



Language
and Literacy Developmental
Milestones for children who are
Deaf or Hard of Hearing
Annual Report

Nebraska Department of Education
Office of Special Education

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Introduction

This report is being provided in accordance with Legislative Bill 965, which was approved by the Nebraska State Legislature and Nebraska Governor in 2020. LB 965 recognized American Sign Language as a distinct and separate language, authorized schools and postsecondary educational institutions to offer courses in American Sign Language, and also established a language assessment program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. LB 965 also requires the State of Nebraska Department of Education, in collaboration with the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, to provide a joint report on or before December 31 of every year that is specific to language and literacy developmental milestones for children age birth through five years of age who are deaf or hard of hearing, relative to such children's peers who are not deaf or hard of hearing. The joint report is based on existing data annually reported by the Department of Education in compliance with the federally required state performance plan.

State Reporting Requirements

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires state Special Education and Early Intervention programs to monitor and report child developmental progress and outcomes for children age Birth to 5 receiving special education or early intervention services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (birth to 3 years) and IDEA Part B, Section 619 (preschool) programs report progress outcomes to OSEP during the reporting year in which children exit the program. Nebraska's state-approved developmental monitoring tool for both programs is Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG). Data collected using this valid and reliable assessment tool help to inform interventions/strategies, instruction, service provision and lesson planning as well as provide information

routinely to address individual needs of children. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) uses child outcome data generated through TSG to submit its Annual Performance Report to OSEP through the Part B and Part C of IDEA State Performance Plan.

The use of TSG is required for all infants & toddlers and preschool-age children receiving early intervention or special education services in Nebraska. All states are federally required to report data that align with three OSEP child outcomes: Positive Social Relationships; Acquires and uses Knowledge and Skills; and Takes Appropriate Actions to Meet Needs. TSG items are mapped to the three outcome areas and include language and literacy focused items. Language items include listening to and understanding increasingly complex language; using appropriate conversational and/or other communication skills socially; and using language to express thoughts and needs. Literacy items include demonstrating phonological awareness, phonics skills, and word recognition; demonstrating knowledge of the alphabet; demonstrating knowledge of print and its uses; demonstrating writing skills; and comprehending and responding to books and other text. TSG uses empirically derived cut scores. The total score for a given outcome area is used to determine the placement of a child's knowledge, skills, and abilities along a 9-point scale relative to a series of cut scores for each rating on the scale. Cut scores are provided in 3-month increments for ages 0 to 71 months. Hence, for each outcome area, the algorithm compares total scores on GOLD to age-specific cut scores to determine the placement of each child's knowledge, skills, and abilities on the 9-point scale. The final step in converting GOLD scores to reportable OSEP outcomes is to map from the 9-point ratings to the Office of Special Education Program's progress categories. Teaching Strategies' scoring system assigns 9-point ratings for each outcome area at entry into and upon exit from a program into one of five progress categories: (a) did not improve functioning; (b) improved

functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers; (c) improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach; (d) improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers; and (e) maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers. The progress category data is used to calculate the proportion of children who meet two summary statements for each outcome are: (1) of those children who entered the program below age expectations, the percent that substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited, and (2) percent of children who were functioning within age expectations by the time they exited.

Annual Outcome Data

Outcome data is only reported to OSEP for children who have been in early intervention or special education for at least six months and who have exited during the reporting year (July 1- June 30). During the 2021-2022 reporting year, data were available for 22 preschool-aged children receiving special education services and 26 infants/toddlers receiving early intervention services who were identified as deaf or hard of hearing. The progress category and summary statement data for 2021-2022 are available in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 below.

All children demonstrated improved functioning. As shown in Figure 1.1, most preschool-aged children were functioning within age expectations by the time they exited preschool special education services in each of the three outcomes areas: social emotional skills (63.6%); acquiring and using knowledge and skills (54.60%); and taking appropriate action to meet needs (77.3%). Figure 1.2 shows that many of the infants/toddlers who entered the early intervention program below age expectations substantially increased their rate of growth by the time

they exited the program: social emotional skills (52.4%); acquiring and using knowledge and skills (62.5%); and taking appropriate action to meet needs (61.9%).

Figure 1.1. 2021-2022 Part B Outcome Data

| Part B 2021-2022 | Social Emotional Skills | | Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills | | Taking appropriate action to meet needs | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|--|---------------|---|---------------|
| | # Of Children | % Of Children | # Of Children | % Of Children | # Of Children | % Of Children |
| a. % Of preschoolers who did not improve functioning | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0% |
| b. % Of preschoolers who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers | 7 | 31.80% | 4 | 18.2% | 5 | 22.70% |
| c. % Of preschoolers who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach | 1 | 4.60% | 6 | 27.27% | 0 | 0.00% |
| d. % Of preschoolers who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers | 4 | 31.80% | 6 | 27.27% | 6 | 27.27% |
| e. % Of preschoolers who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers | 10 | 45.45% | 6 | 27.27% | 11 | 50% |
| Totals | 22 | 100.00% | 22 | 100% | 22 | 100% |
| Summary Statements | | | | | | |
| Of those children who entered the program below age expectations, the percent that substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited | 41.70% | | 75% | | 54.50% | |
| Percent of children who were functioning within age expectations by the time they exited | 63.60% | | 54.6 | | 77.30% | |

*Part B refers to children aged 3-5 who are receiving preschool special education services.

Figure 1.2. 2021-2022 Part C Outcome Data

| Part C 2021-2022 | Social Emotional Skills | | Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills | | Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|---|---------------|
| | # Of Children | % Of Children | # Of Children | % Of Children | # Of Children | % Of Children |
| % Of infants and toddlers who did not improve functioning | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0% |
| % Of infants and toddlers who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers | 10 | 38.50% | 9 | 34.60% | 8 | 30.80% |
| % Of infants and toddlers who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach | 3 | 11.50% | 8 | 30.80% | 3 | 11.50% |
| % Of infants and toddlers who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same aged peers | 8 | 30.80% | 7 | 26.90% | 10 | 38.50% |
| % Of infants and toddlers who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers | 5 | 19.20% | 2 | 7.70% | 5 | 19.20% |
| Totals | 26 | 100% | 26 | 100% | 26 | 100% |
| Summary Statements | | | | | | |
| Of those children who entered the program below age expectations, the percent that substantially increased their rate of growth in [outcome] by the time they exited | 52.40% | | 62.50% | | 61.90% | |
| % Of children who were functioning within age expectations by the time they exited | 50% | | 34.60% | | 57.70% | |

*Part C refers to infants and toddlers, aged 0-3 who are receiving early intervention services.