




HEALTHY HEARING NEWS- ARKANSAS EARLY HEARING DETECTION AND INTERVENTION



WHAT IS AR EDHI ?

The Arkansas Department of Health's Infant Hearing Program (IHP) serves as the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EDHI) program for Arkansas. EDHI programs were created nationwide to support children 0-3 years of age and their families. The CDC reports that approximately 3 of every 1,000 infants are diagnosed with a hearing condition each year, and 90% of Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) children are born to hearing parents. Many of these infants do not have risk factors or signs indicating a hearing condition. As a result, identification of hearing conditions are often delayed until the child is as old as three years of age. Infants with undiagnosed hearing conditions are at an increased risk of developing significant delays in language acquisition.



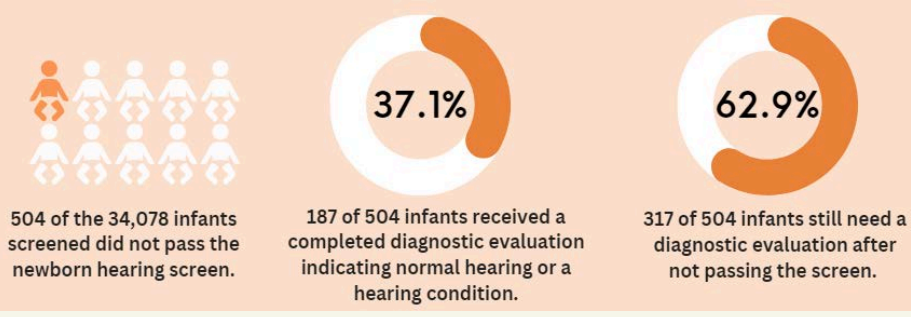
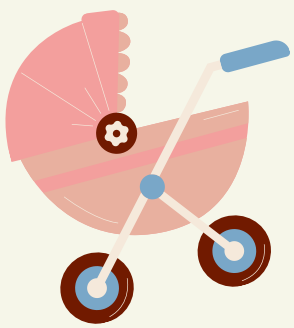
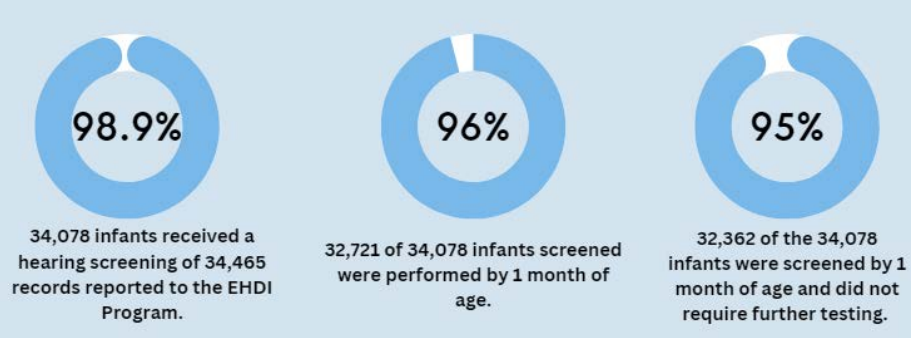
	1	All infants should receive a hearing screening before one month of age.
	3	All infants who do not pass the screening should receive a diagnostic evaluation before three months of age.
	6	All infants who are identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing should begin early intervention services by six months of age.

The Infant Hearing Program is a state coordinated system of care that assists in ensuring infants have documentation of a hearing screening, DHH children are identified early and DHH children are enrolled in early intervention services to promote optimal language development. As of September 2024, 33 birthing hospitals conduct newborn hearing screening before infants are discharged from the nursery, communicate the test result, explain next steps for follow-up to parents and report test results to primary care providers (PCPs) and the state EDHI program.

The IHP facilitates the state's EDHI program by conducting surveillance and providing follow-up to families with children that do not pass the newborn hearing screening to ensure infants are receiving additional evaluation and appropriate connection to intervention services in the recommended 1-3-6 timeframes. Children should receive a screening by 1 month of age, diagnostic evaluation by 3 months of age if they do not pass the screening and enrollment in early intervention (EI) services by 6 months of age if identified with a hearing condition. Additionally, the IHP leads efforts to engage and coordinate all stakeholders (PCPs, audiologists, early interventionists and parents) in providing services for children birth to 3 years of age. The program is pleased to share recent updates and developments. In this edition, you will find information on the latest advancements, ongoing activities and upcoming events aimed at enhancing EDHI statewide. Your continued support and engagement is vital as we strive to improve outcomes for children and their families.

