Nevada Department of Education

Nevada Ready!

Advisory Committee on Language Development for Children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Visually Impaired

December 2020

*Prepared by the Advisory Committee
for Submission to the Nevada State Board of Education*

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INTRODUCTION

The Advisory Committee on Language Development for Children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Visually Impaired was established through Senate Bill 203. This Committee was tasked with the responsibility of recommending criteria, to the State Board of Education, for use by parents or guardians, to evaluate the development of language and literacy skills by children who are less than 6 years of age who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, including, without limitation, children who are both deaf and blind.

The Advisory Committee on Language Development for Children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Visually Impaired shall:

    1. Recommend to the State Board criteria for use by parents or guardians to evaluate the development of language and literacy skills by children who are less than 6 years of age and are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, including, without limitation, children who are both deaf and blind. The criteria must be:

    (a) Appropriate for use to evaluate the development of language and literacy skills by children who:

        (1) Communicate using primarily spoken or written English, with or without the use of visual supplements, or American Sign Language; or

        (2) Read using braille;

    (b) Described in terms used to describe the typical development of children, including, without limitation, children who do not have a disability, and according to the age of the child;

    (c) Aligned with the standards adopted pursuant to NRS 389.520 for English language arts and any standards adopted pursuant to that section for early childhood education; and

    (d) Aligned with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq., and any other federal law applicable to the assessment of the development of children with disabilities.

    2. Make recommendations to the State Board and, where appropriate, the Aging and Disability Services Division of the Department of Health and Human Services concerning:

    (a) The development of criteria pursuant to NRS 388.519;

    (b) The examination of children with disabilities pursuant to NRS 388.433; and

    (c) Ways to improve the assessment of language and literacy skills by children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, including, without limitation, children who are both deaf and blind.

(Added to NRS by 2019, 3936)

The Advisory Committee on Language Development for Children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Visually Impaired is comprised of 13 members who are the parents of pupils who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, including, without limitation, pupils who are both deaf and blind, specialize in teaching or providing services to such children or perform research in a field relating to such children. The Superintendent of Public Instruction makes appointments to the Committee. At their first meeting, the advisory committee elected Candace Emerson to serve as Chair. Additional members and the roles they represent are listed on the next page.

Jeff Beardsley	Individual who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Penni Echols	Parent of student who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Candace Emerson	Parent of student who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Maureen Fradianni	Individual who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Todd Gardner	Individual who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Robin Kinkaid	Parent of student who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Casey McCullough	Individual who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Nicole Paris	Individual who specializes in teaching or providing services to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Kelly Sapyta	Individual who specializes in teaching or providing services to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Franchesca Soriano	Individual who specializes in teaching or providing services to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Laura Thompson	Individual who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Aliceandrea Untalan	Parent of student who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
Sherlee Williams	Individual who specializes in teaching or providing services to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Will Jensen   Director, Office of Inclusive Education
Daina Loeffler   EPP, Office of Inclusive Education
Kim Boles   Secretary to the Advisory Committee

2020-2021 MEETINGS

During the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the advisory committee met on February 10, 2020, March 2, 2020, September 24, 2020, October 15, 2020, October 29, 2020, November 16, 2020, November 30, 2020, and December 7, 2020.

Advisory Committee Recommendations

Pursuant to the law, the criteria was required to be in terms used to describe the typical development of children, including without limitation, children who do not have a disability, and according to the age of the child. In addition to the criteria, the committee was tasked with making recommendations regarding the examination of children with disabilities and ways to improve the assessment of language and literacy* skills for these children. To this end the committee identified three responsibilities and adopted considerations and recommendations for each.

