



February 2011

Hope! Dream! Achieve
www.myparentlinks.com



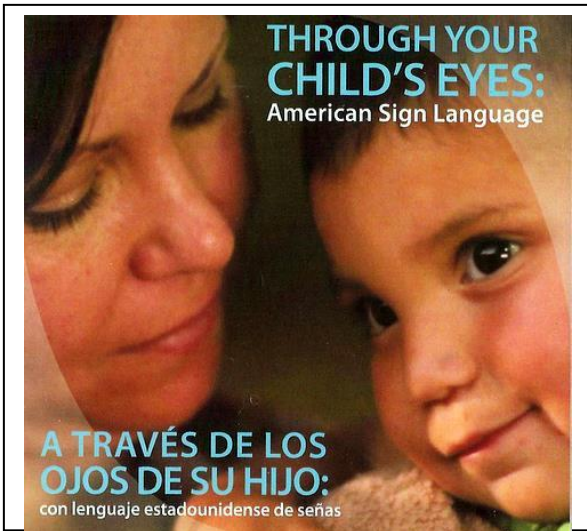
*Parent Links
Hope! Dream!
Achieve!*

Is a program of the California Department of Education funded by a federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau grant. The Parent Links name and materials are used with permission of the Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.

What CAN Your Child DO....

Your deaf child CAN make friends, go to the prom, be captain of the football team, be a boy scout, be a cheerleader, be Student Body President, graduate high school, go to college, become a lawyer, get married, be a teacher, raise a family; the possibilities are endless.

In many ways your deaf or hard of hearing child is like any other child. They will be excited by the waves at the beach, fascinated by a butterfly fluttering by, or disappointed when they can't play with their friends.



Sign Language...should my child learn?

Every parent is faced with this decision and they alone can decide. California State University Northridge and California Department of Education, has put together a 13 minute video presented in American Sign Language/ English / Spanish. This video presents American Sign Language (ASL) as a natural visual language with interviews from parents on how ASL has affected their lives.

To view the video please go to www.throughyourchildseyes.com

Hearing Devices: How do they work?

There are different amplification choices available depending on your child's hearing loss. Here are two examples.

Cochlear Implants:

(taken from website www.hearinglosseeducation.com)

How Do Cochlear Implants Work?



A cochlear implant works by using special electronic technologies to take the place of non-working parts in the inner ear. It's designed to mimic natural hearing

The cochlear implant system works like this:

1. Sound processor:

Sound is picked up by a tiny microphone sensitive to the direction from which sounds come. This lets it pick up more sounds from in front of the user and fewer from behind them. External sound processor captures sound and converts it into digital signals.

2. Digital signals:

The signals are sent across the skin to the internal implant. This is done with technology similar to the way a radio station broadcasts its signal, but on a much smaller scale.

3. Electrode array:

Internal implant converts signals into electrical energy, sending it to an electrode array inside the cochlea.

4. Hearing nerve: Electrodes stimulate the hearing nerve, bypassing damaged hair cells, and the brain perceives signals as sound.

How Do Hearing Aids Work?

(Taken from website www.hearthyhearing.com)

Today's digital hearing aids are miniature electronic devices that sit in or on the ear, and selectively amplify and process sounds. All hearing aids contain one or more microphones to pick up sound, an amplifier that amplifies and processes sound, a speaker (called a receiver) that sends the signal from the amplifier into your ear, and a power source (a battery). All these components are packaged into various styles to fit people's cosmetic needs and power requirements.

Digital Hearing Aid Sound Processing



Hearing aids today are digital, meaning incoming that signals are converted into a series of numbers, which is then processed using mathematical equations. Digital processing enables very complex manipulation of signals. For example, digital processing can help separate speech from noise. Many hearing aids today have more processing power than your desktop computer – gone are the days when hearing aids were simple amplifiers that only made all sounds louder.

Complex algorithms separate sound into different frequency regions and amplify each region selectively. This means that hearing aids are programmed to fit the wearer's hearing loss. It also means that they can be adjusted if the wearer's hearing loss gets worse over time, or if listening preferences change. This is done by a professional at a local hearing center.

The processing in hearing aids also enables different amounts of amplification for soft, moderate, and loud sounds. This means the wearer is able to hear softer sounds, without loud sounds being uncomfortably loud. Digital processing ensures a precise replication of the original signal with minimal distortion, resulting in better, clearer sound quality than ever before.

The Process of Acceptance to Celebration

T. Ronco - Hands and Voices, M. Bronson- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center, D. Schwehr- Parent Links



In the Beginning

After waiting nine months, dealing with morning sickness, swollen ankles, etc, your baby is finally here. Then the news come that your baby has a hearing loss.

