



**State of Vermont
Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind Advisory Council
School Age Subcommittee**

VERMONT QUALITY INDICATOR TOOL TO ASSESS DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, DEAFBLIND SERVICES

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of the School Age Subcommittee is to fulfill the legislative mandate under Vermont Statutes (33 V.S.A, § 1602) to assess the services, resources, and opportunities available to children in the State who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind. (see: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/33/016/01602>).

During the first meeting February 23, 2022, all members present agreed to the scope of this work which, in the long term, would include the use of the Vermont Quality Indicator Tool to assess the quality and impact of D/HH/DB Services in Vermont. This includes D/HH/DB services (age 3-22 years) provided by:

- UVMVC D/HH/DB Educational Services Program
- UVM CARES Team; and
- All other D/HH/DB providers in the State.

List of School Age Subcommittee Members, Roles

Sherry Sousa and Sharon Henry, both of whom co-chaired the D/HH/DB School Age Subcommittee previously, agreed to resume their roles as Co-Chairs. Spenser Wepler, D/HH/DB Council Chair, invited the Directors of both UVMVC ESP and UVM CARES to nominate two individuals from their respective agencies to participate on the subcommittee. The current subcommittee members are:

- Sherry Sousa, WCSU Superintendent, Co-Chair of School Age Subcommittee
- Sharon Henry, D/HH/DB Council Parent Member, Co-Chair of School Age Subcommittee
- Laura Siegel, Director of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and DeafBlind Services
- Jacqueline Kelleher, State Director of Special Education
- Amelia Briggs, D/HH/DB Council Parent Member
- Jen Bostwick, Program Supervisor (ASL/Bilingual) and TODHH, D/HH/DB Educational Services Program EHD/UVMMC
- Tracy Hinck, Educational Audiologist, SLP-CCC, D/HH/DB Educational Services Program EHD/UVMMC
- Rebecca LaLanne, Director/Trainer, Deaf Vermonters Advocacy Services
- Pam Hoover, TODHH, UVM CARES — *withdrawn by Margaret Overman, UVM CARES, on 03/06/2022*

Key stakeholders

Committee members invited key stakeholders who represent AOE, DAIL, and parents of children who are D/HH/DB to attend a subcommittee meeting:

- Michelle John, Chapter President VT Hands and Voices and Chair, VT NASDSE Coalition (attended 04/4/22)
- Tracy Evans Lusielli, Director, New England Consortium on Deafblindness (NEC) (attended 4/25/22)

- John Pirone, EdD, Lecturer/Program Coordinator, Department of Leadership & Development Services American Sign Language Program, University of Vermont (attended 05/04/2022)
- Stuart Solboleski, DVAS (attended 5/9/2022)
- Kevin Smith, parent of a Deaf child (attended 5/17/2022)
- Jacqui Kelleher invited LEA colleagues to review the Quality Indicator document:
 - LEA Special Education Administrators – Dawn Campbell and Lisa Johnson from SVSU (attended 05/25/2022 and 06/07/2022)
 - LEA Special Education Paraprofessional – Dan Comeau (written feedback on 5/15/2022)
 - LEA Special Education Teacher/Case Manager – Cassie Santos (written feedback on 06 01 2022)

In addition, members of our subcommittee have emailed/engaged with/reviewed the following documents:

- All Together Now, NH (DOE)
- Rich Haun, PhD, Director, Washington Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth (CDHY), Washington School for the Deaf
- Sarah Honigfeld. Policy Advisor for NAD
- Allison Sedey, University of Colorado, Boulder, director of the Outcomes and Developmental Data Assistance Center for EHD Programs (ODDACE)
- Laurent Clerc Deaf Education Center, Montana
- State of Virginia, DOE
- Program Evaluation documents from Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
- Program Evaluation documents from Washington Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth (CDHY)
- Kym Meyer, PhD, [Public School Partnerships \(PSP\)](#) at The Learning Center for the Deaf, MA
- National Deaf Center, Washington DC
- Karen Hopkins, Executive Director, The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

Dates of meetings

The School Age Subcommittee met nine times between February 23, 2022 – June 7, 2022 via Zoom; most committee members attended regularly and participated fully in the discussions and the effort. The Subcommittee gave updates to the D/HH/DB Council on 03/15/2022 and 05/19/2022 to apprise the Council of our work and to seek their input.

