

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) Identification and Services

Cedar Bluffs Public Schools is committed to ensuring that students who are deaf or hard of hearing have access to appropriate instruction, communication supports, assistive technology, and educational opportunities.

The district works collaboratively with families, school staff, medical and audiological professionals, and specialized service providers to identify student needs and provide individualized support.

Identification and Evaluation Process

Students suspected of having a hearing impairment may be referred for evaluation based on parent concerns, hearing screening results, medical or audiological information, teacher observations, or concerns related to communication and educational performance.

The identification process follows Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Rule 51 requirements and is part of the district's established Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MDT) process.

The process generally includes:

1. **Referral and Parent Communication:** Concerns are reviewed with the family, and the district determines whether a special education evaluation is appropriate. Required parent consent is obtained before an initial evaluation.
2. **Medical and Audiological Documentation:** The district reviews relevant medical diagnoses, hearing evaluations, audiograms, and recommendations from qualified professionals. A current audiological evaluation is used to document the nature and extent of the student's hearing loss.
3. **Multidisciplinary Evaluation:** The MDT, including appropriate school personnel and specialists in deaf and hard of hearing education, evaluates how hearing loss affects the student's communication, language development, academic performance, and educational needs.
4. **Eligibility Determination:** The MDT determines whether the student meets Nebraska's eligibility requirements for deaf or hard of hearing services, including whether the hearing impairment adversely affects educational performance and creates a need for special education.
5. **IEP Development:** When a student qualifies for special education, the IEP team, including the parent/guardian, determines the individualized instruction, related services, accommodations, communication supports, and assistive technology needed for the student to access and participate in education.

A medical diagnosis or documented hearing loss is an important part of the evaluation process but does not independently determine special education eligibility.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

Services are individualized and determined through the student's IEP process. Depending on student needs, supports may include:

- Specialized instruction from a teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing
- Classroom accommodations and instructional adjustments
- Speech, language, and communication supports
- Assistive listening technology and classroom amplification systems
- Consultation and collaboration between specialists, teachers, and families
- Support for communication access, academic progress, and student independence

Cedar Bluffs partners with **Educational Service Unit (ESU) Special Services** to access qualified deaf and hard of hearing instructional staff and specialized services. These services are provided within Cedar Bluffs school buildings as appropriate to the student's IEP.

Assistive Technology and Equipment Support

Cedar Bluffs works with the Ralston hearing technology program to support access to appropriate hearing-related assistive technology, equipment assistance, and maintenance.

Based on individual needs, technology may include remote microphone systems, classroom listening devices, and other supports that improve access to classroom instruction and communication.

The IEP team determines whether assistive technology is needed and identifies appropriate supports. The district coordinates equipment use, routine functionality checks, troubleshooting, and related assistance with its service partners.

Ongoing Monitoring and Collaboration

The district regularly reviews student progress and the effectiveness of services through the IEP process. IEPs are reviewed at least annually, and reevaluations are completed as required or when student needs warrant additional consideration.

Families, classroom teachers, special education staff, and deaf and hard of hearing specialists work together to ensure that services remain responsive to each student's educational and communication needs.

Questions or Referrals

Parents or guardians who have concerns about their child's hearing, communication, or access to instruction are encouraged to contact Cedar Bluffs Public Schools administration or the district's special education staff.

The district will work with families to review concerns, explain the evaluation process, and determine appropriate next steps.