Responsibility #1:

Review and make recommendations relative to evaluation criteria and existing tools and/or assessments for parents or guardians to use to evaluate the development of language and literacy skills of children who are less than 6 years of age who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, including, without limitation, children who are both deaf and blind, who communicate using primarily spoken or written English, with or without the use of visual supplements, or American Sign Language; or read using braille

Considerations:

Committee members were asked to submit tools for consideration by the full committee. The committee considered tools with a variety of criteria including language assessments, comprehensive assessments, domain specific assessments, standardized norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced scales, skills checklist, screenings and curriculum-based assessment tools. The tools were divided into multiple categories, comprehensive tools, language specific tools, and domain specific tools. Tools listed under the comprehensive section are tools that assess various domains of child development. They have language components but are typically used to gauge progress toward multiple domains. Tools listed under language-specific tools are those that are only looking at some component of language. Tools listed under other domains access specific developmental domains.

The committee felt it was important to include tools that are readily accessible and appropriate to use by families and caregivers. Many of the tools considered require specific training and expertise to administer and interpret results. The suggested list of assessment tools is not exhaustive. The committee recommends that any assessment tool used should be culturally, individually, and developmentally appropriate for the child being assessed.

Furthermore, any method of assessment should be sensitive to and delivered in the child's and families' chosen mode of communication and most applicable to the child, based on parent report and professional insight. The whole child must be considered when assessing or screening them. Parents or guardians can do informal checks while considering formal results of assessments requiring professional administration.

Comprehensive
- Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS)
- Brigance Inventory of Early Development III *(accessible for students who are visually impaired)*
- Developmental Assessment of Young Children (DAYC)

- Teaching Strategies Gold *(also a curriculum-based assessment)*
- The Oregon Project for Preschool Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired
- Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI-2)

Language and Communication Specific Tools
- Stanford Achievement Test
- Verbal Behavior Milestones and Placement Program (VBMAPP)
- Boehm 3 – *(for children who are visually impaired from infancy to 5 years of age)*
- SKI-HI Language Development (LDS) Assessment of Language Skills *(for children who are deaf/hard of hearing from infancy to 5 years of age)*
- The Gesture Approach to Thoughts and Expression (G.A.T.E.) *(depending on the cognitive level of the child and if they have other deficits and look at non-verbal, gesture communication from 0 months to 36 months. It gives total communication age in months, which reflects the infant or child's non-verbal gestural communication level. It includes sign language, as the child gets older or more mature in their communication)*
- Callier-Azusa Scale *(It covers all areas of development, the original scale is called Scale "G" which can be obtained through the University of Texas, Callier Center for Communication Disorders. Scale "H" is a specific component that is based on the work of Dr. Jan van Dijk and is authored by Robert Stillman and Christy Battle. Specifically, a Communication Scale (Scale H) that looks at multi-challenged children with hearing loss and other conditions. Another multi-handicapped scale they have rarely utilized, is the CAROLINA which covers 5 areas of development)*
- Rossetti Infant Toddler Language Scale *(compares children with hearing and is used, but cautiously. For eligibility something called the DASI-2 is used)*
- Preschool Language Scales (PLS-5)
- Infant Scale of Communicative Intent (ISCI)
- Mean Length of Utterance (MLU)
- Receptive-Expressive Emergent Language Test (REEL)
- Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation (GFTA- 2)
- Communication and Symbolic Behavior Scale (CSBS)
- Birth-to-3 Checklist of Learning and Language Behavior (Tina Bangs)
- Clinical Assessment of Articulation and Phonology (CAAP)
- Early Functional Communication Profile
- Symbolic Play Scale Checklist (Westby, 1980)
- MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory: Words and Sentences

Motor
- Peabody Developmental Motor Scale (PDMS-2)
- Alberta Infant Motor Scale (AIMS)
- Infant/Toddler Sensory Infant Profile
- Gross Motor Function Measure (GMFM)
- Test of Infant Motor Performance
- Sensory Processing Measures

Social and Emotional/Measure of Behavior
- Infant Toddler Social Emotional Assessment (ITSEA)
- Brief Toddler Social Emotional Assessment (BITSEA)
- Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2)
- Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS-2)
- Pervasive Developmental Disorders Screening Test (PDDST-II)
- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS)
- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales
- Social Responsiveness Scale (*parent report from 2 ½ yrs. & up*)
- Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)
- Piccolo-Parent Interactions with Children Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (Piccolo)
- Social Emotional Assessment/Evaluation Measure (SEAM)

Vision
- Insite Developmental Checklist for Visually Impaired
- Individualized, Systematic Assessment of Visual Efficiency (ISAVE), which includes the Developmental Inventory of Visual Efficiency and Evaluating Cortical Visual Impairment Degrees of Cortical Visual Impairment by Christine Roman.
- Learning Media Assessment (LMA)
- Low Vision Observation Checklist
- The Callier-Azusa Scale
- Parents and Visually Impaired Infants (PAVII), which includes the Parent Assessment of Needs (PAN)
- The Oregon Project for Visually Impaired and Blind Preschool Children
- Teller Acuity Grading Scale
- Teller Contrast Sensitivity Scale
- Teaching Age-Appropriate Purposeful Skills (TAPS)
- Individual Sensory Learning Profile Interview
- Observational Assessment of Sensory Preferences
- Learning Styles Assessment by Tanni Anthony
- Developmentally Appropriate Learning Media Assessment by Irene Topor
- Functional Vision Development Charts (for multiple involved babies) from the Developmental Guidelines for Infants with Visual Impairment by Lueck, et al.
- LEA Symbols by Vision Associates

Hearing
- SKI-HI
- Learn to Talk around the clock

Recommendations:

1. The committee has identified numerous assessment tools but does not endorse any one tool. Rather, the committee suggests that providers in consultation with families use the instrument that will most accurately measure the child's strengths and skills.
2. The committee has listed comprehensive and skills specific tools because it is important to understand the global development of the child in relationship to language acquisition.
3. The committee recommends that providers, including school districts, Local Education Agency (LEA), and Part C (early intervention) representatives in Nevada should formally assess the language milestones of children in a manner that takes into consideration the child's strengths and abilities, aligned with age or peer expected skills, and early learning standards for the target population, regardless of communication mode.
4. The committee recommends the assessments be performed only by trained and licensed professionals for the specific instrument being used. The results of the assessment(s) must be accessible to families in a timely manner upon completion and in a format, which is easily understood by parents or guardians.
5. The committee recommends any method of assessment and/or evaluation should be sensitive to the child and family's mode of communication when feasible. Communication modes can include, but are not limited to, spoken or written English, the use of visual supplements, American Sign Language or braille.
6. The committee recommends culturally, individualized and developmentally appropriate evaluation methods that consider the whole child in the context of their home and community.
7. The committee recommends that items 1-6 above constitute evaluation criteria which should be utilized and considered when developing criteria by regulation for use by families, school employees holding the requisite license to work with the target population, and providers.
8. The committee recommends that the Nevada Department of Education produce a resource document that is easily accessible to parents or guardians, and providers to ensure that they are aware of the child's progress towards age-appropriate language and literacy milestones. The resource document should include the evaluation criteria and outline available tools to measure language skills and comprehensive skill development required for communication. Specifically, if milestones are not being met, there should be recommended steps to provide intervention and recommendations for services and programs to assist the child's development.
9. For the purpose of comparative data, the committee recommends that the Nevada Department of Education chose an assessment tool or battery from the list, to be used by both the Department of Health and Human Services (early intervention) and the Nevada Department of Education.

Responsibility #2:

Determine how often the tools and/or assessments reviewed should be used for children who are less than 6 years of age who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, including, without limitation, children who are both deaf and blind, who communicate using primarily spoken or written English, with or without the use of visual supplements, or American Sign Language; or read using braille

Considerations:

- Recommendations of the assessment developer is taken into consideration
- Qualify frequency as required by methodology of the assessment instrument, as needed by the student's progress or lack thereof, as is tolerated by the student
- The committee recognizes that year-round programs may be missed by the 6-month assessment schedule
- Align formative assessments with current testing standards and systems

Recommendations:

1. In an effort to improve the assessment of Language and Literacy, the committee recommends formative assessments no less than once every six months.
2. If a child is found to have delays in language and/or literacy development, the committee recommends the IFSP or IEP goals, as appropriate, are addressed to accelerate language and/or literacy acquisition. The expectation should exist for the child to make at least one year of progress in one year of time.

