

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction - IEP Tool Supporting Discussion on
Consideration of Special Factors (IDEA 2004)
when a Student is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The purpose of this document is to assist IEP teams in having a comprehensive discussion and documentation of the **Special Factors** that support the educational needs of a student who is deaf or hard of hearing as outlined in IDEA. Since some of the terms are “disability specific” a short glossary has been included at the end. The language of the DPI sample IEP forms is stated below. Space is given to document the IEP team discussion.

A) Does the student’s behavior impede his/her learning or that of others? Yes No

If so, what are the behaviors?

A student who is deaf or hard of hearing will often demonstrate behaviors that indicate when learning is impeded due to poor acoustics, poor or insufficient visual information, or language expectations beyond the student’s abilities. These behaviors may include, (but are not limited to): poor attention span due to fatigue, restlessness, inattentiveness, “tuning out”, class clown, anxiety, complaining of not knowing or not understanding, etc.

If yes, include positive behavioral interventions, strategies and supports to address that behavior.

Discussion:

Action plan, if any:

B) Is the student an English Language Learner*? Yes No

There are some students who are deaf or hard of hearing who may also be an English Language Learner. This may be the situation for students whose primary language is American Sign Language or another spoken language. If the IEP team believes that the student may be an English Language Learner, it is important to assess their English Language Proficiency (in Wisconsin the ACCESS-ELL is used) to determine the level of proficiency and assist the IEP team in drafting IEP goals that address strategies of English second language learning as well as considerations for the WSAS. The questions below are designed to assist in the IEP team discussion.

- If yes, what is the student’s *English Language Proficiency* level?
- How was it determined?

- Is the student’s communication and language proficiency adequate to enable him/her to succeed in acquiring grade level skills and concepts within the general curriculum?
- What are the implications for instructional strategies and educational services?
 - What supports are needed?
 - What will be done to increase English proficiency?

C) If visually impaired, does the student need instruction in Braille or the use of Braille? **Yes** **No**

If the student who is deaf or hard of hearing also has a loss in vision (corrected or not), the combined effects may affect the student's abilities to learn. Even if the student does not meet the criteria for a visual impairment, or be a student in need of Braille, it is important for the IEP team to consider the possible implications and modifications needed in order to benefit from his/her education. If the student has met criteria for both hearing impairment and visual impairment, this student may be identified as deafblind with access to several state and national resources.

Discussion:

Action plan, if any:

D) In developing each student's IEP, the IEP team shall ... *identify the communication needs of the child who is deaf or hard of hearing, including a) the student's language, b) opportunities for direct communication* with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, and c) academic level and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the student's language and communicative mode.*

a) The Student's Language and Communication Needs:

1. What is the child's primary communication / language use in various settings? Note for all environments.

	*American Sign Language	*English-based sign	*Sign Supported Speech	Auditory / Oral	Receptive language-sign/ Expressive language - spoken	Other, please describe
Home / Community						
School						
With adults						
With peers						

* See the glossary at the end of this document for definitions.

Note discussion:

Action Plan, if any:

b) Opportunities for direct communication* with peers and professional personnel in the child’s language and communication mode. (* “direct communication” means person-to-person communication and not through an interpreter.)

1. What are the **opportunities** for the child to have direct communication with grade level peers?

Discussion:

Action Plan, if any:

2. What are the **opportunities** for direct communication with professional personnel (i.e. teachers, related services staff, etc)?

Discussion:

Action Plan, if any:

c) Academic level and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the student’s language and communicative mode.

1. What is the student’s academic level in relation to their same age peers? What accommodations or modifications are recommended so this student can achieve along with their peers? (If appropriate, include the student’s WKCE results)

Discussion:

Action Plan:

2. What are the “*full range of needs*” for this student? (Check areas below that apply. Add other areas of need that may need to be further addressed in the IEP.)

- Opportunity to interact with deaf or hard of hearing adult role models
- Instruction along the expanded core curriculum (see glossary)
- Staff is able to meet the linguistic needs of the student utilizing the student’s primary means of communication
- Access to technology that supports communication
- Acoustic accessibility for students using auditory / oral communication including those with cochlear implants
- Visual accessibility for students using sign communication including those with cochlear implants
- Social interaction
- Transition information that is supportive of people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Parent support in building strong communication skills in order to support their child’s education at home
- Other:

Discussion:

Action Plan:

3. What factors were considered when discussing the educational environment that is least restrictive for this student?

- Does the school the child would attend if not disabled, allow for opportunities for the student to effectively interact directly with peers and staff? Yes No
 - If no, what other educational programs have been considered?

- Does the school the child would attend if not disabled, provide an environment that is the least restrictive to this student's learning? Yes No
 - If no, what other educational programs have been considered?

E) Does the student need assistive technology services or devices? (see the list below as a reference only) Yes No

- If yes, specify particular device(s) and /or service(s).

For example:

- Audiology services:
 - Monitoring personal hearing aids
 - FM system
 - Other Assistive Listening Device
 - Services supporting use of a cochlear implant
- Access to school environment
 - Visual alarm / alerting system
 - Captioning of films and other sound media
- Communication software
 - Telecommunication software
 - Personal pager
 - Video Relay Service (VRS) module
- Other:

Discussion:

Action Plan:

GLOSSARY:

American Sign Language is the language of sign used by the people in the Deaf community in the USA and most of Canada with over 200 years of evolution. This language is a sophisticated visual language with its own grammatical features that support communication and learning with the mind that does not hear spoken languages.

English-based sign has a few different forms that have evolved since the 1970's. These sign modalities have been created by people with the intent to mimic English on the hands. It is not a language and is not generally used by the community of Deaf or Hard of Hearing adults.

Sign Supported Speech is a process of 'interpreting' that includes a mix of oral interpreting and signing of key and new concepts or vocabulary. It is most often used when the student is able to hear spoken messages, but not with full comprehension, and does not need *all* language interpreted. This student usually speaks for themselves.

Expanded Core Curriculum includes the knowledge and skills needed by a student who is deaf or hard of hearing that supports their independence in life. It includes knowledge of the technology and resources available in the community, state and country that provide resources and services that allow for full participation in work, post-secondary, personal, and community activities. For a list of components that are within the Expanded Core Curriculum, see the DPI Eligibility Guidelines for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, page 25-27 <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/dhhguide.pdf>