CDC’s Progress in Detecting Infant Hearing Loss

CDC’s Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) is making clear progress in supporting the early identification of deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) children. The earlier children are identified with hearing loss and start getting intervention, the more likely they will reach their full potential.

**98 percent** of U.S.-born infants are now screened for hearing loss usually before leaving the hospital.

Since 2005, over 71,000 D/HH infants in the U.S. have been identified early.

$200 million in education costs are saved each year in the U.S. due to newborn hearing screening.

**Identifying hearing loss early is important**

Hearing loss is one of the most common birth defects.

- When left undetected, a hearing loss can delay a child’s speech and language development as well as his or her thinking, learning, and social skills.
- CDC-supported research show meeting the 1-3-6 Benchmarks results in better vocabulary development for children who are D/HH.

**How CDC is making a difference**

- The CDC EHDI program provides assistance to all states and territories to support the early identification of all D/HH infants.
- CDC is responsible for collecting and analyzing EHDI data from across the United States.
- CDC funds the development and use of systems and data tools that help states and territories ensure D/HH children receive essential services
  - Newborn Hearing screening, which is usually done soon after birth.
  - Diagnostic hearing evaluation, which involves tests to confirm if a child is D/HH.
  - Early intervention services help D/HH children with learning language and other important skills.
**CDC’s data show clear progress**
- Better data systems and tools are helping states and territories to make sure more D/HH infants are identified early.
- The percent of infants receiving a hearing evaluation (test) before the benchmark of 3 months of age has increased from 52 percent in 2005 to 77 percent in 2018.

**CDC supports states**
- CDC funds 39 states and territories to develop and improve data information systems, which help make sure all infants receive recommended services.
- CDC helps states and territories leverage advances in health information technology to collect, use, and share data.

**Next steps for CDC**
- Expand the capacity of states and territories to collect and use complete and accurate data.
- Promote adoption of standards and quality measures to improve EHDI data.
- Support research about ways to further increase the benefits of early identification.

**Continued efforts are needed to**
- Make sure all D/HH infants are identified early by documenting that they have received critical screening and diagnostic services.
- Assess progress and support program improvement through timely data analyses.
- Strengthen information exchange between health providers and information systems to help coordinate the delivery of EHDI services for infants.
- Provide assistance to states and territories to support the enhancement and use of their EHDI data systems.

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**References:**
1. Data obtained from CDC Hearing Screening and Follow-up Survey at [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/ehdi-data.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/ehdi-data.html).