



Hope! Dream! Achieve

October, 2010

Standing at the Crossroads - *The ideas and theories of Kenneth Moses are the basis for this Essential Link.*

“You know more of a road by having traveled it than by all of the conjectures and descriptions in the world” William Hazlitt

As a parent you may encounter a variety of emotional responses as you struggle with issues relative to raising a deaf or hard of hearing child. Our journey is not easy. In the case of parenting a deaf or hard of hearing child it is the loss of a dream; the perception of what a child should be. At the time the hearing loss is identified and at various stages through the development of your child, parents are confronted with issues and respond with various emotions (guilt, anger, denial, anxiety, and depression). The experience is natural, it can be painful and, it is healthy.

The process is natural. Feelings and emotions are human responses. They are not right or wrong; they just are. The identification of hearing loss triggers emotions in parents that are natural in a situation that is new and uncharted. Prior to the identification of hearing loss, each parent subconsciously holds a road map of life for themselves and their children. At the time of diagnosis and at various points along the way, they find themselves on a road not listed on their map and they find no way to turn back. When this happens, it is natural to feel anxiety about choices which need to be made, anger at the map maker, guilt for possibly taking a wrong turn, fear of the unknown, and possibly a time spent denying that this could even be happening. To respond otherwise would be unnatural.

The process can be painful. A parent may feel out of control, unable to deal with this new set of circumstances, overwhelmed with sadness or anger. The intensity of emotions may be uncomfortable for those who are interacting with the parent. There is a tendency for others to want to alleviate the pain or at least diminish the intensity. To do so is to deny the parent their search for a new path.

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The process is healthy. Through this experience parents may reevaluate life. They often create new maps for themselves and their children by redefining their destination, asking directions, and finding new roads. Through the process they develop strengths and skills, discovering values that were previously unknown to them. Through the pain comes growth and purpose. Parents find themselves no longer at a crossroads with no place to turn but with a revised map and new roads to travel. The roads are not better or worse, just different.

Not only is this process natural, painful and healthy but it is also an individual process. Each person experiences it in their own way and in their own time. No one can or should do it for you, but

Parent Links can walk with you as you begin your journey.

Mapping out the destination is an ongoing task, but each detour is accomplished with a little less struggle than the first. Remind yourself of the skills, strengths and values you have found in yourself since you first stood at the crossroads. Grab the road map of life and take time to enjoy your wondrous child.

Available online in English/ Español at www.myparentlinks.com



What is a cochlear implant?

A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or severely hard-of-hearing. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin. An implant has the following parts:

- A microphone, which picks up sound from the environment.
- A speech processor, which selects and arranges sounds picked up by the microphone.
- A transmitter and receiver/stimulator, which receive signals from the speech processor and convert them into electric impulses.
- An electrode array, which is a group of electrodes that collects the impulses from the stimulator and sends them to different regions of the auditory nerve.

How does a cochlear implant work?

A cochlear implant is very different from a hearing aid. Hearing aids amplify sounds so they may be detected by damaged ears. Cochlear implants bypass damaged portions of the ear and directly stimulate the auditory nerve. Signals generated by the implant are sent by way of the auditory nerve to the brain, which recognizes the signals as sound. Hearing through a cochlear implant is different from normal hearing and takes time to learn or relearn. However, it allows many people to recognize warning signals, understand other sounds in the environment, and enjoy a conversation in person or by telephone. Read more at www.nidcd.nih.gov

Sign Language Cognitive Benefits for Deaf Babies and Children

▪ Sign language jumpstarts brain development

Sign language enhances brain development by establishing connections between auditory and visual input. Signing acts as catalyst for communication by jumpstarting areas of the brain that are linked to speech and language development.

▪ Sign language reduces frustration for the child

*A deaf child that can easily communicate a basic need such as wanting a favorite toy or needing a drink will be much happier.

*Signing bridges that communication gap and creates an emotionally secure social environment for your hearing-impaired child.

Read more at www.babies-and-sign-language.com



Parent Mentors

Parent mentors are parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. From hearing aids, cochlear implants, sign language and speech, we have been there. Have questions? Give us a call.

Exceptional Parents Unlimited

Darla Schwehr
Vicky Olea
4440 N. First Street
Fresno, CA 93726
559-229-2000 x 208

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