

April 10, 2020

Hello Colleagues:

The Colorado Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind (CCDHHDB) and the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Early Intervention (EI) Program were recently awarded a four-year federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA). These grant funds support a refresh of Colorado's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) system. The two new lead agencies submitted a grant that includes some changes that will impact some positions and some roles and responsibilities of various agencies in the state. Some changes are interim modifications until participating lead agencies can meet to discuss sustainable processes. Our primary goal remains the same - to ensure continuity of services for children who are deaf and hard of hearing and their families.

All children and families who may be eligible for services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) receive protections under the law. Families referred for EI services receive service coordination; appropriate, individualized services; and comprehensive and unbiased information about program opportunities. Parents are supported as they make informed decisions on behalf of their child and family.

Processes to provide the aforementioned services have been in place for many years. One constant has been the role of the Regional CO-Hear Coordinator through the Outreach Department at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB). The previous EHDI grant funded a Data Outreach Coordinator which is a position not funded by the current grant. However, referrals will continue to be made to the Regional CO-Hear Coordinators, ensuring a child's entry into EI/Part C. The CO-Hear Coordinators have a data tracking system in place which will be enhanced during the next four-year grant period. The interim process for referrals follows this course:



Notably, the role of the Regional CO-Hear Coordinators remains the same. They provide research-based information in an unbiased way about child development milestones, language development, hearing technologies, communication modalities, and community, state, and national resources. Additionally, the CO-Hear Coordinators connect families with parent-to-parent resources. The list of Regional CO-Hear Coordinators, and the counties they represent, is attached.

Another notable change is the funding for the coordinator for children diagnosed with unilateral hearing loss (UHL). The "Unilateral Hearing Loss Coordinator" position is no longer funded. As an interim process, all referrals of children with unilateral hearing loss will be sent to the Regional CO-Hear Coordinator, who will contact the family and share available resources.

As always, and according to Part C rules and regulations, a family has the right to decline any service offered under Part C without jeopardizing their right to service coordination and other protections under the law. Additionally, early intervention services are provided at no cost to the family.

Thank you for your work and dedication on behalf of the infants and toddlers across the state who are deaf and hard of hearing and their families. Special thanks for your commitment to the good work done by so many during the nation's COVID-19 crisis. If you have any questions, during this interim period and beyond, please contact:

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Please visit the Colorado EHDl Alliance website at www.coehdi.org and sign up to receive future correspondence.