



October, 2011

Hope! Dream! Achieve



Conner's Story

Excerpt taken from article Deafness – Stages of Acceptance
by Jamie Berke

The Beginning

My son's hearing impairment was identified through newborn screening; I had no idea they even screened for hearing. I had a perfectly normal delivery, and the baby seemed fine. I had had a fairly normal pregnancy, although I had had a virus (possibly flu) at six weeks, which had me concerned throughout the pregnancy that something might have gone wrong. My obstetrician told me not to worry the baby was probably just fine. But I still worried.

While in the hospital Conner's hearing was tested. The newborn screening was done when he was only one day old. On the morning of Conner's third day of life I was alone with him in the room waiting to be discharged. The pediatrician on call gave me the news. What he said was, "I don't want to sugarcoat it: he failed the hearing test three times." He then went on to tell me what steps take place (ABR test, etc.) would find out to what degree that loss was. At that point I started to cry. I wish that the doctor could have waited for a better time, at least until my husband was there to tell me. It was hard news to take alone.

Hearing Loss Confirmed

When Conner was one month old, we had the ABR test that confirmed his loss; the audiologist was amazingly compassionate. I remember being overwhelmed by wave after wave of new insight: "Oh My God, my baby can't hear! He can't hear me sing to him! If he can't hear, how will he learn to speak? How will I be able to communicate with him? How will he communicate with others?" It was both emotional and practical. I didn't know ANYONE with hearing loss, knew of no other children born hard of hearing or deaf, had no information to draw on. I cried every night for a month, mourning the loss of the child I had expected, and for what I thought he was missing.

Conner and Mommy Today

Conner is now almost two. I know a lot of people with varying degrees of hearing loss, am connected with tons of parents of HOH and deaf children, know much more about communication and speech and language. In two years, I have accumulated a wealth of information. But more importantly, I have watched my child: he is happy and healthy and sweet and inquisitive and so much fun. He is learning to communicate (painfully slowly, for me!), but he is very easy going and happy. I am truly no longer concerned that he will learn to communicate, that he will most likely speak and be understood, and that he will be very fortunate indeed if this is the only obstacle life hands him. Of course I wish he'd been born with his hearing intact. But he wasn't, and I can see even now that that is not a terrible thing.

***Parent Links
Hope! Dream!
Achieve!***

**Está aquí para
ayudarlos
La visión de
Parent Links
A través de la
relación
con mentores
apoyaremos e
informaremos a
las
familias para
que todos
los niños en
California
puedan acceder
lo más
tempranamente
posible
al desarrollo del
lenguaje y a la
comunicación.
Si se les
proporciona un
comienzo
apropiado a
estos niños,
crecerán
para convertirse
en
miembros
productivos e
independientes
de la
sociedad**

Connecting with Other Parents

Excerpt taken from A publication of the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, January 2011



When a parent gets the news that their baby is deaf or hard of hearing, it normally comes as a tremendous shock. They start to read everything they can about hearing loss. The information is helpful but often times, parents feel alone and unsure of themselves.

Connecting with other parents can help to bridge the gap. Attending a parent group in your area with others experiencing the same issues, same doctors or specialists, same schools can really make a difference.

Can a Parent to Parent Group Really Help Me?

Yes, it most likely can! While professionals can be very helpful to you and your child, you may feel like many parents do—wishing you could talk to another parent who has had similar experiences! When asked who is best able to support them emotionally, families often say their first choice is other parents who can share their experiences. There are many benefits to sharing with other parents. A lot of useful information can be exchanged.

For example, you might contact a Parent to Parent group if you want to:

- Talk to someone about the impact of disability on your family and friends
- Discuss the stress of dealing with multiple doctors, learning a whole new vocabulary, and dealing with the financial aspects of disability
- Find support and advice about special classes and services, talking to special educators about your child's difficulties, and trying to remain optimistic
- Find playmates and friends for your child who may not play the same way as other children or with the same kind of toys
- Learn about keeping your family happy and healthy while making major changes in your daily life and activities
- Learn how to have confidence in your own impressions and your own ideas for what your child needs and wants.



These are just some of the reasons that parents get in touch with a Parent to Parent group. Probably one of the most powerful reasons, though, is that the veteran parent is seen as a "reliable ally"—someone who can provide emotional support and information in especially meaningful ways because of the shared experiences. Many parents find it's very helpful to learn how other families have managed similar situations.

Parent Links is founded to empower parents of deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers by providing them with comprehensive information and awareness through mentoring, networking, and resources. No matter where a parent is located in California, another parent who has a child that is deaf or hard of hearing is only a phone call away. We can also help find a Parent to Parent group for you in your area.



Padres mentores son padres de niños sordos o con dificultad de audición, quienes por experiencia propia saben de audífonos, implantes coclear, lenguaje de señas. ¿Tiene preguntas? Llámenos

Exceptional Parents Unlimited

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

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