

Early Intervention Studies (EIS)

at Gallaudet University



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Welcome New Program Director, Dr. Leah Geer!

We are thrilled to share that Dr. Leah Geer has officially joined our team as the new Program Director of the Early Intervention Studies (EIS) Program, effective June 2nd. Dr. Geer brings a wealth of experience in early intervention, language acquisition, and deaf education, and we are excited for the leadership, insight, and energy she will bring to the program.

As part of this transition, Dr. Geer will also become the faculty advisor for all current EIS students. This transition will take place over the summer, and students can expect to hear from Dr. Geer soon as she begins connecting individually.

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Moving forward, Dr. Geer will be the primary point of contact for any questions related to the EIS Program. That said, Dr. Thompson and I are still available as needed and will continue to support the program, please feel free to contact us anytime!

Please join us in warmly welcoming Dr. Geer to this role. We look forward to the many ways she will support our students, faculty, and broader community in advancing high-quality, equitable early intervention services for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families.

Welcome, Dr. Geer!

-written by Dr. Sarah Honigfeld
(6/18/25)

New 2025-2026 cohort

On May 31, June 1, and 2, 2025, thirteen of our newest Early Intervention Studies (EIS) students gathered on campus to launch the 2025-26 EIS Interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate and Master's Program. They kicked off their journey with the EIS700 course, instructed by Dr. Honigfeld and Dr. Geer.



Language Toolkit for Infants and Toddlers Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Empowering Families with Effective Strategies

By Rebecca Tucker, Early Intervention Studies Certificate Student
Presented at 2025 EHDI Annual Conference

Language development is crucial for young children's growth, particularly for infants and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Rebecca Tucker, an EIS Certificate student and lead D/HH Early Intervention Specialist in Georgia, recently presented a Language Toolkit at last spring's 2025 EHDI Annual Conference in Pittsburg, PA. This toolkit, as part of Rebecca's capstone project, was designed to empower families with effective strategies for fostering language development.

Rebecca consolidated various resources, including academic articles and best practice guidelines, to create a single toolkit containing 10 practical tips, that can be shared with families, agencies and specialists. These tips are designed to be parent-friendly and accessible, for any ages, using simple vocabulary that avoids bias toward any specific communication modality.

This toolkit outlines ten evidence-based strategies to create a language-rich environment and emphasizes the importance of daily interactions. By implementing these key strategies, families can play a pivotal role in enriching their child's language development, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Here are the 10 strategies included in the toolkit:

1. **Start Strong: Connect** with your child right away.
2. **Share the Focus: Joint Attention:** Engage with what captures your child's attention.
3. **Expose Rich Vocabulary:** Use descriptive and varied language.
4. **Express Naturally & Intentionally:** Communicate with purpose.
5. **Communicate with Expression:** Use gestures and facial expressions to enhance understanding.
6. **Prompt & Pull:** Encourage your child to engage and respond.
7. **Take Turns:** Foster conversation through back-and-forth exchanges.
8. **Expand & Add:** Build on your child's contributions to enrich language development.
9. **Read:** Share stories to promote literacy and language skills.
10. **Share Joy:** Celebrate interactions and language use to create a positive learning atmosphere.

For those interested in utilizing the [Language Toolkit](#) or for more information, please reach out to Rebecca at rebeccahestucker@gmail.com or rebecca.tucker@doe.k12.ga.us.



Upcoming Conference Date

What: 2026 EHDI Annual Conference

When: March 15-17, 2026

Where: Jacksonville, Florida



Abstract submissions deadlines: September 29, 2025
(for breakout sessions/posters).

Conference & Scholarship Opportunities



REGIONAL EARLY ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE



REAL South is committed to empowering families and professionals with the resources they need to support young D/HH children by offering scholarships for memberships, educational materials, and access to cutting-edge language and literacy tools.

EIS students from South & West regions may be eligible to apply for funds to attend conferences. Apply through QR code above.



2026 EHDI Annual Conference
Jacksonville, FL on March 15-17, 2026



2026 Language First Conference
Knoxville, TN on April 14-16, 2026

Research Study to Share

Parents and Caregivers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children can take part in a research study exploring how early language experiences impact later language skills in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Dr. Razi Zarchy, a doctoral candidate at Pacific University Oregon, is conducting this study for his dissertation.

This study is for them if they:

- Are a primary caregiver of a deaf or hard of hearing child aged 2 to 12 years, 11 months
- Are 18 years or older and live in the U.S.
- Are fluent in written English and either spoken English or American Sign Language
- Have good Internet access for a Zoom interview and survey

Participation involves completing a 10-minute survey and a 45-minute interview about their child's language milestones and experiences.

Visit bit.ly/LanguageProfileStudy or scan the QR code in the flyer.

Questions? Reach out to Razi Zarchy at razi.zarchy@pacificu.edu. Thank you!

**CALLING
PARENTS AND
CAREGIVERS
OF DEAF AND HARD OF
HEARING CHILDREN**

**to participate in a language
research study!**

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE IF YOU:

- Are at least 18 years old
- Live in the United States
- Are fluent in written English and either spoken English or ASL
- Have good Internet access
- Have a deaf or hard of hearing child aged 2 to 13 years old

WHAT IT INCLUDES:

- 10-minute survey on your child's language milestones
- Meet for a half-hour interview to build a profile of your child's early language experiences
- Get a PDF of the profile we build together!

All languages and communication modalities welcome!

Questions? Email Razi Zarchy at razi.zarchy@pacificu.edu

Take a brief survey to see if you qualify:

bit.ly/LanguageProfileStudy

Scan me

Pacific University Oregon

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Pacific University 058-25

Reminders!



Reminder: Upcoming Zoom Live Event on Deaf Education!

When it comes to deaf education, it's not about either/or—it's about the power of AND!

Join us on September 17, 2025, from 7-8 PM (ET) for an enlightening live event with Dr. Wyatt Hall.

This webinar explores the impact of embracing multiple approaches in deaf education. Across topics ranging from language use and instructional strategies to student performance and outcomes, we aim to demonstrate how “AND”—not “either/or”—better serves the diverse needs of deaf and hard of hearing learners.

📅 Wednesday, September 17, 2025

🕒 7-8 PM (ET)

💻 Zoom live event ([register](#) through QR)

✅ ASL/English interpreters & closed captioning provided



Support DHH Rising Stars Day with Gallaudet University Athletics Department!

Deaf and Hard of Hearing K-12th grade students and their families will be on campus on Saturday, September 20! Invite your local families to enjoy an afternoon filled with sports, fun, and community connection. They will watch our football and volleyball teams compete, then stay for a cookout. QR code for [registration](#).

📅 Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025
🕒 12 PM-6 PM (EST)