Responsibility #3:

Identify expressive and receptive language and literacy skills for children who have typical development, including, without limitation, children who do not have a disability, and according to the age of the child.

Considerations:

- Align with Early Learning Guidelines and standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and any standards adopted for Early Childhood Education.
- Align with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, will be held to the same academic ELA standards as their peers. The milestones for early language and literacy should include appropriate prelinguistic skills and adaptations for the use of American Sign Language, early braille reading, and other communication systems. Families should feel empowered by using the milestones and assessment data to show how their child communicates and the next steps in the process.

Recommendations:

1. The following Language Milestones are recommended by the committee for children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, including, without limitation, children who are both deaf and blind, who communicate using primarily spoken or written English, with or without the use of visual supplements, or American Sign Language; or read using braille.

Language Milestones**

The following language milestones are designed to help track language and literacy growth and are not meant to replace formal assessments. Parent observations of skills may be different than the results of formal assessments presented at the child's IFSP or IEP. Parents or guardians and providers should discuss whether the child is meeting each of these milestones and is making age-appropriate language and literacy growth. Any time the child is not making age-appropriate language and literacy growth, it is important that parents or guardians, and providers discuss what changes need to be made to the child's program and/or services, to help ensure the child is making progress.

The First Year
During the 1st year, a child may:

0-3 Months
- look around and is attentive to people's faces.
- smile when they see people's faces.
- show awareness of the environment.
- recognize and respond to a person's voice, movement or light.

4-6 Months
- begin to babble with hands and/or voice. May use babbling to get attention.

- copy movements involving arms, head, hands, and face.
- respond to changes in the tone of voice and/or changes in facial expressions.
- expresses feelings by cooing, gurgling, and crying when alone or when playing.
- looks or vocalizes when their name is signed or spoken.

7-12 Months
- points to self and to things.
- imitates and expresses their first words or signs, such as mine, more, milk, mommy, daddy.
- makes onomatopoeia (sound) words such as choo choo, swish, and buzz.
- babbles with inflection/facial expressions similar to adults and tries to imitate turn-taking conversation.
- demonstrates joint attention (e.g., parent and child look at the same object).
- can tell what different facial expressions mean.
- uses gesture or vocalizations to protest and express emotions.
- responds to a request (e.g., come here).
- understands words for common items (e.g., cup, shoe, juice) and family names.
- responds to the word, "no" most of the time.
- looks at people's faces and at the environment attentively.
- turns their head and looks in response to sounds or attention-getting behaviors (e.g., hand waving, lights on/off, foot stomping).
- has 1-3 signs and/or words by 12 months of age.

One-Two Years
Between the first and second year, a child may:

Expressive Language
- use exclamatory expressions (e.g., uh-oh, no-no).
- repeats the last word used by an adult.
- communicates wants and needs through single words.
- uses signed or spoken names to refer to self and others.
- begins to use pronouns (e.g., me, my, mine).
- begins to use two-word phrases (e.g., my milk, mommy shoe).
- asks to be read to.
- labels their own drawings/scribbles with 1-2 spoken words or signs.
- asks simple questions (e.g., what that?, where mommy?).
- takes 1-2 turns in a conversation.

Receptive Language
- recognizes their own name when it is spoken or signed.
- recognizes the names of family members when they are signed or spoken.
- understands simple commands (e.g., come here, give it to me, sit down).
- understands a few simple question forms (e.g. who, what, where, yes/no).
- points to at least 5 body parts on self or doll when asked.
- points to pictures named on a page.
- attends to and enjoys simple stores of rhymes.
- recognizes the first letter of their name.
- recognizes their favorite book by its cover.

- pretends to "read" books.
- begins to understand how books are used (e.g., turns several pages at a time, holds book right side up).

Vocabulary
- has a vocabulary of at least 50-100+ words, primarily labels for people, food, animals, toys, and action words. by the age of 2 years.
- has begun to use simple two spoken or signed word phrases (e.g., baby cry, more milk, my cup, no juice) by the age of 2 years.

