

# Florida's Model Communication Plan

Technical Assistance PowerPoint  
To be used by districts for internal training purposes

For Assistance or More Information, contact The Resource Materials  
and Technology Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
(RMTTC/DHH) [rmtcosbd.org](http://rmtcosbd.org)

# Regulatory Requirements

From IDEA 2004 Section 300.324:

- The IEP team must consider the communication needs of the child.
- In the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, the IEP team must consider:
  - The child's language and communication needs
  - Opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode
  - Academic level and full range of needs including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode

# Regulatory Requirements

From Florida Statute subsection (6) Section 1003.55:

- The Florida Department of Education shall develop a model communication plan, to be used in the development of a student's IEP. The developers of the communication plan shall include representatives from:
  - Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
  - Education Stakeholders
  - The Auditory Oral Community

# Regulatory Requirements

The Statute also requires FDOE to disseminate a Model Communication Plan to each school district & provide technical assistance

The Resource Materials and Technology Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RMTC/DHH) was identified as the project to provide Technical Assistance to all districts

For more information on available Technical Assistance, please visit their website at [rmtcosbd.org](http://rmtcosbd.org)

## What is the purpose of the Model Communication Plan for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Children?

- The Model Communication Plan (MCP) is a required component of the IEP process for students who have been identified as having the Deaf/Hard of Hearing exceptionality. This includes students who are Dual Sensory Impaired (deaf-blind).
- The MCP helps to gather all data to guide the IEP team discussion on supports and services needed in the areas of language, communication, reading, assistive technology, listening, and more.

# For whom does the Model Communication Plan need to be completed?

- If a student is in (or being staffed as) the Deaf or Hard of Hearing or Dual Sensory Impaired exceptionality, then a Model Communication Plan must be completed along with each IEP.
- Although it is not required, a Model Communication Plan could benefit an educational team serving
  - Students who have a hearing loss and have a 504 Plan
  - Students who have a hearing loss but did not qualify for the DHH exceptionality.

# Who completes the Model Communication Plan?

- The *entire* IEP team completes the Model Communication Plan prior to the IEP meeting. The document is not "owned" by one individual team member, but should be a collaborative work, just as is done with the IEP.
- Contributors may include:
  - Teachers: Teacher of the Deaf and other ESE Teachers
  - Related Services Professionals: SLP, Audiologist, School Psychologist
  - Professional Service Providers: Interpreters, Captionists
  - General Education Teachers
  - Interveners
  - Parents
  - Student

## Who completes the Model Communication Plan? (continued)

- A school may select one of the IEP team members to be the Model Communication Plan Lead. This person may be responsible for:
  - Ensuring all components of the MCP are completed
  - Identifying which team members need to complete specific sections
  - Ensuring all testing is completed and reports are collected
  - Facilitate discussion of the Model Communication Plan data and information during the IEP meeting



## Who completes the Model Communication Plan? (continued)

- Remember that parents and guardians are members of the IEP team and they should be active in the completion of the Model Communication Plan. They have valuable information on the student's present communication and language needs and levels.
- If a parent cannot attend a meeting, attempts should be made to obtain their input through telephone/videophone calls, written communication or home visits.

## When is the Model Communication Plan Completed?

- Most of the information needed to complete the Model Communication Plan should be collected and written *before* the IEP meeting, however, there are a some sections that may be done during the meeting, such as additional parent input, or when team members bring new data to the IEP meeting.

## When is the Model Communication Plan Completed? (continued)

- It is strongly recommended that the Model Communication Plan be discussed at the beginning of the meeting so that the team can consider the appropriate communication and language needs of the student.
- This documented information drives the development of the IEP each year, it is critical to discuss the student's communication needs early in the IEP process.

## How Often is the Model Communication Plan Completed? (continued)

- It is required that the Model Communication Plan is addressed at each IEP meeting for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing or dual-sensory impaired.
- If a student does not currently have a Model Communication Plan, one must be developed.
- If a student already has a Model Communication Plan, it must be reviewed, then updated with any new or changed information.

