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Helping Families Obtain Full Access to Information for Their Deaf Child's Language Acquisition

By Sheri Farinha, M.Ed.,
CEO & PI and

Julie Rems-Smario, Ed.D.
California's EHDI Co-Coordinator

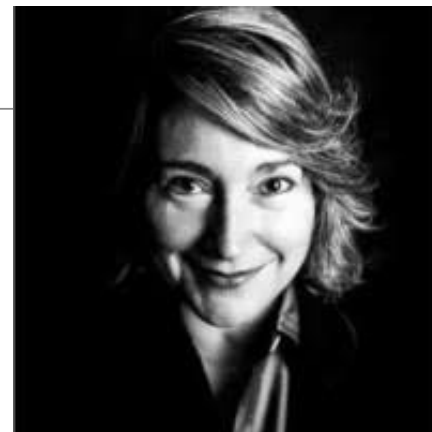


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Sheri Farinha, MA

Sheri A. Farinha is the EHDI Coordinator for California. Sheri Farinha received her BA and MA Degree in Special Education from Cal State University at Northridge. Since 1993, Sheri Farinha has served as the Chief Executive Officer, NorCal Service for Deaf & Hard of Hearing serving 24 northeastern counties. Sheri is currently the PI for NorCal's new program called LEAD-K Family Services to provide Early Start Referrals for California newborn hearing screening program under HRSA. Sheri has successfully worked on legislation impacting Deaf Children's education and language acquisition, employment services, civil rights improvements, and many other bills. Nationally, she is a well-known as a strong Civil Rights Leader and Advocate. For over 36 years, Sheri has received numerous accolades and awards from local, state, and national stakeholder organizations, as well as CA Legislators honoring her numerous contributions related to advocacy, leadership, and legislative actions that benefit Deaf, late-Deaf, hard of hearing, and Deaf-Blind Individuals.



Julie Rems Smario, EdD

Dr. Julie Rems Smario, Co-Coordinator, (EHDI) and works closely with LEAD-K Family Services. Julie currently works for the California Department of Education, Early Language and Education Programs Consultant at the CORE Division, a program of the California School for the Deaf. Previously, Julie's tenure at the California Department of Education in 2018 through 2021, included serving as EHDI Coordinator and supervising SB 210 data (LEAD-K law) which included developing resources for families of Deaf children, supporting and training Early Start teachers, and providing technical assistance to K-12 Deaf education teachers. During her after-work hours, Julie volunteers as Public Relations director of a national campaign, Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K). In 2017, Julie was honored with Deaf Women United's Deaf Woman of the year award and in 2015 she was recognized as Deaf Person of the Year by Deaf Life for her early work with LEAD-K. In 2007, Julie was also recognized by E-Women Network with the International Humanitarian Award and by CNN as one of CNN's heroes for her work with Deaf survivors of domestic and sexual violence as the founding director of DeafHope. Julie has MA in Deaf Education from California State University, Northridge, MS in Deaf Counseling from San Francisco State University, and Ed.D. In Educational Leadership and Social Justice from California State University, East Bay.

Disclosures

- **Presenter Disclosures:** Financial: Sheri Farinha is employed by LEAD-K Family Services. Non-financial: Sheri Farinha has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose. Financial: Julie Rems Smario is employed by the California School for the Deaf. Non-financial: Julie Rems Smario has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose. Presenters received an honorarium for this course.
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Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify 1 current trend for expanding the 1-3-6 EHDI goals.
- Identify 1 strategy to empower families in supporting their Deaf children's language development.
- Identify 1 way to collaborate with the CA EHDI Coordinators.



