

Iowa Early Hearing Detection and Intervention: Understanding Audiology Diagnostic Testing

Kristen Ponturiero, MA and Alyssa Adamec, MA

Research Mentor and other collaborators

Emily Andrews, AuD,CCC-A and Tammy O'Hollearn, BA

Objective

- a. Explain diagnostic audiologic testing in a way that is accessible and understandable to parents and viewers who have no prior knowledge on the subject
- b. Present evidence-based recommendations for audiology diagnostic testing
- c. Emphasize the importance of audiology and hearing in relation to their necessity in ensuring appropriate speech, language, and social development in children

Methods

We reviewed the Joint Commission on Infant Hearing's recently released position statement (2019). This document guides audiology best practice for Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programs across the country. We consulted with practitioners at different audiology centers in Iowa to discuss how their diagnostic testing is completed so that our video product would be universally relevant for viewers across the state. We worked closely with Tammy O'Hollearn, who works with the Iowa Department of Public Health as the director of the state's EHDI program, to finalize the script and video content.

Results

Educational video directed towards parents and could be viewed and utilized by additional family members, community providers, and other professionals as well as legislators/policymakers to aid in understanding of audiology diagnostic testing. This video presentation will be available for viewing on the internet (e.g., YouTube) and through the Iowa Department of Public Health's website.

Conclusions

With the implementation of universal newborn hearing screening programs, we are able to identify children with hearing loss at ages younger than ever before. Identifying hearing loss early is crucial so that appropriate interventions may be made so that the child can develop language in a timely manner. For some parents, the newborn hearing screen may be the first interaction that they have with an audiologist. They may not know about the audiology scope of practice and/or what further audiologic testing entails. Our presentation is designed to serve as an educational guide for parents navigating the diagnostic testing process. We explain the field of audiology, the hearing screening process in Iowa, how to prepare for diagnostic testing, what to expect on test day, and the possible outcomes of testing. In alignment with the values of LEND, we emphasize the importance of parental education so that parents and providers can work together to make the best decisions for the patient and the patient's family.

This project has been in partnership with the Iowa Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program through the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH).