

VOTE YES on SB 564

VA Hearing Loss Identification and Monitoring System; Language Development for Children.

January 7, 2020 - Introduced by Senator Edwards

February 7, 2020 – Read third time and Passed Senate (39-Y 0-N)

February 13, 2020 – Assigned to House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions – sub: Health

Support Early Language for ALL Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

“All identified and at-risk children and their families should have access to resources necessary to reach their maximum potential.”

- **Principle 9** - “Families should have access to information about all resources and programs for intervention, and support and counseling regarding the child’s educational and communication/language needs.” (Page 4)
- **Principle 11** - “Professionals with appropriate training should provide ongoing surveillance of communication development to all children with or without risk indicators.” (Page 4)
- **Guideline** - “Regardless of previous hearing-screening outcomes, all infants with or without risk factors should receive ongoing surveillance of communicative development beginning at 2 months of age during well-child visits in the medical home.” (Page 4)

- The Journal of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention 2019; 4(2)

The ISSUES:

- The current Virginia EHDI advisory committee represents professionals who specialize in assessing hearing and recommending hearing aids, assistive listening devices, and cochlear implants – but has no experts who specialize in language acquisition and development.
- During a presentation to the VA Disability Commission on November 28, 2017, John Eisenburg, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services Virginia Department of Education, reported that 52% of D/HH children exiting pre-school programs are functioning below age expectation in language.
- During the public comment period of the 2019 JCHC Study Mandate of Language Development Milestones for Young Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children, **239 of the total 265 responses were in support of introducing legislation** to require state agencies to select language milestones and track language development of D/HH children, age 0-5.

The SOLUTION:

In order for the Virginia EHDI advisory committee to keep abreast with the updated and expanding practices stipulated and endorsed in the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, §§ **22.1-214** and **32.1-64.1** of the Code of Virginia must be amended and reenacted such that –

1. The EHDI advisory committee must add two language specialists to its membership (one who uses the dual languages of American Sign Language and English; one who use spoken English)
2. The EHDI advisory committee shall select language developmental milestone assessments for educators and early intervention specialists to have the option to use in assessing the language and literacy development of children from birth to age five who are deaf or hard of hearing.
3. The Virginia Hearing Loss Identification and Monitoring System shall track the language development of children who are identified as deaf or hard of hearing