



## Canadian Infant Hearing Task Force

### Groupe de travail canadien sur l'audition des nourrissons

#### **Position Statement on Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI): Canadian Infant Hearing Task Force (2016)**

Every year in Canada, more than a thousand children are born with a permanent hearing loss. There is evidence that children who receive timely diagnosis and intervention (screening by 1 month, diagnosis by 3 months and intervention by 6 months of age) have better communication, literacy and cognition than children with delayed diagnoses. Reducing the age of diagnosis, paired with early support for communication development, results in improved outcomes for the child and family.

Early hearing detection and intervention programs have become a standard of care in many countries, where screening for hearing loss is made available to all newborn babies. This is not the case in Canada, where many provinces and territories do not have sufficient programs in place. Recent reviews by the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) and the Canadian Infant Hearing Task Force identified gaps in many provinces and territories in hearing screening and follow-up services which limit access to timely and appropriate detection and intervention. The CPS lists Canada's lack of a nationwide program for early hearing detection and intervention as one of the top challenges facing Canada's youth.

It is time for all Canadians to have access to a well-integrated and culturally sensitive early hearing detection and intervention program. This must include a comprehensive range of services including screening; surveillance for late-onset hearing loss in childhood; diagnosis and intervention; access to assistive technologies; and support for communication development. Anything less leaves our children at a significant disadvantage.

This position statement was developed by the Canadian Infant Hearing Task Force, a collaboration of the Canadian Academy of Audiology (CAA) and Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC). For more information about the Canadian Infant Hearing Task Force, please visit [www.infanthearingcanada.ca](http://www.infanthearingcanada.ca)

*This position statement has been endorsed by:*



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