

Idaho Sound Beginnings - Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program Overview

Idaho Sound Beginnings (ISB) is a public health screening program with federal support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Health Resources and Services Administration, Division of Maternal and Child Health. The program is located within the Infant Toddler Program in the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, and is Idaho's chapter of the CDC's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program (EHDI).

Goal

The goal of Idaho Sound Beginnings is to improve the quality of life for infants with hearing loss through early detection and connection with early intervention services and family support.

Fast Facts

- Hearing loss is the most common birth disorder.
- Most children with hearing loss are born to hearing parents (90%).
- There are many different types and degrees of hearing loss.
- Hearing loss is invisible.
- Infants as young as one month of age can be fitted with hearing aids.
- Many children with hearing loss have no other disability.

Why EHDI?

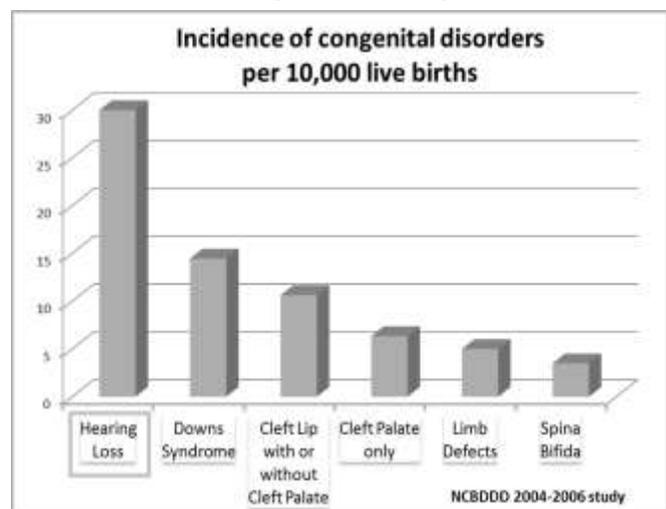
Children begin to listen when they are still in the womb, and start to learn to communicate from the moment they are born. Even a mild hearing loss can lead to delays in learning and language development and should not be overlooked. Studies show that the earlier a child is identified with a hearing loss and begins early intervention, the more likely they are to develop language and communication skills equivalent to their hearing peers.

Language acquisition and educational achievement are not related to the **degree** of hearing loss, but rather to the **age of identification** of hearing loss. Exposure to speech sounds is required for normal acquisition of spoken language.

There is a limited window of opportunity for stimulation of the auditory brain center. Hearing loss is a neurodevelopmental emergency. Any degree of hearing loss will result in auditory deprivation.

Auditory brain tissue will be taken over by the visual system if not stimulated, which will cause irreversible damage.

It is estimated that for every 1,000 births, two to three infants will have hearing loss. Hearing loss occurs at a significantly higher rate than any of the other congenital conditions that are screened.



Newborn hearing screening is a pass/refer type of test designed only to identify newborns who are at risk for hearing loss, and need additional diagnostic testing in order to rule out or confirm the presence of hearing loss. Screening is not a 'test' of hearing.

Joint Commission on Infant Hearing (JCIH) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Recommendations

An effective EHDI system ensures all newborns receive a hearing screen by one month of age, all hearing losses are identified by three months of age, and all infants diagnosed with a hearing loss are enrolled in early intervention services by six months of age as follows:

- 1 – Prior to One Month of Age: Newborn Hearing **Screening** (NHS) completed.
- 3 – Prior to Three Months of Age: Pediatric Diagnostic **Testing** completed and hearing 'status' confirmed (normal or hearing loss). Only an audiologist can CONFIRM the hearing status.
- 6 – Prior to Six Months of Age: **Early Intervention Services** initiated for infants with confirmed permanent hearing loss.

Idaho Sound Beginnings Services

Idaho Sound Beginnings provides the following services:

- Training and support to birth facilities, early intervention programs, and other groups that screen newborns for hearing loss.
- Screening equipment available for loan.
- Tracking and follow-up for all infants who do not pass the newborn hearing screening.
- Tracking of infants identified with risk factors for late-onset and/or progressive hearing loss.
- Follow-up reminder letters and phone calls to parents to explain and encourage the completion of diagnostic audiology testing by a qualified pediatric audiologist.
- Providing quality assurance reports created from the collection of individual and aggregate statewide screening data. Annual aggregate data reports are provided to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - The CDC state and national data reports can be viewed online at www.cdc.gov (search box: EHDI).
- Providing educational materials for parents and professionals on hearing loss, developmental milestones, and steps to take in the event of identifying a hearing loss.

Information and Resources

Refer to the following websites for additional information:

- Idaho Sound Beginnings – <http://www.idahosoundbeginnings.dhw.idaho.gov>
- National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) – <http://www.infanthearing.org>