**Julie Rems Smario, Ed.D. & Sheri Farinha, M.Ed. PI
CALIFORNIA EHDI COORDINATORS**

What we know

- Historically, Deaf children have struggled academically.
- Being Deaf or Hard of Hearing does not cause language delay.
- It is ***language deprivation*** that causes language delay. ***This is true even if the hearing level is mild or unilateral.***

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT FROM BIRTH TO THE AGE OF THREE IS CENTRAL PART OF THE EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

For Deaf children of hearing parents, the most significant predictors of success are:

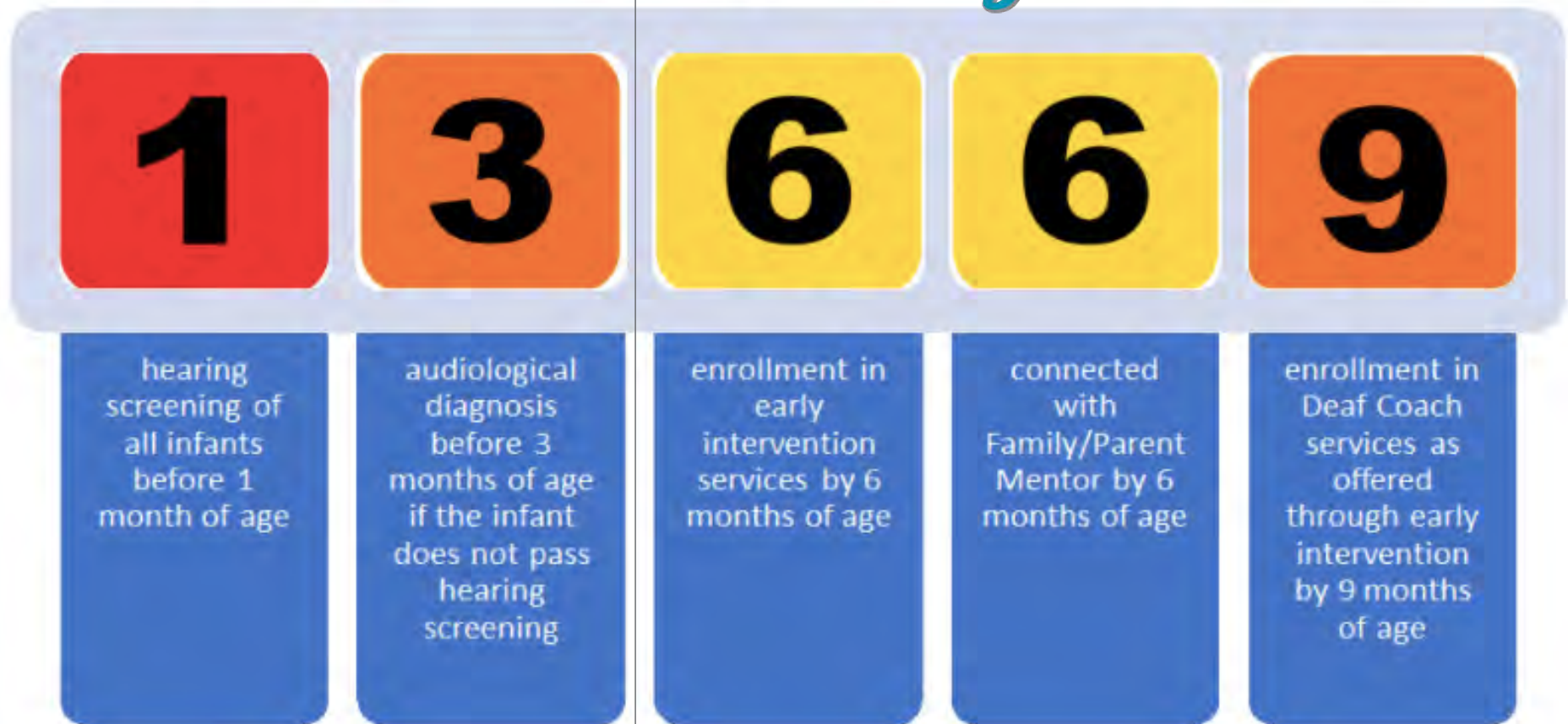
- Early identification
- Appropriate early language acquisition services
- Family engagement

1986	The Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, also known as IDEA Part C, was enacted.
1998	AB 2789 California Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Legislation passed by state legislature.
2000	Congress first authorized this federal program Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Act and most recently amended it in 2022
2020	HRSA EHDI Grant awarded to LEAD-K Family Services www.LeadkFamilyServices.org

