

Language Assessment Program-Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the language assessment program for deaf/hard of hearing children (LAP-DHH)?

In accordance with K.S.A. 75-5397e, a language assessment program was established to assess, monitor, and track the ASL and/or English language developmental milestones of each child who is deaf or hard of hearing from birth through age eight in Kansas for the purpose of providing data-driven interventions and helping the children achieve age-appropriate language development.

Per the statute, an advisory committee developed specific action plans and recommendations which were approved by the legislative education committees and led to the establishment of the Language Assessment Program-Deaf/Hard of Hearing. The program is coordinated by the Kansas Commission for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) and housed at the Kansas School for the Deaf (KSD).

Typically, children are enrolled in the program before they are three. Once they are enrolled, they remain in the program through age eight. As the program expands, it will include all deaf/hard of hearing children in the state.

Is this program just for children who are receiving special education services?

No, this program is for *any* child who is deaf/hard of hearing (DHH) birth through age eight regardless of whether they have an IFSP, IEP, or 504 plan including those who might not currently qualify for additional support. Children who have been identified as having hearing within normal limits do not qualify for LAP-DHH.

My students are doing fine. Why do all DHH children need to be assessed?

Children who have a hearing loss of any degree are at risk for delays due to not having the same access to acquire language as children who have typical hearing. Hearing aids and cochlear implants do not restore hearing, and even at their optimal performance, they do not give children 100% access to the spoken language around them. Even in children whose home environments and early interventions support typical language development, it is not uncommon to see a language gap develop and/or widen as they enter school. Additionally, when the process for acquiring language is interrupted or slowed, this can have an impact not just on language but on cognitive, social, and educational development.

Who does the assessments?

KSD secures and trains the LAP-DHH specialists who conduct the assessments. All LAP-DHH specialists must meet certain qualifications and go through training in order to be eligible to give the assessments. Best practice suggests eligible specialists for the program need to be a licensed Teacher of the Deaf (TOD), Early Childhood Special Educator (ECSE), and/or Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP). These are licensed professionals within the field of education who can address language development concerns that may arise as a result of a hearing loss (and subsequent lack of access to language). Preferred competencies for a LAP-DHH specialist should include experience in deaf education and/or child development for children who are DHH as well as knowledge of language milestones and language development in American Sign Language (ASL) and English in children from birth through age eight. Additionally, language assessment specialists must be fluent in ASL and/or English in order to administer the assessments in the child's primary language(s) to avoid the use of an interpreter.

Why can't we do the assessments ourselves?

Assessments must be conducted by professionals with specific training and experience in working with DHH students. That is why the licensure of TOD, ECSE, and SLP is required as a starting point. Additionally, a LAP-DHH specialist must successfully complete intense training on assessments used and how to interpret the results of those assessments. KSD is responsible for hiring and training LAP-DHH specialists. KSD and KCDHH recognize the benefits of using regional LAP-DHH specialists who live across the state as well as the need to limit travel costs. KSD and KCDHH will be investigating ways to utilize local providers in various locations throughout the state who can serve as LAP-DHH specialists.

What is the assessment process?

After receiving written parent consent, a specialist from the LAP-DHH program will come to your school and/or the child's home to do the assessments in the child's preferred language(s). The LAP-DHH specialist will use various assessments and an interview process in collaboration with the child's teachers/educational team and family to complete the assessment. The time to complete the assessments can vary from one hour to several hours. The LAP-DHH specialist assigned to the child will contact the family and the school to schedule the assessment at a time that is the least disruptive to the child's education. The school and the family will receive a report describing the results. The assessments will occur annually.

What is our role in the assessment process?

At this time, you do not need to do anything. If a child is already enrolled in the program, a LAP-DHH specialist will contact the child's school to schedule an assessment. If you have students in your district who are not currently enrolled in LAP-DHH, you may pre-register them by completing this [pre-registration form](#).

What happens with the results?

Detailed assessment results will be shared with the child's family and educational team. Combined results of all deaf/hard of hearing children birth through eight will be shared with the Kansas State Legislature as required by the law. The most recent report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p952vuz> or at KSDeaf.org > Statewide Resources > Language Assessment Program.

Why are we being billed for this service, and how did KSD get the authority to bill for it?

In 2022, the Kansas Legislature passed the following proviso:

"Provided, That expenditures shall be made from the language assessment fee fund for operating expenditures to implement a fee-for-service model to fund the implementation of a language assessment program for children ages three through eight: Provided further, That the above agency [Kansas School for the Deaf] is hereby authorized to fix, charge and collect fees from unified school districts, special education cooperatives and interlocals to fund the operations of the language assessment program authorized pursuant to K.S.A. 75-5397e, and amendments thereto: And provided further, That all fees received for such programs shall be deposited in the state treasury in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 75-4215, and amendments thereto, and shall be credited to the language assessment fee fund: And provided further, That all expenditures from the language assessment fee fund shall be only for the operations of the language assessment program: And provided further, That expenditures from the language assessment fee fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, for such program shall not exceed \$493,157."

Why does it cost \$2,000?

The fee for LAP assessments includes the cost of salaries for LAP-DHH specialists (to include direct service hours, indirect service hours, and drive time), interpreters, assessment tools, mileage, per diem, lodging, technology, training, database, and administrative time. KSD is consistently looking for ways to lower the cost of the assessment process.

When will billing begin, and how will we be billed?

A letter will be sent to local superintendents and special education directors to inform them of any children who are currently enrolled in LAP-DHH within their district/coop. A LAP-DHH specialist will contact the child's school to schedule an assessment. An invoice will be submitted at the completion of the assessment process.

If you have further questions about the program, feel free to contact Angie Walker, LAP-DHH Coordinator at 913-343-0103 or awalker@kssdb.org.

The limits of my language are the limits of my world.

~Ludwig Wittgenstein