# How is Information from The Model Communication Plan Reflected in the IEP?

- Information from the Model Communication Plan should be incorporated throughout the IEP in sections such as:
  - Present Levels of Performance
  - Strengths
  - Needs
  - Specially Designed Instruction
  - Support Personnel
  - Related Services
  - Annual Goals and Benchmarks
  - Accommodation and Modifications

# The 5 Components of the Model Communication Plan

- Language and Communication Needs
- Accommodations and Assistive Technology
- Academic Level and Readiness to Engage in the Curriculum
- Opportunities for Direct Communication with Peers and Professional Personnel, Opportunities for Instruction in the Student's Language and Communication Modes
- Full Range of Needs

# Section I: Consider the Student's Language And Communication Needs

- The purpose of this section is to identify
  - The student's primary language (if there is one)
  - Their modes of communication
  - Their current language level or skill
  - Other factors that may impact their language development
  - How the family communicates with their child

## Section II: Considerations for Accommodations and Assistive Technology

### **Purpose:**

- In this section, discuss the student's auditory and visual access, current use of accommodations and/or AT to access the curriculum and to participate in classroom and school activities.
- Determine the accommodations and/or AT required to increase and maintain proficiency in meeting state standards.
- Determine if the student or the support staff need any training to ensure effectiveness.



## Section III: Consider Academic Level and Readiness to Engage in the Curriculum

Purpose: To identify any supports or services that are needed to increase proficiency in the student's language and communication to acquire grade-level academic skills and concepts.

# Section IV: Direct Communication

Purpose: To ensure that students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind have access to direct communication with peers and professional personnel and to opportunities for direct instruction.

## Section V: Considerations Regarding the Full Range of Needs

Purpose: To ensure students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Dual Sensory Impaired have access to all components of the educational process, both academic and non-academic, and that their full range of needs has been considered, including emotional, cultural, or other considerations.

# FAQ's

Frequently Asked Questions

# FAQ's

Q: What do we do if we identify a need for services or supports that our district currently does not have or cannot provide?

*A: Districts are responsible to hire qualified personnel to fulfill a need. Districts must immediately advertise to fulfill the position through a contract or district hire. Some districts share staff members through part-time contracts or by setting up a district-to-district contract.*

# FAQ's

Q: Can the Model Communication Plan be used with students who have a hearing loss who do not have an IEP, such as those with a 504 Plan or those whose hearing loss is not significant enough for them to qualify for the DHH program?

*A: Yes. Although it is not required that these students have a Model Communication Plan completed, it could be very helpful in gathering information and planning supports and services for these students as well.*



# FAQ's

Q: If we identify a need for staff to receive more training or support, what resources are available to offer them that training or support?

*A: There are many state discretionary projects that offer services, information and/or training free of charge. Some of the projects that could offer support to those who work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing include:*

- 1. The Resource Materials and Technology Center - Deaf Hard of Hearing (RMTC-DHH) is available to offer a variety of training and support to teachers, SLPs, interpreters, administrators, parents or anyone who works with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing child. They offer services such as in-service trainings, workshops, referrals, materials, 1-on-1 training, information, etc. ([rmtcosbd.org](http://rmtcosbd.org))*
- 2. The Educational Interpreter Project (EIP) offers training and support for Educational Interpreters ([interpreterproject.org](http://interpreterproject.org)).*
- 3. Outreach Services for the Blind/ Visually Impaired or Deaf/ Hard of Hearing (OSBD) offers support to parents (information, training) as well as direct services to students (speech-language evaluations, functional listening evaluations, etc). ([rmtcosbd.org](http://rmtcosbd.org))*
- 4. The MTSS AT-UDL Loan Library offers a free state-wide loaning system for a multitude of assistive technology devices. They offer information and support in use of these devices ([www.at-udl.net](http://www.at-udl.net)).*

# FAQ's

Q: Is the Model Communication Plan used for students whose primary disability is something other than DHH (such as InD)?

*A: Yes. The Model Communication Plan must be completed for ALL students who have an IEP that indicates that they have the DHH Exceptionality. DHH does not need to be their primary disability / exceptionality. They can be receiving services in any type of placement.*

# FAQ's

Q: Do we have to go back and create Model Communication Plans for DHH students who have already had their IEP meeting this school year?

*A: It depends on the date of the IEP. You do not need to go back and add in a Model Communication Plan for any students who have already had their IEP meeting prior to the adoption of the Board Rule on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014.. However, if they have had an IEP since that date, then yes, a Model Communication Plan must be developed.*

# FAQ's

Q: Where do we file the  
Model  
Communication Plan  
once it is completed?

*A: The completed Model*

*Communication Plan should be filed along with the IEP and distributed in the same fashion as the IEP and all IEP documents.*



# FAQ's

Q: Can a district create their own version of the Model Communication Plan, or must they use this exact document?

*A: Florida's Model Communication Plan for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students is a legal document and must be used as is. No changes or adaptations can be made. Two versions of the form are available, one is fillable.*

# FAQ's

Q: Do students with an  
IFSP need to also have  
a Model

Communication Plan?