CA EHDI:
LEAD-K
 LANGUAGE EQUALITY & ACQUISITION FOR DEAF KIDS
Family Services



California Newborn Hearing Screening Program



Benefits of Family Engagement Services for Families with Deaf Infants and Young Children:

- Families find the right support, tools, and techniques to support their child to acquire and develop language.
- Families can quickly adapt to support their child to thrive and navigate in a hearing society.
- Families are able to alleviate their worries about their Deaf children's future and become confident in communicating and raising their deaf child.
- Families with Deaf babies feel less overwhelmed in navigating the medical and early intervention system.

Research indicates:

- By the time children enter school, at least 6 in 1000 are deaf or hard of hearing.
- The newborn screening identifies half of these children (2 - 3 in 1,000)

What about the other half?

New Expansion for EHDI Services to address this gap

HRSA Grant for 2024-2029 is focused on the expansion of hearing screening through the age of three.



New HRSA Goal for EHDI Services:

Collect language acquisition outcomes for the population of DHH children in their state.



Our plan in California:

Empowering Families with Language Milestones

- Families will receive age-appropriate universal language milestones for ages 0-5 in ASL, English, and language of home.
- With language milestones available, if the Deaf or hard of hearing child is not on track with the language acquisition and development, the family can discuss this immediately with the educational IFSP or IEP team to make changes to the child's program that might help the child gain age-appropriate language skills.

The goal is for every Deaf and hard of hearing child to acquire age-appropriate language skills and be ready for Kindergarten at age five.

Your Deaf Child's Early Language Acquisition Journey

Check off the milestones your child has reached and share your child's progress at every IFSP & IEP meeting

This Parent Profile is designed to help you track your child's language growth. You and your Early Start or preschool teacher should discuss whether your child is meeting each of these milestones and is making age-appropriate language growth. Check off each milestone as your child meets it. Be an active observer of your child in the exciting journey towards being language ready for kindergarten at age 5.

Start here:

Birth -1 year old

- ☐ Your baby smiles when they see you
- ☐ Your baby looks around and is attentive to people's faces.
- ☐ Your baby shows awareness of the environment.
- ☐ By 12 months, your baby has 1-3 signs and/or words.

1-2 years old

- ☐ Your baby recognizes their own name when it is spoken or signed.
- ☐ Your baby uses signed or spoken names to refer to self and others.
- ☐ Your baby takes 1-2 turns in a conversation.
- ☐ Your baby uses exclamatory expressions.

2-3 Years old

- ☐ By 2½ years of age, your child answers questions with yes or no
- ☐ Your child uses intelligible words or signs about 80% of the time.
- ☐ Your child vocalizes or signs for all needs.

3-4 Years old

- ☐ Your child answers questions logically.
- ☐ Your child starts to understand different perspectives.
- ☐ Your child communicates fluently, clearly, and is easily understood by family and familiar adults.

4-5 Years old

- ☐ Your child begins to ask the meanings of words and signs.
- ☐ Your child uses 2,500+ words and/or signs
- ☐ Your child puts sequencing concepts together.



Helping Families to Feel Empowered in Their Journey:

- Online and In-Person American Sign Language (ASL) Resources
- Resources about strategies for teaching speech
- Representative Toys, Books, & Games Appropriate for Deaf Children
- Recommendation that the Family to ask their Early Intervention provider for Deaf adult role model/coach/mentor to support their child's language acquisition and development as part of IFSP/IEP services.

Building Critical Partnership With Your State's EHDI Program:

- Meet with your state's EHDI coordinators to explore ways to support each other's efforts working with families
- Attend your state's EHDI events for families with Deaf children
- Participate on your state's EHDI advisory committee.

You can find your state's EHDI coordinators at this link from NCHAM:

<https://www.infanthearing.org/status/cnhs.php>

Q & A



THANK YOU FOR JOINING OUR PRESENTATION

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