



Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program Eligibility Guidance for Children who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

The Birth to 3 Program is committed to children under the age of three with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. We value the family's primary relationship with their child and work in partnership with the family. We work to enhance the child's development and support the family's knowledge, skills, and abilities as they interact with and raise their child.

Children with a confirmed diagnosis of a permanent hearing loss meet the criteria of eligibility for Wisconsin's Birth to 3 Program as a diagnosed condition. Scientific evidence related to the long-term developmental consequences of hearing loss in infants and toddlers indicates that any degree or configuration of permanent hearing loss is likely to result in a developmental delay. Therefore, a child with a unilateral or bilateral permanent hearing loss of any decibel level is eligible for the Birth to 3 Program and does not need to demonstrate a developmental delay. **Children diagnosed with a conductive hearing loss resulting from fluid do not meet criteria for a diagnosed condition and are evaluated for eligibility based on documentation of a developmental delay.**

If a county Birth to 3 Program receives a referral for a child diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss, then the early intervention (EI) team convenes to review the diagnosis, confirm eligibility and assure that assessment information is available for convening the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team meeting. The EI team is to include the parents, the service coordinator, qualified personnel from at least two different disciplines in areas of suspected need, with at least one member who has expertise in the assessment of both typical and atypical development and program planning.*

Following the determination of eligibility, the IFSP Team meets to develop the IFSP. The team includes: the parents, other family members requested by the parent, the service coordinator, an advocate (if requested by the parent), at least one of the qualified personnel who took part in the evaluation and assessment of the child, and at least one professional who has expertise in the assessment of both typical and atypical development and expertise in child development and program planning, and appropriate service providers.**

For children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, the EI and IFSP teams should include a team member who understands the developmental impact of hearing loss and is able to interpret pediatric audiological reports. This may include a speech and language therapist, audiologist, deaf and hard-of-hearing teacher or other team members qualified to make the determination of eligibility and participate in the development of the IFSP.

Resources, services and supports are individually established for each child based on the outcomes determined by the IFSP team.

Reference:

Early Intervention Services For Children From Birth To Age 3 With Developmental Needs, Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter DHS 90.

*Wis. Admin. Code § DHS. 90.08

**Wis. Admin. Code § DHS. 90.10