.

Indicators:

- The percentage of children with disabilities, who participate in a standards-driven curriculum with adequate accommodations, modifications, and supports, will increase.
- The percentage of students included in the general educational environment with appropriate modifications and accommodations will increase.
- A greater percentage of children with disabilities will participate in the Colorado Student Achievement Program, the Colorado Student Achievement Program-Alternate, or other assessments.

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Key Outcome 4:

Significant Achievement: Exceptional children will make significant achievements in assessments, academics, and in their development.

Strategy:

1. The Colorado Department of Education will promote methods for increasing achievement within the D/HH student population.

Indicator:

1. The percentage of children with disabilities, who demonstrate progress in the Colorado Student Achievement Program, the Colorado Student Achievement Program-Alternate, and other assessments, will increase.

Key Outcome 5:

Successful Transitions: All exceptional children will be provided the resources and supports to make successful transitions from birth through primary education; from primary through secondary school; and from the secondary school to successful post-school outcomes.

Specific strategies for D/HH are yet to be identified.

Key Outcome 6:

Qualified Personnel: There will be an adequate supply of qualified personnel and effective training programs to meet the identified needs of exceptional children and to provide access to quality education.

Strategies:

1. The Colorado Department of Education will implement on-going training, mentoring, and professional development activities to support and improve proficiency for specialty providers, general educators, administration, and families to better serve the needs of D/HH children.
2. The Colorado Department of Education will collaborate with national and state resources to recruit and train staff to provide services to D/HH children.
3. The Colorado Department of Education will develop a consultive/mentoring model to meet the needs of D/HH children living in rural areas by training regional resource teachers to provide systematic support and guidance to local resource teachers.

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Indicator:

1. An increasing percentage of stakeholders will report that educational services and supports as identified on the IEP/ IFSP will be provided within appropriate timelines.

Key Outcome 7:

Effective Monitoring: The Colorado Department of Education will effectively coordinate federal, state, and local agencies to ensure compliance with Colorado and Federal Regulations and will effectively monitor dispute proceedings and the delivery of services to exceptional children.

Specific strategies for D/HH children are yet to be identified.

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Statewide Plan for Delivery of Educational Services to Children Who are Hearing Impaired/Deaf or Visually Impaired/Blind (1990)

Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. June 30, 1990

Executive Summary

Introductory Comments

A first draft of a statewide plan for hearing impaired/deaf or visually impaired blind children has been prepared and provides a snapshot of services currently available, identifies omissions/gaps in service delivery and makes recommendations for improvement. The plan has been developed for a number of reasons:

- To respond to issues raised by a recent legislative performance audit of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, CSDB concerning its future role,
- To respond to concerns raised over the last several years by educators, professionals, parents and other concerned parties relative to the current status of education in Colorado for hearing impaired/deaf or visually impaired/blind children,
- To identify needs of students, families, the educational system and to list recommendations that would aid in the development of a coordinated statewide system of providing needed services for hearing impaired/deaf or visually impaired/blind students, and
- To suggest areas of focus for immediate action by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and CSDB.

This plan will continue to evolve over the months to come with full implementation anticipated for June, 1992.

Important Findings

A wealth of information was collected through a variety of means to determine the current status of education in Colorado for hearing impaired/deaf or visually impaired/blind students. Some of the more important findings that impede adequate service provision to students are listed below:

- There is an apparent under-identification of hearing impaired/deaf children based on national statistics due to inadequate child find practices.
- Attracting, hiring and retaining qualified staff is very difficult throughout the state. This is especially true in rural areas. As a result students either receive inadequate services or must attend CSDB.
- Deaf students are scattered throughout the state and in some cases are isolated from other deaf peers or adult role models.
- There is a lack of specialized assistive equipment necessary to educate students throughout the state.
- Comprehensive assessment is sometimes not available for students who live in rural areas or for students who are difficult to assess regardless of where they live.

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- The specialized learning needs of student in areas of orientation/mobility, sign language training, daily living/independent living, affective skills, recreation and vocational training are difficult to meet for many local educational agencies.
- Continuing education is needed for teachers and related service professionals and paraprofessionals.

Major Recommendations

Recommendations were compiled from educators, professionals, parents and individuals/groups having an interest in the education of hearing impaired/deaf or visually impaired/blind children. Upon examining the many recommendations that were made, areas of focus are suggested for immediate attention by CDE/CSDB as a means of beginning to develop a coordinated educational service deliver system. Some of the more important areas of focus are listed below:

- Develop a consistent and meaningful statewide system, of data collection.
- Improve the overall standards, coordination, and cooperation of the educational system by linking student outcomes to policy, decision-making, curriculum, instruction, and service delivery in general.
- Improve the skills and availability of teachers, professionals, and paraprofessionals.
- Implement a statewide system of outreach services to supplement local school district services.
- Conduct regional meetings to clarify gaps in the continuum of services and to devise specific strategies to fill those gaps.
- Develop a statewide clearinghouse for equipment, materials, etc. at CSDB.
- Develop needs-based criteria for student placement (entrance and exit criteria) within a statewide continuum of services that includes not only CSDB but also local school districts.
- Investigate the possibility of developing a magnet school for deaf student in the Denver Region.



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