

Implementing a Standardized Assessment Plan Program Wide: Benefits and Barriers

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Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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JCIH Recommendation to EHDI Professionals

Goal 6 of 2013 Supplement to the 2007 JCIH Position Statement:

“All children who are D/HH should have their progress monitored every 6 months from birth to 36 months of age, through a protocol that includes the use of **standardized, norm-referenced developmental evaluations...**”

Extending the JCIH Recommendations

- In addition to the advantages of individual providers using standardized, norm-referenced assessments, there are additional benefits when the...
- Same assessments are used program wide
- Same assessments are used nationwide

Today's Topics

- Overview of a CDC-supported project (ODDACE) focused on:
 - Partnering with EI programs to implement the program-wide use of a consistent set of standardized, norm-referenced assessments
 - Increasing our understanding of factors impacting outcomes of children who are D/HH

Today's Topics

- Present results of interviews with ODDACE participants on:
 - Benefits of implementing a common set of standardized, norm-referenced assessments program wide
 - Obstacles to implementation
 - Ways to overcome barriers
- Many of these benefits can be realized without or without participation in ODDACE



Outcomes and Developmental Data Assistance Center for EHDI (ODDACE)

Background

- Long interested in understanding language & developmental outcomes of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - How are early identified children doing?
 - What do we mean by outcomes?
- Previous CDC-funded research projects



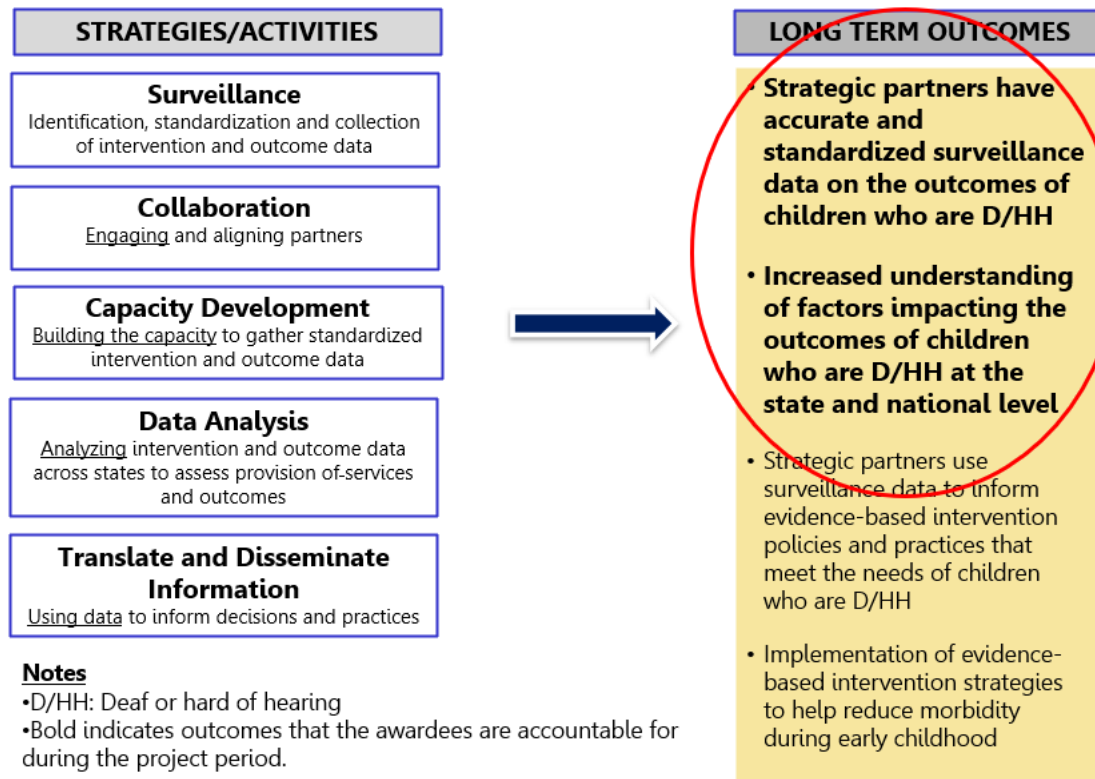
Outcomes and Developmental Data Assistance Center for EHDI (ODDACE) Programs

- Notice of Funding Opportunity released in Spring, 2020
 - NCBDDD Outcomes and Developmental Data Assistance Center for EHDI (ODDACE) Programs, CDC-RFA-DD20-2005
 - Four Focus Areas
 - Strengthen capacity
 - Assess relationship of intervention and outcomes
 - Promote best practices
 - Assist in implementation



Outcomes and Developmental Data Assistance Center for EHDI (ODDACE) Programs

ODDACE Logic Model



Current ODDACE Partners

- 16 programs across 14 different states
- All programs using a common set of standardized, norm-referenced assessments
 - DAYC-2
 - MacArthur Communicative Development Inventories
- Some programs include additional, optional assessments (e.g., SKI-HI LDS, LittleEars)

ODDACE Procedures

- Developmental assessments are completed by the interventionist in partnership with the parent
- Assessment protocols are sent to the ODDACE team at the University of Colorado-Boulder

ODDACE Procedures

- Assessments scored
- Written report of individual child results
- Graphic summary of developmental scores
- Database created for each program
- Annual accountability report characterizing program's performance and comparing this to national averages
- Databases combined across programs to examine language outcomes nationwide

Interview Process

- Interviews were conducted with ODDACE participants to:
 - Determine benefits and barriers to using a consistent set of standardized, norm-referenced assessments program wide

Interview Participants

- Participants: Directors, supervisors, and lead interventionists in programs participating in ODDACE
- Number of interviewees: 21
- Number of programs: 14
- Timeframe: June and July 2022
- Let's hear/see what they had to say!