Closed Captioning transcript of School Age Subcommittee meetings and meeting summaries are posted at: [Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Council | Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living \(vermont.gov\)](#)

Development of Vermont Quality Indicator Tool for D/HH/DB Services

During the initial meetings, the subcommittee brainstormed tools/resources that are currently available for assessing the quality of D/HH/DB programs in the USA, and each member agreed to review some of these resources and follow up on contacts as needed. The lack of an assessment tool/metrics and benchmarks quickly became apparent in our nationwide search. Tools reviewed could not easily be applied to services for DHHDB. However, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) Guidelines (2018), a set of ten principles guide both school districts and D/HH/DB providers in best practice, provided the most comprehensive structure for assessment.

The subcommittee has also created a list of qualifications for persons reviewing the evidence submitted and a scoring scale to guide qualified reviewers as they judge the quality and merit of the evidence submitted. Lastly, the document also includes nationally agreed upon definitions for the professional qualifications for each service provider category (e.g., TODHH, Educational audiologist, etc) and tools to assist school personnel when hiring personnel to serve the D/HH/DB population.

Vermont Quality Program Indicators for Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Deaf Blind School Age Children
(updated 07/16/2023)

The **scope and purpose** of these Quality Indicators is to fulfill the legislative mandate under Vermont Statutes ([33 V.S.A, § 1602](#)) to assess the services, resources, and opportunities available to children in the State who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind (D/HH/DB) in order to ensure that our Vermont children who are D/HH/DB are receiving high quality services. Beside each Quality Indicator in parentheses is the portion of the State Statute that is addressed (where applicable).

Introductions: Quality Indicators establish the level of service and support expected of programs/providers working with D/HH/DB students in Vermont and require that they offer evidence of compliance with these standards. These standards are based in large part on the work of National Association of State Directors of Special Education ([NASDSE](#)) Guidelines (3rd ed., Sept 2018) in addition to stakeholder input as well as the NASDSE Guidelines for Deafblindness (2008) and conversations (email/Zoom) with national experts.

Evidence: Evidence are artifacts that are provided by a program that serves students who are D/HH/DB in advance of a review. These can be documents or links to examples of practices occurring in the program and are entered into the far-right column. Parent/student input is critical to reflect in all documentation and as such should be notated (e.g., with **) by providers and student teams. While individual student plans, (IEP, 504 or EST), have different requirements, all at minimum demand a plan, a diverse qualified team, and meeting notices and minutes. The evidence documents recommended in this tool utilize those means of communication to ensure compliance with levels of best practice. At this time, the recommendation is that providers provide the expected evidence for each indicator to the school team they are supporting. This working relationship between provider, student, family and school that is documented through the tool is one means to guarantee that our children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind receive high quality services.

Appendices: At the end of this document, important links are included for D/HH/DB providers as well as for school district personnel who are working with this population.

Essential Elements	Descriptor	Program advocates for and documents that:	Evidence	Submitted Evidence links
1. Unique Needs of Each Student is Considered (VSA Powers and duties C.1.B)	A full continuum of services individualized to the needs of each student for full engagement in school programs.	Goals of students and/or family are represented and integrated	Meeting invitation, agenda, minutes, and/or other parent documentation (redacted) Consideration of including expanded core curriculum as documented by meeting minutes	

		Educational services support individual language options, communication modes and hearing status	IEP/504 or EST plan includes evaluation and progress data (redacted)	
		VT state licensed teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, VT licensed audiologist, licensed SLP, Intervener or DeafBlind specialist attend/participate in team meetings, depending on student's needs.	Meeting invitation, agenda, and minutes (redacted). Provider input is documented in meeting minutes	
2. Expectations, Educational Programming, and Future Employment (VSA Powers and duties C.1.B)	Programmatic opportunities provide access to high quality learning which will impact future career plans.	Students and families are actively engaged in transition planning.	Meeting invitation including HireAbility (including Rehab Counselor for Deaf as appropriate), agenda, and minutes (redacted)	
		Student programs reflect learning profiles, are modified based on students' progress, and instruction meets student needs	VT Licensed TOD/HH and DeafBlind professionals/Intervener participation in team meetings as evidenced by meeting invitation, agenda, Personal Learning Plans, and minutes	
		Provide professional development regarding the variety of needs of, and appropriate practices for, students who are D/HH/DB, including those students with co-occurring disabilities	Provide menu of opportunities and dates for training that are offered to teams, families and other professionals	
3. Families as Critical Partners (VSA Powers and duties C.1.C)	High levels of family involvement contribute to positive student outcomes.	Parents are included in all levels of planning and decision making for their child(ren)	Parents input is documented in meeting minutes (IEP, 504, Educational Support Team meeting, etc). Use Guidance for Parent Input	
		Specialized activities and programs are shared with parents, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with other parents of D/HH/DB, children • Social events specifically for families of children who are D/HH/DB • Transition support training (e.g., early transition to preschool, elementary to 	Emails (redacted) documenting sharing of information, Parent newsletters, School Calendars, progress towards goals on student's educational plan pertaining to transition	

