

COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

Adapted from the American Society for Deaf Children

Parents may use one or more of several modes to communicate with their child who is deaf or hard of hearing. Because every baby and every family is different, the decision about which way to communicate (modality) must be made carefully, based on your baby and family's needs. Any decision will require commitment from you and the professionals on your baby's team.

American Sign Language (ASL) ASL is a full, signed language with its own grammar, word order, and idioms. It is the primary language of many Deaf persons in the United States. It is associated with Deaf culture, which has customs, beliefs, and mores unique to itself. Schools where American Sign Language is the primary language of instruction generally subscribe to a **Bi-Lingual/Bi-Cultural** approach, where ASL and the Deaf community are seen as strengths. English is taught primarily through reading and writing and speech training is offered.

Contact Language Individuals who are learning a second language (such as hearing parents learning ASL) often follow the rules and patterns of their first language (such as spoken English). Contact language, sometimes called Pidgin Signed English, is the mode of communication that results from the "contact" between these two languages.

Cued Speech Cued Speech is a sound-based visual communication system which, in English, uses eight handshapes in four different locations ("cues") in combination with the natural mouth movements of speech, to make all the sounds of spoken language look different.

Oral This approach emphasizes the use of residual hearing and/or speech reading. Includes Oral/Aural, using hearing and speech reading and Auditory-Verbal (A-V), using only hearing. The use of sign language is not encouraged.

Manually Coded English These sign systems use signs from ASL along with invented signs to represent English word order and rules. These systems are not languages, but are a code meant to be used to support spoken English. Some examples are Seeing Essential English (SEE I) and Signing Exact English (SEEII).

Speechreading The skill of understanding spoken language through movements visible on the mouth, facial expression and body language, and contextual clues.

Sim-com See Total Communication

Total Communication In theory, this approach uses the diversity of ways in which persons who are deaf communicate: signing, speechreading, gesturing, use of residual hearing, etc. In practice this approach often appears as simultaneous communication, "sim-com", or signing and speaking at the same time. Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) may be used in some cases.

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For more information, please call 877-322-7299, press option 4# for Parent Links.

Parent Links is a program of the California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.

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