

NE-EHDI Biannual Audiologist Newsletter

The Nebraska Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program develops, promotes, and supports systems to ensure all newborns in Nebraska receive hearing screenings, family-centered evaluations, and early intervention as appropriate.

Smoke Alarms Save Lives!



There are 28 million deaf and hard of hearing Americans who are unable to rely on the life-saving warning sound of a working smoke alarm to alert them of fire. Therefore, this audience must become aware of the availability of flashing or vibrating smoke alarms, and the importance of proper escape planning.

The Omaha Fire Department installs free combination smoke/carbon monoxide alarms for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or those who may wear hearing aids during the day but take them off at night to sleep.

These alarms utilize flashes of light in addition to sounding an audible alarm. The alarms currently being installed are the Photoelectric Smoke Alarm with a Strobe Light feature to visually alert individuals of smoke. In addition to this, they will also install the bedside Fire Alarm system which listens for smoke/CO alarms to sound and then uses a 520 Hz alarm through the speaker and a bed shaker to alert the individual of the warning.

The alarms work well both in houses and apartments. You do not have to live in the Omaha metro area to take advantage of this program. The Omaha Fire department will travel to install the alarms for those who need them or mail them to a local fire department for installation.

This program is sponsored by the First Responders Foundation, and there are a limited number of alarms available. Alarms are installed on a first-come, first-served basis. **Click the link below to find out more information and to view the application.**

<https://bit.ly/SmokeAlarms4DHH>



Reporting, EHDI Website, Tele-audiology, & Staff Changes



Early Hearing Detection & Intervention

01

Reporting Audiology Results

All newborn hearing screenings and diagnostic evaluations on children birth to age three should be reported to NE-EHDI within five days of the evaluation to ensure that timely follow-up and intervention occurs. Make sure you report the following:

- All outpatient screenings, re-screenings, evaluations (diagnostic and behavioral) on newborns/infants.
- ENT evaluations on children birth-3 years of age who have not passed their newborn hearing screening.
- Late identifications on children ages birth-3 years of age.
- Periodic evaluations on children birth-3 years of age due to risk factors for late-onset or progressive hearing loss.

The EHDI Audiologic Screening and Diagnostic Report form can be found on the EHDI website:

dhhs.ne.gov/EHDI-Audiologists

02

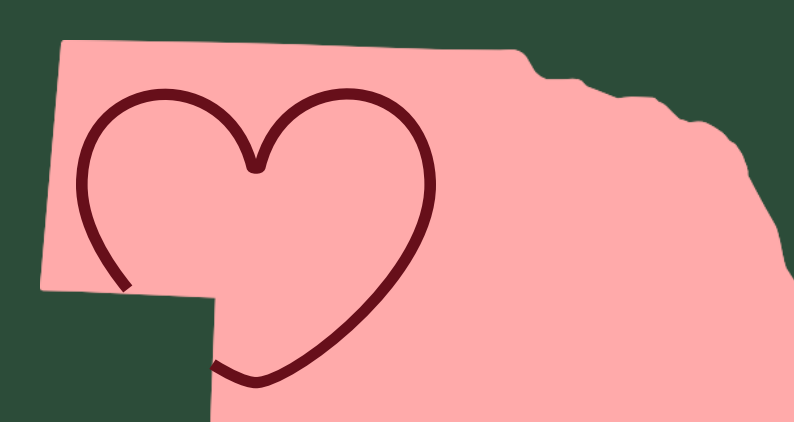
NE-EHDI Award Winning Website

Did you know that the Nebraska EHDI website won Website of the year in 2020?

The Nebraska EHDI website contains a wealth of information and resources for Audiologists, Parents & Families, Primary Care Providers, and Hospital Personnel. Visit the website often to stay informed about the latest EHDI updates, and how you can work with EHDI to ensure all Nebraska families receive timely and quality audiology services.

dhhs.ne.gov/EHDI

THANK
YOU



for all the work you do to
provide quality services to
families in Nebraska!

03

Pediatric Tele-Audiology Services in Nebraska



Hannah Ditmars, Pediatric Audiologist at UNL Barkley Center conducts a diagnostic ABR evaluation via tele-audiology

Nebraska EHDI has partnered with UNL Barkley Speech-Language & Hearing Clinic and ESU13 to make pediatric audiology services available through telehealth. Before the implementation of tele-audiology services, the majority of pediatric audiology providers were concentrated in the metro areas of eastern Nebraska. Central and western Nebraska were historically underserved, and there was a critical need to address the issues with access to timely and appropriate care.

Thanks to UNL Barkley and ESU13, tele-audiology appointments are available at the following Educational Service Unit locations:

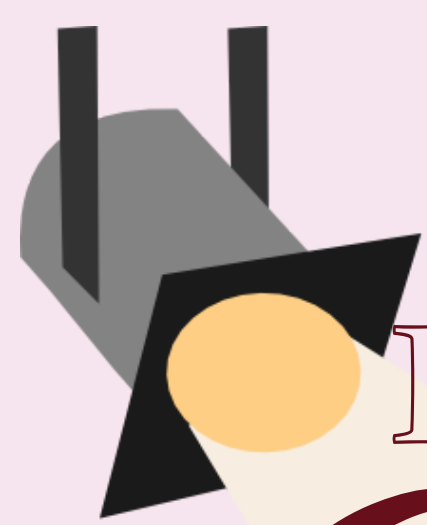
- Chadron
- North Platte
- Ogallala
- Scottsbluff
- Sidney

To schedule an appointment, call Barkley Speech-Language & Hearing Clinic at 402-472-2071.



WORKING TOGETHER

To help children identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing reach their full potential!



Professional Spotlight

By: MeLissa Butler



Brenda Coufal, Nebraska EHDI Program Manager has resigned effective December 17, 2021, and is embarking on a new career adventure at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. Brenda joined the Nebraska EHDI team in August 2016, and she has been an important part of the NE-EHDI program's success over the past five years. Under her exceptional leadership, NE-EHDI has been recognized as one of the highest quality EHDI programs in the nation. Brenda's work ethic, compassion, attention to detail, and desire to serve the citizens of Nebraska have been an asset to the program, and she will truly be missed!

Brenda gave the following statement in her resignation:

"I have enjoyed working as the NE-EHDI Program Manager for the last five-plus years, including working with all of you. I appreciate all of the passion and guidance you provide to the NE-EHDI Program to help us provide the best possible services to families in Nebraska. As a result of the involvement and partnership of so many dedicated individuals, the NE-EHDI Program is recognized as one of the highest quality programs in the nation. The NE-EHDI Team has so much passion, dedication, and expertise, and I am confident that the program will continue to grow and succeed."

Please join Nebraska EHDI in congratulating Brenda on her new journey. Feel free to send your good wishes to the NE-EHDI inbox, and they will be passed on to her.

DHHS.NEEHDI@Nebraska.gov



Projects & Initiatives

1

Expansion of Childhood Hearing Screening up to age 3



Per the current HRSA EHDI Grant requirements, NE-EHDI is expanding our capacity to support hearing screening, diagnosis, and enrollment into early intervention for children up to age three who pass a newborn hearing screen but later develop hearing loss. NE-EHDI is partnering with four Nebraska Early Head Start programs to do a pilot project, and based on the findings we will have a final plan in place by March 31, 2023. This will help us to continue to monitor and identify children who have late-onset or progressive hearing loss up to age 3 so they can be identified and enrolled in early intervention as soon as possible.



Do you know of other agencies who are providing early childhood hearing screenings? If so, please reach out to us with your recommendations!
DHHS.NEEHDI@nebraska.gov

2

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Role Model/Mentor Program

In April 2020, The NE-EHDI Program received grant funding from Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to create a statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) Role Model or Mentor Program. NE-EHDI is collaborating with a workgroup consisting of parents, individuals who are D/HH, advocates for individuals who are D/HH, family support professionals, and other organizations and individuals with a vested interest in developing the D/HH Role Model or Mentor Program.

The objective of HRSA and EHDI is to connect interested families with an adult who is D/HH and is trained to be a Role Model or Mentor by the time their child who has been identified as D/HH is 9 months of age. If the family is not ready to be connected to a Role Model or Mentor at 9 months of age, the family will have the option to request one when they are ready to be connected.

Currently, the workgroup is determining which organization can house and run the program and is also identifying other organizations that can offer their expertise and support services to ensure the program is sustainable and meets the needs of the families it will serve. Once the lead organization is identified, the workgroup will determine what curriculum will best serve the needs of Nebraska families. After the curriculum is set, the lead organization will begin recruiting and training Mentors and Role Models. The goal is to implement the program by March 2023 and have families enrolled and receiving services by March 2024.

D/HH Role Models or Mentors are uniquely qualified to provide families with a positive and hopeful perspective and bring important views to discussions regarding the needs of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. NE-EHDI and this workgroup are excited to offer this unique support system to families in Nebraska.