		middle school, middle to high school, high school to post-secondary education and training		
		Parent counseling and training services necessary to implement the IEP, 504 and EST goals are routinely provided to assist parents to support their child(ren)	Meeting minutes documenting discussion around parent supports needed to implement IEP/504/EST goals (if an IEP is in place found on Service Page as a Related Service) (e.g., sign support/instruction, listening/spoken language support)	
4. Language and communication needs are considered and accommodated in the student's learning environment (VSA Powers and duties C.1.A)	Language and communication needs are considered and accommodated in the student's learning environment.	Student's language is comprehensively assessed at each transition to identify gaps that may occur	Licensed TOD/HHs, ASL Specialist, SLP's or DB Specialist working with D/HH/DB children employ evidence-based assessment tools that are age/developmentally appropriate Meeting minutes demonstrate that qualified providers are involved in the planning process and interpretation as appropriate. Documentation of assessment of developmental milestones at regular intervals to include receptive and expressive language measures for semantics, syntax, pragmatics, morphology, and phonology	
		Opportunities for direct communication with the child's peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode is needed	Communication Plans (see Appendix) must include discussion, ideas shared and plans for these interactions and dates of when opportunities occurred in the student's learning environment (redacted)	
		Direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode integrated and implemented	Meeting notes and/or Communication Plan (redacted) include data to demonstrate if there is a need for Direct Instruction	
		Student's needs for assistive technology devices and services considered and provided, where appropriate as determined by "Use Plan."	IEP, 504 Plan, or EST Plan and Communication Plan (redacted) that includes specific technologies recommended, including a "Use Plan" for the technology	

		Student's communication needs are tailored based upon the classroom or activity environment	IEP, 504 Plan or EST Plan and Communication Plan (redacted) document discussion of various settings and activities the student will participate in throughout their day, and how the communication needs will be met in these different circumstances.	
		A continuum of placement opportunities available for students whose language and/or communication mode(s) cannot be met with available school services	Meeting notes (redacted) documenting the discussion with the team/parents about various placements available within and outside of VT	
5. Student receives individualized specially designed instruction that incorporates evidence-based practices	Qualified providers (e.g., VT Licensed TOD/HHs, VT Licensed Audiologists, VT Licensed SLPs, DB Specialist/Intervener - see Appendix) determine the approach to instruction, use of curriculum and assistive technology, and monitor student progress in order to ensure effective instruction.	Decisions about programs and strategies that are used with students are guided by recent research and evidence-based practices	Citation of recent literature used to guide decisions Rationale for instructional programs are documented in the team meeting minutes	
		Training is provided to general education teachers, specialized instructional support staff personnel, providers and others to understand the language, communication, and educational and functional performance needs of these students	Meeting notes (redacted) of educational sessions Notes from classroom observations (redacted) by qualified providers reflect that the needs of the student are incorporated Qualified providers are maintaining currency in the professional literature and practices as evidenced by attendance at continuing educational conferences and maintenance of Vermont State licensure in TODHH, Audiology and SLP, DB Specialist	
		Use of assistive technologies includes a functional evaluation or screening as to whether the technologies are appropriate, effective and beneficial to the student, both in the classroom and	Evaluation notes (redacted) from observations of classroom and other environments completed by a qualified provider	

