

Essential Links

Parent Links

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Facts about developing Communication

For hundreds of years, people have debated the best ways to communicate and educate deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Here are a few things that scientific and health professionals, educators, and experienced parents usually agree on:

- The earlier hearing levels are identified, the better chances a child has to acquire language, whether spoken or signed.
- Each child is unique. It is important to understand a child's hearing levels. It is also important to understand how each family member and caregiver will communicate with the child. Get to know the services that are provided in your community for children in preschool and elementary school.
- All children hearing, deaf or hard of hearing benefit from early exposure to sign language.
- Children with hearing loss are visual learners.
- Meeting and interacting with deaf and hard of hearing adults and children leads to a greater understanding and acceptance of their own child.
- Optimizing residual hearing may be advantageous. Children may benefit from amplification. This is a decision that you should discuss with your child's health care providers.
- Exploring the options and, if possible, working with professionals in teams can be beneficial. Your child may visit a pediatrician, an otolaryngologist, an audiologist, and/or a speech-language pathologist. Ask each to keep the others informed about your child's visits. Coordinated care can be a big help to you and your child.
- Connecting with parents and adults who can answer your questions is very beneficial.
- It is important to interact often with your deaf or hard-of-hearing infant by holding, facing, smiling, and responding to your infant from the very beginning. All of the caregivers in the child's life should keep interacting with him or her. Children need love, encouragement, and care from their families.

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