 Quarterly Newsletter & Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Data

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Newborn Hearing Screening Results

Quarterly Data from 04/01/2019_06/30/2019.pdf
Before our son, Winston, was born we were able to prepare ourselves for the possible outcome of him being deaf because his dad is deaf. We were able to talk about what route we would want to go: an auditory-verbal program where he would be mainstreamed like his dad or learn American Sign Language (ASL), something that was foreign to both of us. We decided on total communication, the best of both worlds. We had a big portion of his life plotted and planned out before he even entered the world and before we knew the outcome.

The day finally came when he was born and the thing, I was most anxious for was the newborn hearing screening. I just got to a point where I wanted to know. He failed both of his screenings, but the nurses reassured us that it could just be a fluid buildup* and he would get re-tested in two weeks to see if he could pass a hearing test. We knew then that most likely he failed because he is deaf, but to have to wait a few more weeks to have a definite answer was tough.

We finally got our answer when Winston was five weeks old, that he has severe sensorineural hearing loss in both of his ears, or profoundly deaf. When we found out I remember feeling like I didn’t have the right reaction to the news, it wasn’t something that tore me apart. I wouldn’t say I was relieved, but we had spent so many months wondering what the future would hold for us. It was just sort of like “Yes, he is deaf. What is our next step?” “Will he be a candidate for hearing aids? A cochlear implant?” and “How can we start to learn ASL?”

We were bombarded with so much information after his diagnosis; for example, an Ear Nose and Throat doctor referred us for hearing aids, which directed us to an Audiologist an hour away from home, some more tests just to be 100 percent sure that he was deaf, tubes put in, we started taking ASL classes, MRI done to make sure he is a candidate for cochlear implants, being introduced to Hands & Voices™ and their Guide by your Side™ program, and Early On services, signing him up for Children’s Special Health Care Services and so many doctor appointments.

It definitely opened up a whole new world for me but all the programs that are available for the children and parents are so helpful, we wouldn’t be where we are today without them. Any support parents can get is beneficial, not just to the parent but also to the child because it isn’t easy at first, it is hard and confusing. I think I am lucky because I saw my husband; a hardworking, kind, funny and very abled person who never let his deafness get in the way of much of anything in his life. So, for me the word deafness was always associated with my husband, not a disability.
That’s how I saw Winston, I had somebody to look to and say to myself that he is fine; he will be fine.

Winston finally got his hearing aids fitted when he was 7 months old, but he didn’t have much of a response with them. He could barely hear anything with them on, if he would even keep them in. We were waiting for the day he could get his bilateral cochlear implant surgery which meant more tests and more appointments, but it was definitely worth it. He got implanted when he was 13 months old and his processors were turned on a few short weeks after. He could finally hear us!!

He has had his processors for five months now and does so well with them. He loves to wear them. He mostly communicates through ASL right now but also has said a few words which totally caught me off guard, thinking it would be so long before he could speak. We must work a little bit harder to communicate with him and give him access to anything and everything possible that might benefit him. But he will be more than okay. He is a healthy and very happy toddler now - He is curious and hilarious, loud and rambunctious and literally just a little ball of joy to anyone who knows or meets him. I hope he will see his deafness the way I do and will never let it hold him back.

*EHDI Pro Tip: Telling parents that it “could just be a fluid buildup” may keep parents from attending a follow-up appointment because they may not expect a serious problem. Parents without a family history of hearing loss may be even less likely to have follow up testing if they think fluid could be the cause. In actuality, more than 90% of children born deaf or hard of hearing are born to hearing parents. Instead of saying it could just be fluid, say this: “We don’t have enough information about your baby’s hearing right now. You need to schedule a follow up appointment.” Then help them set up the appointment.
Whats New with EHDI

- Coming Soon– EHDI Bulletin Board. EHDI has partnered with the Wayne County Great Start Collaborative “Talking is Teaching – Talk, Read, Sing” Campaign to create an educational bulletin board for families. EHDI will provide the free materials to interested facilities later this fall. Your involvement will help assure that families not only understand the importance of early brain development on all future learning, but also have the information and tools to nurture learning from the minute their babies are born. Stay tuned for more information! Learn more at: www.talkingisteaching.org

- The EHDI brochure for families has been revised! Spanish and Arabic versions have also been updated and are available.

- Michigan Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Program Order Form: EHDI Order Form.pdf
Tips to Perform Newborn Hearing Screenings

By: Shelly Schindler, EHDI Regional Audiologist

Are you struggling to perform "baby friendly" newborn hearing screenings? Baby friendly is a wonderful opportunity for families to learn about the importance of newborn hearing screening. It can create challenges in having families understand their role in the newborn hearing screen. The process also means more wear and tear on equipment as it is moved from room to room for testing. Baby friendly means that screeners need to be prepared to explain the newborn hearing screenings process to families. Here are few tips to make baby friendly hearing screening a bit easier:

- Educate the family on how the screen works and what results mean (EHDI brochures can be useful for this).

- Ask family to limit noise during the screen. Keep voices low, mute television, limit visitors, etc.

- Limit the electrical noise in the environment. Ask families to turn off and move cell phones away from babies during screening. Turn off or move baby away from other electrical equipment (beds, etc.). Some rooms may be more difficult than others.

- Find a safe way to store cables during transportation so they do not get damaged.

- Consider adding a battery to your equipment to prevent you from needing to power down between screenings (check with manufacturer to see if this impacts warranty).

- Educate the family on the importance of a calm sleepy baby for testing. Consider having baby swaddled and cradled in the arms of a family member.

Any other ideas? If you are performing baby friendly newborn hearing screenings, we would love to hear what is working for you! Contact Michelle Garcia, Au.D., CCC-A EHDI Follow-Up Consultant at GarciaM@michigan.gov or 517-335-8878.
Screening Cards

HEARING CARDS

Hearing cards should be mailed once a week—alone—and in a regular envelope to: MDHHS/EHDI, Attention: Erin Estrada, PO Box 30195, Lansing, MI 48909

Any Hospital
Any Where
Michigan

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