*A: No. At this time there is no requirement for students who have an IFSP to have a Model Communication Plan, however, these types of questions and conversations would be beneficial to the IFSP team in planning supports and services. Sample Model Communication Plans for younger children can be found on RMTC's website.*

# FAQ's

Are educational interpreters employed by Florida public school districts required to have a specific certification or credential?

*A: No. Each school district determines the certification and credential level for the educational interpreters they hire as well as the pay ranges.*

# FAQ's

Where can I find more information on interpreting, interpreter qualifications, interpreter training, etc?

*A: Please visit the Technical Assistance Paper on Interpreting Services for Students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind, at: <http://info.fl DOE.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6578/dps-2012-103.pdf>*



# FAQ's

Is MCP required before  
every initial IEP  
meeting?

*A: Yes. A Model Communication  
Plan must be completed with  
EVERY IEP, even if it is the initial  
IEP meeting.*

# FAQ's

---

Is MCP required every  
3-year re-evaluation?

*A: The Model Communication Plan is not necessarily required as part of a 3-year re-evaluation, however, it is a required part of the IEP, and an IEP will be developed upon completion of the 3-year re-evaluation. Also, the information and data collected from the assessments that may be completed as part of a 3-year re-evaluation could provide valuable input into the Model Communication Plan. Best Practice would be to complete the Model Communication Plan during the 3-year re-evaluation process and then bring the completed Model Communication Plan to the IEP meeting.*

# FAQ's

Is a copy of the MCP  
provided to the parent?

*A: Yes. Just as the IEP and all IEP meeting documents are provided to the parent at the end of the IEP meeting - the Model Communication Plan should be included in the copies provided to the parents.*

# FAQ's

---

Is consent required for  
MCP?

*A: No. If the data, information, and assessments being done are for informational and progress monitoring purposes to inform the IEP, then no consent needs to be obtained. However, if evaluations and assessments need to be done, such as for a 3-year re-evaluation, to make placement decisions, or any formal decision beyond writing of the IEP, then consent will need to be obtained before these assessments can be done. Keep in mind, the consent is for the **assessments to be completed** - not a consent to complete a Model Communication Plan. If the parent does not give consent for assessments to be completed, the IEP team can still complete a Model Communication Plan with whatever information and data they have available to them.*



# FAQ's

What is a sign language interpreters role in the Model Communication Plan and IEP process?

*A: Related service providers, such as interpreters, interveners, or other individuals working with students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, are identified as members of the educational team and, therefore, share responsibility for completing the Model Communication Plan and implementing the student's IEP. Based on the IEP, the related service provider may be asked to assist with duties other than their primary duties, such as tutoring fostering socialization with others, as well as fostering independence. Related service providers may provide input based on their interaction with and observation of the student on a variety of nonacademic topics. These topics could include the mode of communication the student uses, the student's use of the interpreter or intervener, the student's attentiveness to the interpreter and understanding of the related service provider roles, reporting classroom challenges and modifications the interpreter makes to convey the content. **The related service providers, such as interpreters, interveners, and captionists, will be active participants during the IEP meeting. If the student or parents need an interpreter, a different person should provide the interpretation so that the related service providers can fully participate in the meeting.***

# FAQ's

If I provide materials to my student that are on his reading level, then aren't I providing him with a modified curriculum?

*A: No. As long as you are working towards the standards that are on his grade-level, then it doesn't matter how to provide him with that instruction. There are multiple means of representation that you could use to provide the same content.*

# FAQ's

Q: Who do we contact if we have ideas/suggestion for revisions to the Model Communication Plan?

*A: Suggestions should be submitted to Leanne Grillott, Program Specialist at the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS).*

*Leanne.grillot@fldoe.org*

# FAQ's

---

Who do we contact if we have questions or need assistance?

*A: There are a variety of sources to assist you in the Model Communication Plan process:*

- 1. The Florida Model Communication Plan Training & Technical Assistance Module (found on the [rmtcosbd.org](http://rmtcosbd.org) website) answers many questions and can be used as a reference.*
- 2. Your district may have selected someone to attend specialized training or be a main contact for Model Communication Plan implementation in your district. Speak to someone in the ESE office, such as the DHH or SLP Program Specialist, who may be able to answer your questions or point you in the right direction.*
- 3. The Resource Materials and Technology Center - Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RMTC-DHH) is available to answer questions, provide resources and offer training. Find more information on their website at [rmtcosbd.org](http://rmtcosbd.org).*