

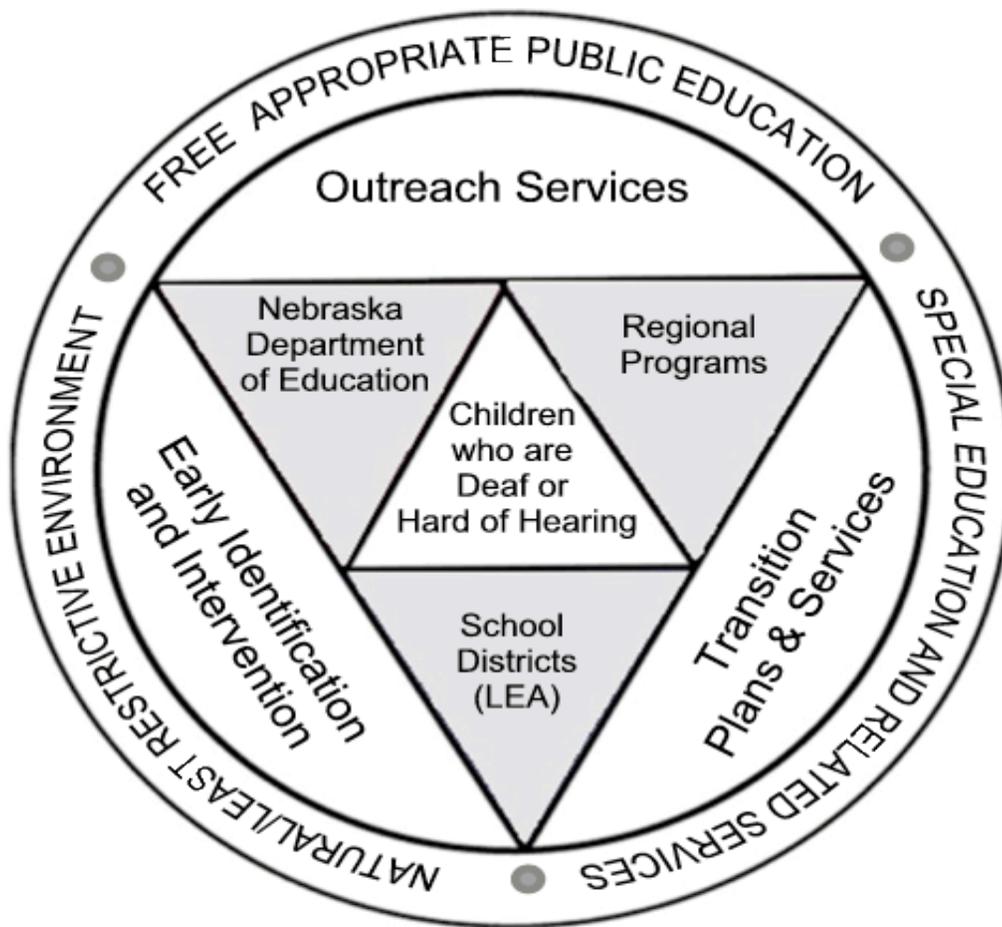
Nebraska Department of Education

Statewide Educational Programs and Support
Services for Children who are
Deaf or Hard of Hearing



Approved by State Board of Education
December 10, 2004

The Nebraska Model



PREFACE

This plan was developed to support the concept of regional programs and cooperative relationships with the school districts, educational service units and consortium of school districts in order to:

- Maximize resources in providing programs and services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- Provide a network of support and services that will serve as the state infrastructure to link programs together and assist in the enhancement of a child's educational program;
- Contain costs now in order to assure future funding;
- Provide continued support to quality educational programs, which may include center-based options;
- Reinforce the belief that children who are deaf or hard of hearing benefit from education with hearing and deaf or hard of hearing peers;
- Continue state leadership and support for a full continuum of placement options for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.



INTRODUCTION

Appropriate and quality learning opportunities should exist for all children. The education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing requires specialized programs, and appropriately certified personnel with effective communication skills.

Appropriate and quality learning experiences for children who are deaf or hard of hearing should accommodate not only their disabilities, but should also recognize and build on their unique strengths and learning styles.