		in other environments based on the student's educational plan.		
		Training provided to the student, staff and parents on the use of the technologies and accommodations.	Minutes and agendas (redacted) from training sessions to the student, staff and parents Calendar for updated training for the student, staff, providers and parents as needed (a minimum of yearly review) and when technology is updated Program accommodation and modification page and/or Service Page of student's plan reflects need for assistive technology training	
		Monitoring plan to ensure that hearing aids, cochlear implants and hearing assistance technologies used by students are working consistently as required by IDEA	Routine checking (See Appendix) occurs for effectiveness of devices and in line with the students Use Plan (redacted) with dates of equipment checks When there is faulty equipment, personnel responsible for monitoring take appropriate and immediate action to remedy, including notification of qualified personnel and parent/student.	
6. Educational Progress, Accountability and Oversight (VSA Powers and duties C.1.F)	Language, literacy, academic progress and social emotional wellness should be monitored frequently and reported according to the same requirements for all students.	Providers of services such as sign language interpreters are regularly evaluated by the Program	Program framework including assessment tools and expectations for regular supervision and evaluation of Service Providers Supervision process includes individuals with expertise in the same areas as the D/HH/DB service providers.	
		Programs and services routinely evaluated.	Program's process for regularly reviewing student outcomes, and for developing, recommending, implementing and monitoring program improvements	
		IEP, 504 or EST Plans are developed based on	IEP, 504 Plan or EST Plan and	

		individual student needs rather than available services	Communication Plan (redacted) document demonstrates alignment between student needs and services/supports provided. The student's disability category is documented as deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind on their educational plan	
		D/HH/DB education team is provided with opportunities to meet periodically to discuss roles and responsibilities, share ideas and current practices and to attend training specifically related to their professional capacity.	Schedule, dated meeting agenda and minutes that demonstrate teams have opportunities for collaboration and consultation	

7. Access to Peers and Adults who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (VSA Powers and duties C.1.B)	Children and youth need ongoing access to students and adults like them.	Access to professional personnel is provided in the child's language and communication mode	Program staff directory includes professional personnel fluent in child's language and communication mode and provides students with the opportunity to interact with this individual. Dates indicate when the opportunity was offered to the student and family List of community members and organizations available to meet this need (dates that they participate) and to share events that are happening. Redacted emails or correspondence directly to student/families about events. Program provides opportunities (and the dates) for social interactions of students sharing similar communication modes	
8. Qualified Providers (VSA Powers and duties C.1.A)	Providers of D/HH/DB services must meet professional standards that include minimal qualifications and ongoing performance evaluations and be provided relevant	All service delivery providers are appropriately licensed/certified and trained, and meet minimal qualifications (See Appendix for definition of "Qualified Providers")	Licensure, training, results of performance evaluation (redacted) and qualifications of service delivery providers are collected and maintained by program	

	professional development opportunities.			
		Relevant professional development is available to all providers of D/HH/DB services on a regular basis	Yearly calendar for professional development of all D/HH/DB providers	
		All D/HH/DB providers are appropriately evaluated by a professional from their respective fields	Schedule of supervision and evaluation of D/HH/DB program professionals	
		Current efforts to recruit and retain early intervention providers, teachers of D/HH/DB students and specialized instructional support personnel are on-going	Documentation of recruitment and retention steps	

9. State Leadership and Collaboration	<p>Strong state and local leadership with effective collaboration among key stakeholders (parents, D/HH/DB consumers, state and local educators, university teacher preparation programs and advocacy organizations) is key to successful systems of delivery of programs, services, recruitment and retention of the workforce. To provide a perspective on how students who are D/HH/DB are performing from year to year, the Agency of Education should report annual student assessment results for language and literacy.</p>	<p>Various state agencies, programs, families and schools for the D/HH/DB collaborate to provide a seamless continuum of placements, services and supports for children and their families through age 21, and that students' assessment of performance and other key indicators are reviewed when addressing issues and provide guidance to the state, local school districts, teachers, professionals and families.</p>	<p>Program provides meeting notes (with dates) where D/HH/DB education leaders and parents convene to discuss educational services and systems issues that reflect the needs of a student</p> <p>Program schedules annual meetings with AOE to review aggregated student outcomes on all state assessments</p> <p>Number and nature of consultation that they did with school districts on professional development</p> <p>Number and nature of consultation that they did with school districts on collaboration with advocacy and family support organizations</p>	
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Appendices:

- Communication/Language Plan
 - ✓ [The Vermont Communication Plan \(02/23/2023\)](#)
 - ✓ The Vermont Communication plan is based on one from New Jersey (<https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/deaf/resources/New%20Jersey%20Communication%20Plan%20for%20Students%20who%20are%20Deaf%20or%20Heard%20of%20Hearing.pdf>)
- American Academy of Audiology
 - ✓ RMHAT selection, fitting, verification, and validation of FM/DM systems guidelines https://www.audiology.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HAT_Guidelines_Supplement_A.pdf_53996ef7758497.54419000.pdf
 - ✓ Classroom audio distribution systems (classroom sound fields) selection and verification (https://www.audiology.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20110926_HAT_GuidelinesSupp_B.pdf_53996ef98259f2.45364934.pdf)
- Template for classroom observations to ensure access
 - ✓ Access to Curriculum Assessment Tool (ATCAT) - more information [here](#).
- Template for functional evaluation in the classroom, other environments
 - ✓ https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Functional-Listening-Evaluation_complete-with-phrase-lists_autocalculate.pdf
- Definitions for Qualified Providers/professionals of DHHDB services
 - ✓ For Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TODHH):
See Rules Governing the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals, see pages 209-212
<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/Rules%20Governing%20the%20Licensing%20of%20Educators%20-%20Effective%20June%2011%2C%202021.pdf>
 - ✓ Audiologist
 - Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) VT licensure: <https://sos.vermont.gov/audiologists/>
 - ASHA: <https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/info/vt/licensure/>
 - ✓ Speech Language Pathologist
 - AOE: <https://education.vermont.gov/educator-licensure/become-a-vermont-educator/speech-language-pathologists>
 - OPR: <https://sos.vermont.gov/speech-language-pathologist/>
 - ASHA: <https://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/info/vt/licensure/>
 - ✓ Educational Interpreter

- Recommended minimum qualifications in Vermont include having a score of 4.0 on the Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment (EIPA).
 - A national certification (e.g., [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#)) is preferred.
 - A BEI certification (Basic or above) is also acceptable.
- ✓ Intervener
- Often used for students who are DeafBlind
 - See [Pathways-for-Intervener-Training-in-the-United-States-2022](#)
- ✓ Communication Facilitator
- to assess someone's ASL skills, the [American Sign Language Proficiency Interview \(ASLPI\)](#) or the [Sign Communication Proficiency Interview \(SCPI:ASL\)](#) are two commonly used tests.
 - At this time there are no minimum scores established in Vermont; the adequacy of the proficiency of the ASL skills is determined by the Educational Team when considering the needs of the student
- Evaluation scale to judge the quality and merit of the evidence gathered by D/HH/DB providers and Educational Teams when using the Vermont Quality Indicator TOOL for D/HH/DB Services.



**State of Vermont
Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind Advisory Council (D/HH/DB)
School Age Subcommittee**

**“Vermont Quality Indicator Tool for D/HH/DB Services”
Scoring Scale to Evaluate the Quality of the Evidence**

This evaluation tool was designed to assist qualified Reviewers to judge the quality and merit of the evidence submitted based on use of the “**Vermont Quality Indicator Tool for D/HH/DB Services.**”

Considering each of the nine quality indicators separately, the Reviewer should examine the evidence/artifacts submitted and rate each quality indicator based on the following scale:

- 1 – evidence does not meet quality indicator (0% - 25%)
- 2 – evidence partially meets the quality indicator because a number of **key** elements are missing (26% - 50%)
- 3 – evidence mostly meets the quality indicator, but some elements are missing (51% - 75%)
- 4 – evidence fully meets the quality indicator (76% - 100%)

On the next page is an example of how the scoring scale would be applied to the “Vermont Quality Indicator Tool for D/HH/DB Services.”

A column labeled ‘Priority’ was added so a Reviewer could indicate that addressing the lack of evidence submitted for a particular Quality Indicator was a priority and should be addressed as soon as possible.

				evidence does not meet quality indicator 1	evidence partially meets the quality indicator; a number of key elements are missing 2	evidence mostly meets the quality indicator but some elements are missing 3	evidence fully meets the quality indicator 4	PRIORITY To address?
8. Qualified Providers (VSA Powers and duties C.1.A)	Providers of D/HH/DB services must meet professional standards that include minimal qualifications and ongoing performance evaluations and be provided relevant professional development opportunities.	All service delivery providers are appropriately licensed/certified and trained, and meet minimal qualifications (See Appendix for definition of "qualified".)	Licensure, training, results of performance evaluation (redacted) and qualifications of service delivery providers are collected and maintained by program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Relevant professional development is available to all providers of D/HH/DB services on a regular basis	Yearly calendar for professional development of all D/HH/DB providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		All D/HH/DB providers are appropriately evaluated by a professional from their respective fields	Schedule of supervision and evaluation of D/HH/DB program professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Current efforts to recruit and retain early intervention providers, teachers of D/HH/DB students and specialized instructional support personnel are on-going	Documentation of recruitment and retention steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

