

Frequently Asked Questions

About Early Support Referrals for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Who provides early support services?

The Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program coordinates a statewide system of early support services and helps families access services through a county Family Resources Coordinator (FRC). Early support services are available to eligible children aged birth to three years of age.

How do I make a referral?

- Fax, call, or secure email the Lead FRC for the county in which the child lives. See the [Early Support for Infants and Toddlers \(ESIT\) Contact Directory](#) to locate the child's Lead FRC.
- Refer through the EHDDI program
 - Complete the [Resource Referrals for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Form](#) and fax it to the EHDDI program at 206-364-0074.
 - If you use the EHDDI Web Application to report results online, enter an FRC referral in the child's case. See page 18 of our [EHDDI Web Application Guide](#) for instructions on how to make a referral through the EHDDI web application.

If the child is three years old or older, please send the referral to their [local school district](#).

What will the FRC do when they receive the referral?

- Arrange in-depth developmental screening or evaluation to verify or rule out the need for early support services.
- Explain early support services available and help develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), if needed.
- Assist the family in accessing other community programs such as parent support, respite, and transportation; and
- Help identify funding resources for early support services.

When should I refer the family to the FRC?

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C requires primary referral sources, such as audiologists, to refer a child identified as deaf or hard of hearing to the Part C program "as soon as possible but in no case more than seven days" after identification ([CFR 303.303](#)).

What if I haven't confirmed that the child is deaf or hard of hearing yet?

Refer the child for early support services as soon as you suspect a permanent hearing difference or hearing loss. The family can start working with the FRC before receiving the confirmation hearing evaluation or other medical evaluations.

Should I refer a child with fluctuating but persistent conductive hearing loss?

Yes, refer a child with a fluctuating conductive hearing loss that has persisted in the first few months of life and remains for three months. This includes children with cleft palate or Trisomy 21 who are at risk for chronic fluctuating middle ear effusion.

What if the child is already enrolled in early support services?

You must notify the child's FRC about suspected hearing differences. The FRC can assist the family in accessing additional services available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Do I need the family's permission to send a referral to the FRC?

Yes, obtain and document parental consent before sending the referral to the FRC.

What if the child doesn't qualify for services?

In Washington, infants identified as deaf or hard of hearing automatically [qualify](#) for early support services. If you are unsure if a child qualifies, please refer them to early support services anyway. The following hearing related diagnoses automatically qualify for early support services:

- Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder
- Aural Atresia, Bilateral or Unilateral
- Hearing Loss (Permanent Conductive) (bilateral or unilateral)
- Hearing Loss (Sensorineural) (bilateral or unilateral)
- Otitis Media (for more than 3 months, unresolved) (bilateral or unilateral)

There are also some syndromes associated with hearing differences that automatically qualify for services as well. Please see the complete [ESIT Qualifying Diagnosis List](#) for more information.

What is the cost to the family for services provided by the FRC?

Family resources coordination, developmental screening, and evaluations to determine eligibility are provided at no cost to families. Deaf and hard of hearing ESIT services are provided at no cost to families. The FRC will work with the family to find funding resources for early support services if a child is found to be eligible for additional services such as physical therapy or speech therapy.

What if the family declines the referral to early support services?

If a family declines the referral for early support services, document this in your records and when reporting results to the EHDDI program.

Washington State EHDDI Program

Phone: 206-418-5613
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