EDHI DATA

In 2022, Arkansas vital records documented a total of 34,628 live births in the Electronic Registration of Arkansas Vital Events (ERAVE) database. Additionally, hearing screening data was reported in ERAVE by birthing hospitals and hearing screening providers.



KEY REMINDERS

Healthcare Providers:

- **Early Screening:** Ensure all newborns are screened for hearing conditions **before 1 month** of age.
- **Timely Referrals:** Refer any infant who does not pass the hearing screening for further evaluation **by 3 months of age**.
- **Family Support:** Connect families with DHH children to resources and family-to-family support throughout the identification and intervention process **but no later than 6 months of age**.
- **Follow-Up:** Stay engaged with families for follow-up assessments and interventions as needed.
- **Continuing Education:** Stay abreast of EHD1 best practices. Scan the QR code for more physician information:



Parents:

- **Screening Awareness:** Understand the importance of hearing screening and advocate for your child's screening at birth.
- **Monitor Language Milestones:** Track your child's development and discuss concerns with their doctor at check-ups. Download the CDC's Milestone Tracker app to assist in preventing developmental delays in language.
- **Seek Support:** Scan the QR code for support resources:



Contact the IHP at 501-280-4740 for more information.

SOURCE: ERAVE HEARING SCREENING AND FOLLOW-UP SURVEY, RUN 2-8-2024. CDC EHD1 ANNUAL DATA.

2024 ANNUAL BIRTHING HOSPITAL SURVEY

The IHP distributed the Annual Birthing Hospital Survey during July 2024 in accordance with Act 1559 of 1999. The survey identifies current protocols for birthing hospitals providing EHDI services and parent education per the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing’s (JCIH) 1-3-6 recommended practice guidelines. At the time of the survey, there were 35 birthing hospitals in Arkansas, and each hospital responded to the survey. This survey allowed the IHP to update the demographic information for each facility and identify opportunities to support EHDI performance improvement. Trending themes from this year’s results provided information about the hospitals’ EHDI protocols, quality improvement efforts and how effectively they use ERAVE, a web-based database, as a tool to monitor quality assurance (QA).



According to the 2024 Annual Birthing Hospital Survey, approximately 60% of hospitals reported that they monitor their newborn hearing screening (NBHS) performance, but an internal quality improvement (QI) initiative does not exist. ERAVE provides hospitals with on-demand access to reports to assist in monitoring the facility’s overall NBHS performance. However, only 29% of birthing hospitals reported using ERAVE reports monthly, 8% use ERAVE reports twice a month, 26% use ERAVE reports weekly and 37% of hospitals report not using these reports at all.

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE RECOGNITION

The IHP program reviews monthly performance reports with staff at each birthing hospital. Each report is reviewed approximately 30 days after the month ends and addresses:

- **Data Quality:** Hearing records submitted for each live birth.
- **Linkage:** Hearing records linked to birth records.
- **Reporting Timeliness:** Hearing records submitted within two days of testing.
- **Initial Screening Validity:** Monitoring the facility’s failure rate in comparison with recommended failure rates.
- **Rescreening:** The number of infants who did not pass the initial screening and received an outpatient screening.

These hospitals exhibited an excellent performance rating of 90% or above each month this quarter (July 1, 2024-September 30, 2024):

- Baxter Regional Medical Center**
- Baptist Health Medical Center-Little Rock**
- Baptist Health Medical Center-Arkadelphia**
- CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs**
- NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital**
- Ouachita County Medical Center**
- Mena Regional Health System**
- Johnson Regional Medical**

AR EHDI OUTREACH

The IHP is committed to supporting families and healthcare providers with comprehensive educational resources to promote healthy hearing for infants. Educational materials such as a prenatal toolkit, list of hearing screening providers and next steps after the initial screening brochure are available for expectant and/or new parents and providers. These materials can also assist hospital staff when communicating with parents during the prenatal and delivery periods. Additionally, toolkits are available for PCPs, audiologists and otolaryngologists to outline best practice recommendations for early detection and intervention.



Calling Expectant Parents: Did you know your baby will receive a newborn hearing screening?