The communication and language environments for children who are deaf or hard of hearing must be varied and rich. The individual communication and language needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing may present special challenges to naturally occurring interactions. All communication modes and languages are to be provided for and respected, whether oral/aural language or manual language, whether American Sign Language or English signing systems and whether the child has a cochlear implant.

Early identification followed by timely and appropriate intervention must form a safety net of support around all programs and services if quality and equity are to be made a reality for all.

It is intended that the proposed system operate as a fluid network allowing students to move to appropriate programs and services as needs and circumstances change, as determined by the student's IFSP or IEP team. The state system should have distinct yet connected options.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ALL PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

1. Individuals closest to the child, especially the parents, in consultation with professionals and in some instances with the child, are in the best position to make educational program decisions for children.

- 1.1 Parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing should be aware of all the options available to their children.
- 1.2 Decision making in planning for the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing must include professionals trained in the education of children (Birth – 21) who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- 1.3 Parent education and personnel development are essential components for meeting the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

2. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing must have access to a free appropriate public education.

- 2.1 Children who are deaf or hard of hearing should have quality learning opportunities and meet the same educational requirements and standards, as all children.
- 2.2 Children who are deaf or hard of hearing need special accommodations, and/or considerations, to access and benefit from an educational program.
- 2.3 Learning opportunities should be provided in an environment with peers who are not deaf or hard of hearing.
- 2.4 Learning opportunities should be provided in an environment with peers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ALL PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING (cont.)

3. An array of educational programs allowing movement within the options will be available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - 3.1 A full continuum of services is available. Educational placement is determined by a child's IFSP or IEP team.
 - 3.2 Regional programs may facilitate exploration of placement options.
 - 3.3 Strong partnerships among parents, school districts, service providers and agencies are vital to meet the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - 3.4 Professionals providing services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing must be trained and skilled in this discipline.
 - 3.5 The state will provide resources (financial, informational, technical assistance, professional support and residential services) to assist parents, schools and communities in the decision making process for the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.



SCHOOL DISTRICT'S ROLE

School districts will assure that all children Birth through 21 (B-21) years of age, who are deaf or hard of hearing have available a free appropriate public education which includes special education and related services to meet their unique needs.

1. School districts will assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children who are deaf or hard of hearing (B-21) are educated with other children, who are both hearing and deaf or hard of hearing in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
2. School districts will assure the full continuum of placement options as described in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing (B-21).
3. School districts shall meet the standards of Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 51) Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs.
4. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing will receive accommodations, to the extent appropriate, to benefit from their educational program.



REGIONAL PROGRAM'S ROLE

The Regional Programs will work cooperatively to maximize state and local resources for the enhancement of the education of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (B-21).

1. The Regional Programs serve as the statewide networking system among students, parents, professionals, and the Nebraska Department of Education and other agencies serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing (B-21).
2. The Regional Programs will cooperatively plan and coordinate student activities to provide opportunities for socialization through a unique and shared mode of communication.
3. The Regional Programs will develop summer educational experiences.
4. The Regional Programs will encourage family involvement in educational and social activities for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
5. Each Regional Program will promote excellence and equity for all children (B-21) in Nebraska who are deaf or hard of hearing.
6. Each Regional Program will build upon existing services, promote cooperative agreements among service providers, and support the ongoing development of outreach services.
7. Each Regional Program will provide social and educational opportunities for children who are deaf or hard of hearing (B-21) to interact with others in a language barrier free environment.
8. Each Regional Program will assist in offering professional development and training opportunities to enhance the skills of individuals working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing (B-21).

REGIONAL PROGRAM'S ROLE (cont.)

9. Each Regional Program will assist school districts in assuring that educational interpreters meet the state standards established by the Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 51) Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs.
10. Each Regional Program will assist in identifying technological equipment for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
11. Each Regional Program will assist in identifying the availability of specialized technological equipment.
12. Each Regional Program will serve as a clearinghouse of specialized materials and information relating to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
13. Each Regional Program will serve as a resource to families, students, and school districts.
14. Each Regional Program will provide technical assistance and assist the Nebraska Department of Education with statewide initiatives.
15. Each Regional Program will collect and maintain statistical information regarding children who are deaf or hard of hearing within their region.
16. Each Regional Program will identify and utilize appropriate Deaf role models for student activities.