Grieving Process

Grieving process...grieving for whom? That's a great question. This type of grieving process is different from the process one may experience after losing a loved one. This process is typically grieving for a dream that you have for your baby. Dreams born from your expectations of what your baby would be like, what your baby would become, and what parenthood would be. This is very normal. There is hope & celebration, but you'll probably need to go through a grieving process first. Keep in mind that it is not usual for your grieving process to look different another person's. You may even go through the stages faster in some area then in others or even revisit the stages as your child grows. Below are the stages of Grief model from Kubler-Ross.

Now the good stuff...

So, what do you need to know or look for in getting through the grieving process? You need to know that you are not alone. Other parents have gone through this. There is support of many kinds and information out there for you. Getting support is foundational to you coping and dealing with the new journey you are now on.

Coping Tips:

1. Meet other parents in your area or online. You are not alone. There are many parents that have gone through the same experiences that you are going through. Family Resource Centers, Parent Training and Information Centers, the California Schools for the Deaf, local school programs, Deaf Access Agencies are a great resource.
2. Ask lots of questions to Deaf adults, parents who have been there, teachers, doctors, audiologists etc. The more you know the less you will feel lost.
3. Find a role model for your child.
4. Learn about different opportunities in your community that can benefit your child.
5. You will receive a lot of suggestions from family, friends, and different professionals. Weigh each suggestion carefully. Will it work for your child and your family?
6. Keep focused on moving forward in your journey.
7. Remember...no decision needs to be forever. Evaluate your child's progress. Stick with what is working for your child and change what is not. The goal is to have appropriate language acquisition and developmental outcomes.

This guide is designed to help you. In its pages, you find how to identify support you'll need, contact information, and it give you leads on resources. In addition it will help start your education about this new journey.

*Again, we need emphasize that you are not alone.

A Quick Reminder

Love and value your baby for the wonder that he or she is. The days will not all be easy. The nights will not all be perfect. You can learn the right questions to ask, figure out with wisdom the answers and make informed decisions that best support your beautiful child.

Acceptance

Acceptance of your journey will begin when you have a plan on what to do and gain experience doing it. You'll see your baby for the whole child that he or she is. You'll be moving forward. You'll also start seeing possibilities again.

Can you back track within the grieving process? Yes, of course, that's normal, but you'll recognize it quicker and be quicker in reacting on how to cope with it.

Again, no decision plans need to be forever. Evaluate progress. Stick with what is working for your child and change what is not. The goal is to have the best language acquisition and development outcomes possible.

Celebration

Now we can get back to celebration, and the birth of a baby is a wonderful reason for celebration. After you gone through the processing, been on this journey and you have found your direction, you'll mostly realize that the dreams you had for your baby are still possible. And you'll have the beautiful gift of watching and helping your baby develop and be happy.

You get to this point step by step. There are no magic ways to do this. You must travel on this journey for benefit of your baby and yourself.





MOM to MOM

When a parent finds out that their child is deaf or hard of hearing, they often do not know what to do next. Of course the professionals direct them toward the early start programs, preschools, speech therapy, medical intervention and all of that is very important. But a professional cannot share in the parents experience as another parent can. Meeting another mom who also has a child can be very exciting. Another parent could be able to answer the questions and relay their own personal experiences.

The benefits of meeting other parents include:

- mutual support through contact with other parents of a deaf or hard of hearing child with similar condition
- sharing information which helps in caring for their child
- building confidence
- offers an opportunity to help other parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing

“Parents who frequently met with other parents of deaf and hard of hearing children reported less isolation, stronger emotional bonds with their child and greater acceptance for the child. Parents also emphasized the benefits of giving mutual practical help in coping with everyday challenges.” (Manfred Hintermair, 2000)

Offering support to parents is what Parent Links is all about. Each mentor is a parent of a deaf or hard of hearing child.

- Through email, phone and mail we are here to help answer the questions that parents may have about raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- Help parents find local connections.

Parent Mentoring in Spanish and English.

Just give us a call.

Parent Mentors

Exceptional Parents Unlimited

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

Counties

Alameda, Contra Costa
Fresno, Kings
Madera, Mariposa
Merced, Monterey
San Benito, San Francisco
San Joaquin, San Mateo
Santa Clara, Santa Cruz
Stanislaus, Tulare

Family Focus Resource & Empowerment Center

April Chauhan
Irma Sanchez
Cora Shahid
Kristal Molina
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330
818-677-6854 Office
Counties
Imperial, Inyo
Kern, Los Angeles
Mono, Orange
Riverside, San Bernardino
San Diego, San Luis Obispo
Santa Barbara, Ventura

Rowell Family Empowerment Center

Kat Lowrance
Barb Ciukowski
962 Maraglia Street
Redding, CA 96002
530-226-5129

Counties:

Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras
Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado,
Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen
Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa
Nevada, Placer, Plumas
Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra
Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma
Sutter, Tehama, Trinity
Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba

www.myparentlinks.com