All newborns receive a hearing test before leaving the hospital because:

- A hearing condition can affect a child's ability to communicate.
- A child may delay in learning language if a hearing condition goes unidentified.
- 2-3 per 1,000 children are born Deaf or Hard of Hearing. 90% of these children have hearing parents.
- Hearing screening is a quick easy process, it is painless and only takes few minutes.

Check List

- Make sure your baby receives a hearing test before leaving the hospital. If not, contact your baby's doctor to schedule a test before 3 month of age
- If your baby passes the screening on both ears, no further testing is needed.
- If your baby did not pass the screening, ask your baby's doctor for a referral for another test or contact the Infant Hearing Program (IHP).

For more information, contact the IHP at 501-280-4740 or scan the QR code.

Arkansas Specific Roadmap

Birth: Home or Hospital Birth for Newborn Hearing Screen Date: _____

Before 1 Month: Outpatient Hearing Screen (or Rescreen) Place: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Before 3 Months: Evaluation by a Pediatric Audiologist with experience testing children 6-4 months of age. Place: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Before 6 Months: Enroll in early intervention program with experience serving children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Register with the Pediatric Audiologist.

Screening Results: Left Ear: Did not pass / Pass / Not screened (retest) Right Ear: Did not pass / Pass / Not screened (retest)

Test Results: Left Ear: No Hearing Loss / Hearing Loss Right Ear: No Hearing Loss / Hearing Loss

Early Head Start Information: Call or Text Guide By Your Side 501-482-8182

Healthy Hearing Starts Here

Why Test for Hearing? Rescreening shows the degree of hearing loss. That's why it's so important to retest from time to time. If you don't retest, children could be as old as three before hearing loss is discovered. When hearing loss is found early, therapy can be started before six months of age. This will prevent the risk of lagging behind in speech, language, communication and other very important learning skills. Your baby's future success in school and life depends on these skills.

A Test that Means the World to Your Infant: When a baby is tested for hearing, a soft sound is played into the baby's ear through a tiny, specially designed earpiece. A machine then measures the baby's response to the sound. The test takes only minutes and is painless and cost-free while your baby is sleeping. Health professionals often use the term "The Infant Hearing Program" to refer to the hearing test that newborns receive.

Rescreening Information: Baby's Name: _____ Appointment Date/Time: _____ Place/Phone Number: _____

Hearing, Speech and Language Milestones: What Babies do at Certain Ages.

- 2 Months:** Cries, makes gurgling sounds; Turns head toward sound.
- 4 Months:** Begins to babble; Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain or being tired; Responds to name.
- 6 Months:** Responds to sounds by hearing reflexes; Stares and smiles when speaking ("coo", "tut", "tut"); Reaches sounds to show joy and displeasure; Begins to use comprehension sounds (including "no", "hi", "ba").
- 9 Months:** Understands "no"; Makes lots of different sounds like "mama" and "dada"; Copies sounds and gestures of others; Shows signs for pain and hunger.
- 1 Year:** Responds to simple spoken requests; Uses single words, like "mama" (even though more like "mama" and "dada" and may understand the "ba" sound); Says several single words; Says and shows "no"; Points to show someone what they want.
- 2 Years:** Tells to bring or get items when they are named; Knows names of familiar people and body parts; Says sentences with two to five words; Follows simple instructions; Responds words to questions in conversation; Plays to bring in a book.

Scan the QR code to access these factsheets:



The IHP staff communicates directly with birthing hospitals, physicians, hearing screening providers and parents daily to obtain and enter hearing and intervention data into the IHP's database for each live birth. The IHP staff educates and trains stakeholders in accordance with the JCIH's recommendations to promote optimal outcomes for children at risk or identified with a hearing condition. The IHP strives to increase program awareness through outreach at community events, correspondence with healthcare providers and engaging stakeholders statewide to promote optimal opportunities for collaboration. Contact the IHP Outreach Coordinator at 501-280-4139 or nidhi.patel@arkansas.gov to learn more about collaboration opportunities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- December 2024 - Language Acquisition Workgroup
- April 22, 2025 - Universal Newborn Hearing Screening, Tracking and Intervention Advisory Board Meeting



Contact the Infant Hearing Program for more AR EHDI information:
501-280-4740 • ADHEHDI.FB@arkansas.gov • www.arhealthyhearing.com