STATE ROLE

Director of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments will serve as the primary contact for the Nebraska Department of Education in providing outreach services on the behalf of children, families, professionals, and other interested agencies and individuals seeking information relating to the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

1. The Director will support the *Guiding Principles for All Programs Serving Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*.
2. The Director will serve as a liaison between the regional programs and the Nebraska Department of Education.
3. The Director will provide information about the need for and availability of services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, upon request.
4. The Director will provide consultation in the area of program development, upon request.
5. The Director will collect and maintain statewide statistical information regarding children who are deaf or hard hearing.
6. The Director will facilitate a network of communication among stakeholders.
7. The Director will serve as a broker of services, upon request.
8. The Director will facilitate the development of partnership agreements among parents, school districts, regional programs, service providers and agencies to assure all children who are deaf or hard of hearing have a free appropriate public education and that an array of auxiliary services are available.
9. The Director will provide technical assistance as it relates to standards and assessment for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, upon request.
10. The Director will assist school districts or educational service units in the implementation of Improving Learning for Children (ILCD) as it relates to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, upon request.
11. The Director will facilitate and monitor the development of regulations relating to standards for educational interpreters in Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 51) Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs.
12. The Director will facilitate the development of educational interpreter training and mentoring on a statewide level.

Nebraska Department of Education, Special Populations Office will ensure the implementation of the Statewide Educational Programs and Support Services for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, with special attention to the following.

1. The Department of Education will maintain a system of regional programs across the state of Nebraska.
2. The Department of Education will assure that all school districts and approved cooperatives (even if they do not enter into state approved regional program agreement) will continue to be eligible for special education reimbursement/payment if they meet the standards of Rule 51.
3. The Department of Education will ensure that school districts provide students who are deaf or hard of hearing with a free appropriate public education.
4. The Department of Education will design and implement specialized professional and family training opportunities, in collaboration with state approved regional programs.
5. The Department of Education will continue to be responsible for the cost of **residential** educational placement as determined by the student's IFSP or IEP team. Educational cost will continue to be the responsibility of the student's school district of residence, in accordance with the district's responsibility to provide the student with a free appropriate public education.



STATEWIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

TIMELINE OF IMPLEMENTATION

School Years

2005-2007

The development a 10 Year Implementation Review of the Statewide Educational Programs and Support Services for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

May, 2005

Submission of regional plans to the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments for review and approval.

School Year:

2004-2005

The Regional Programs in collaboration with local districts and agencies develop new Regional Plans for the implementation of recently revised state plan: Statewide Educational Programs and Support Services for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. (September, 2004)

December, 2004

Revised Statewide Educational Programs and Support Services for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing is approved.

School Year:

2001-2002

Educational interpreters must meet rule standards.

September, 2000

Establish standards in rule for educational interpreters.

August, 1998

With the support of the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments secondary children from NSD begin to receive services at regional/statewide program(s).

Current NSD campus is vacated.

April 1998

With the support of the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments, approved regional/statewide programs and resident school districts conduct IEP meetings for secondary children at NSD.

January, 1998

With the support of the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments elementary children from NSD begin to receive services at regional/statewide programs.

- November, 1997** With the support of the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments, approved regional/statewide programs and resident school districts conduct IEP meetings for elementary children at NSD.
- October, 1997** Applications for regional/statewide programs resubmitted to the Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments.
- Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments enters into agreements with school districts and educational service units meeting specifications for regional/statewide programs
- Based on regional/statewide agreements, Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments determines additional staff and resource needs.
- Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments begins further development of residential options.
- July 1997** Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments conducts a meeting(s) for school districts and educational service units interested in becoming a regional/statewide program.
- Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments begins to provide technical assistance and support to school districts and educational service units developing regional/statewide programs.
- Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments begins development of interpreter guidelines and training program.
- June, 1997** Establish The Office of Programs for Children with Sensory Impairments, including outreach services. Begin to identify staffing needs.
- Mail letters of notification to school districts and education service units regarding the Department of Education's interest in establishing regional/statewide programs.
- School districts and educational service units submit a letter of interest to the Department of Education regarding their interest in establishing regional/statewide programs.