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Benefits to Program-Wide Use of a Consistent Set of Norm-Referenced Assessments



Norm-Referenced Assessments: Definition

- During test development, normed-referenced assessments were given to hundreds/thousands of children
- Child's performance is compared to other children of the same age, on the same assessment

Benefits of Norm-Referenced Assessments

“Tracking is essential. We have to track D/HH kids because language deprivation is a real thing, and if we're not catching it at the EI level, then the kid's coming into school disadvantaged.”



Norm-Referenced Assessments: Benefits

- In addition to providing age scores...
- Provides standard scores and/or percentile ranks
- Unlike age scores, these allow you to objectively determine if child's skills are within the average range
- This is critical for program-wide accountability

Norm-Referenced Assessments: Benefits

- Goes beyond checklists and anecdotal info
- Compares child to their same-age peers
- Provides parents with objective information so they know where child is at
- Objectively monitors growth/progress
- Carries weight at IEP/IFSP table
- Helps with transition to Part B providing evidence for eligibility for services

Benefits of Using the **Same** Assessments **Program Wide**

“...the benefit is consistency around the state. No matter where you are in this state to have every family have the same tools being used, that's huge for consistency, for data collection...”

“...having some common language, standardized protocols, being able to support and understand each other.”

Consistent Assessments Program Wide: Benefits

- Benefits to interventionists and families:
 - Collaborate more fully with colleagues
 - Team members can support each other
 - Seamless transition if child/family switches interventionists within the program

Consistent Assessments

Program Wide: Benefits

- System-wide program benefits:
 - Combining apples with apples
 - Using a consistent assessment battery allows you to aggregate results across your program
 - Can identify program strengths and areas for improvement
 - Informs personnel prep needs

Power of **Norm-Referenced Assessments** used **Program Wide**

- *“As a growing program, we're always looking for grants and looking for donors. Standardized numbers are easy to explain and gives them a snapshot, and they can read that easily.”*



Consistent Norm-Referenced Assessments Program Wide: Benefits

- Provides data for funders, administrators, board members, etc.
- Enhances grant applications
- Facilitates strategic planning
- Streamlines data collection and reporting for accountability legislation (e.g., LEAD-K, Kindergarten Readiness initiatives, House and Senate Bills)

Benefits of Using the **Same** Assessments **Nation Wide**

“...this program will give really good data across the nation. We always need to be monitoring the progress of our kids, seeing what's working, what's not working, see where we need to pivot...”



Consistent Norm-Referenced Assessments Nation Wide: Benefits

- Allows programs to compare their results to national averages
- Improves representativeness of this diverse and heterogeneous group
- Increases our understanding of language strengths and challenges
- Identifies factors that are predictive of more successful language outcomes

Obstacles Noted by Interviewees

- Interventionists may be reluctant to use a given assessment if they
 - Are not confident in interpreting the results
 - Are not sure how to use the results to support goal development
 - Don't want to share discouraging results with a family
 - Believe it is taking time away from the intervention

Overcoming Potential Obstacles

- Interpreting results and using them to guide intervention goals
 - Using a consistent assessment program wide allows for colleague-to-colleague mentoring
 - Personnel prep opportunity
 - ODDACE provides consultation and professional development to participating programs

Overcoming Potential Obstacles

- Sharing discouraging results
 - It's important for parents to have clear, honest and accurate information about their child
 - Focus on progress over time rather than specific scores
 - Multi-domain assessments (e.g., the DAYC-2) often balance a challenging area with an area of strength
 - Consider the Communication Matrix for children with global delays

Overcoming Potential Obstacles

- Assessment takes time away from intervention

*“Younger therapists say, “Oh no, I've got to do therapy.”
No, you can do the testing as well. It's part of
intervention.”*

Overcoming Potential Obstacles

- Assessment is part of intervention
- Involving parents in the assessment:
 - Enhances their observation skills
 - Informs them about developmental sequences and next steps
 - Familiarizes them with the language used by professionals, empowering them to be an informed and equal member of the intervention team

Why Assess?: Closing Words from our Interviewees

“We should be expecting children to stay on track with their hearing peers. I want parents to have that expectation for their kids and know even if we're not getting it, why is that? And what can we do differently?”

“We've got to see if what we're doing is effective or not, or if this child needs something else. It just totally informs us on all that.”