Two-Three Years
Between the second and third year, a child may:

Expressive Language
- name objects/animals/people in pictures and in person when asked.
- sign or say their full name on request.
- count to 5.
- vocalize or sign for all needs.
- request help when needed.
- use commands with two steps (e.g., sit down - eat).
- relate experiences using short sentences with greater frequency over time.
- recite a few spoken or signed nursery rhymes.
- enjoy signed or spoken stories and imitate the actions/facial expressions of characters in the story.
- verbalize or sign prepositions (e.g., on, under).
- express emotions like happy, sad, mad with signs or spoken words.
- speak or sign in a way that is understood by family members and friends most of the time.
- use intelligible (clearly understood) words or signs about 80% of the time.
- use most basic sentence structures.
- use the sign or word "and."
- use singular/plural noun-verb agreement (e.g., boy walks, boys walk).
- use possessives (e.g., my, your).
- use past tense in sentences (e.g., mommy cooked, Susie ran).
- use over generalized words (e.g., calls all animals "puppy").
- answer questions with yes or no by 2 1/2 years of age.
- ask two-word questions.
- begin the "why" question stage.
- ask "who" questions.
- use pronouns (e.g., he, she, it), including personal pronouns (I, me, my, mine), and possessive pronouns (e.g., his, her).
- use number + noun (e.g., two doggie).
- use simple describing words (e.g., hot, cold, big, little).
- name at least three colors.
- use negatives (e.g., no, none, not, don't like, don't know, not-yet).

Receptive Language

- understand two stage commands (e.g., sit down and read the book).
- notice (e.g., points, gets excited) sights, sounds like the videophone or doorbell flashing/ringing.
- respond appropriately to a location phrase (e.g., in, on).
- begin to understand time phrases (e.g., yesterday, today).

Vocabulary
- has a vocabulary of 500+ words and/or signs by 3 years of age.

Three-Four Years
Between the third and fourth year, a child may:

Expressive Language
- communicate fluently, clearly, and is easily understood by family and familiar adults.
- answer questions logically. Use 4-5 word sentences.
- carry on simple conversations staying on topic through 3-4 turns.
- talk about things that have happened at school or with friends.
- discuss storybooks that are read to him or her.
- describe action in pictures.
- use possessives (e.g., mine, yours, his, hers).
- repeat a simple signed or spoken rhyme.
- make attempts to read and write.
- use classifiers to describe manner, place, direction, size, shape, degree, and intensity if using ASL.

Receptive Language
- understand most of what is communicated to them.
- understands "who?", "what?", "where?", "why?", and "how?" questions.
- carry out 2-4 simple unrelated successive commands (e.g., sit down and eat your lunch).
- give objects as requested by name.
- point to/or places objects on top/bottom, up/down by request.

Vocabulary
uses 1,500-1,600 words or signs by 4 years of age.

Four-Five Years of Age
Between the fourth and fifth year, a child may:

Expressive Language
- sign and/or speak clearly and fluently in an easy-to-understand manner.
- use long and detailed sentences.
- tell made-up stories that stay on topic. (ASL users, can use space in storytelling.)
- while using spoken language, most sounds are pronounced correctly, though he/she may have difficulty with "r", "v", and "th".
- use rhyming with words and/or signs.
- identify some written letters and numbers.

- use 4-8 word/sign sentences.
- use "has", "does", and "had".
- use "because...", "when...", "if...", and "so...", in clauses.
- use "these" and "those" uses "before" and "after".
- answer "why" and "how" questions.
- speak or sign with emotion and body language when describing an event or action.
- end conversations appropriately.
- ask "what" questions.
- ask "who" questions.
- ask "where" questions.
- asks "why" questions.
- ask "why do" questions.
- use past tense.
- use future tense.
- use conditional sentences, as in these sentences:
  - English (if...then...).
  - ASL (topicalized sentence).
- use the five ASL parameters of handshape, palm orientation, location, movement, and facial expression (e.g., button, cat, fox).
- use number distribution while using ASL, e.g., talking about leaves falling - FALL SINGULAR - One leaf falls; FALL PLURAL - Many leaves fall; FALL RANDOM - Leaves fall from time to time, here and there.
- repeat WH- word at beginning and end of question (e.g., WHERE GO WHERE?). This is called WH-bracketing in ASL.
- use the AGENT sign in ASL (e.g., FARM-ER; TEACH-ER).
- use topic continuation in ASL (holds a sign with one hand and continues signing with the other).
- use body shift and eye-gaze, while using ASL.

Receptive Language
- understand most of what is said or signed at home and in school.
- pay attention to short stories.
- enjoy stories and can understand simple questions.
- carry out four simple related commands in order.
- understand things that are similar (e.g., things that fly, things you eat, things you wear).
- understand time concepts (e.g., day/night) and seasons of the year.
- understand words that rhyme.
- point to/or places an object before, after, above, or below when asked.

Vocabulary
- use 2,500+ words and/or signs.
- begin to ask the meanings of words and signs.
- use describing words (e.g., hard, soft, yucky).
- put sequencing concepts together (smallest to largest; longest to shortest).
- name categories (e.g., pizza, hamburgers as food).

*Definitions:

The committee used the following definitions for the purpose of drafting criteria to evaluate the development of language and literacy skills of children who are less than 6 years of age who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired

Language:
A system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release.
Retrieved from: https://www.britannica.com/topic/language

Literacy:
All the activities involved in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and appreciating both spoken and written language.

Early Literacy Skills: Skills that begin to develop in the preschool years, such as alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, letter writing, print knowledge, and oral language.

Note: Early literacy skills are sometimes called "emergent," "precursor," "foundational," or "predictive" literacy skills to distinguish them from more conventional literacy skills, such as decoding, oral reading, fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and spelling.

Early Beginnings Early Literacy Knowledge and Instruction.
Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel.
National Institute for Literacy. Washington, DC
Retrieved from: https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPEarlyBeginnings09.pdf

**These Language Milestones are taken from the following resources:

- California Department of Education, SB210 Report
- Oregon Department of Education, HB3412 Report
- "Literacy Milestones Birth to Age 6" - Reading is Fundamental, The Literacy Advisory Board and the Multicultural Advisory Board
- "My Smart Hands" Laura Berg, Ph.D.
- "Language Development 0-5 Years" Ages and Stages Summary
- "How Does Your Child Hear and Talk" American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
- "Speech and Language Development Milestones" National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)
- Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) Curriculum Based Checklist
- Language Development: An Introduction, by Stephen Stahl Brookline Books, Brookline, MA
- "Language Development Timeline" Bradley E. White, copyright
- "Visual Communication and Sign Language Checklist" Simms, Baker, and Clark, copyright
- "SKI-HI Milestones 0-5 Years" HOPE, Inc.

Conclusion

Although impacted by the pandemic, the committee met numerous times and reviewed copious material, including task force reports from other states, in order to complete this document. The commitment of the membership to this effort transcended fulfilling its statutory functions and reflects the committee's strong dedication to improving results for children.

The membership intends that this report will result in lasting policies and procedures that will benefit all children in the target population. This strong commitment derives from the belief that the ability to understand language and communicate is a basic human need and right and is a vital component of each child's development and future success. It is the hope of the committee that this work helps prevent children from experiencing language and literacy deprivation and ensures that milestones are tracked, regardless of communication mode. If milestones are not met, intervention and supports will be available from parents, educators, and service providers, who have enhanced knowledge and training.

The membership looks forward to seeing how its work will be used to create a readily available, easily understood, written resource for parents and providers to ensure that they can track each child's progress and intervene, as necessary. It is also hoped that the data that will be available regarding the language and literacy development of children, in the target population, in comparison to their non-disabled peers, will promote analysis and the improvement of services and supports, as needed.

The committee wishes to thank the dedicated staff of the Nevada Department of Education for assistance and guidance in bringing this important work to completion. The committee hopes that this document provides information and recommendations that will benefit parents, educators, service providers and the community, to bring about improved knowledge and outcomes for children who are less than 6 years of age and are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, including, without limitation, children who are both deaf and blind, throughout Nevada.