



Hope! Dream! Achieve

Newsletter

July, 2010

**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.

It's a BOY!

One Families Experience with Newborn Hearing Screening

Cora Shahid and Naseer Naseer– Proud Parents of Zain

On May 30th 2004 we were anxiously following the delivery, I heard my replied "A BOY!" Our entire family was full of excitement and joy and changes our entire family's life.

On the second day of my son's life a nurse walked into our hospital room, sat in a chair and told us that our baby had not passed the Newborn Hearing test. I asked how that could be? What does that mean? She assured me that this is common when a baby does not pass the test, typically when they come back for their follow up in 3 weeks they will pass so not to worry. The pediatrician who was caring for our son in the hospital also assured us that there could be fluid in the ears and not to worry. But how can two parents not worry about their newborn baby?

While we were waiting for our sons follow up appointment we had good days where we knew that the test was wrong and that the next test would show normal hearing, but we also had days where we were scared. We cried and worried about our sweet babies future. When we returned for his follow up hearing test he was 3 weeks old and the Nurse who administrated the hearing test was unable to give us any information other than we needed to follow up. She set up an appointment for us to have an ABR.

We were asked to not allow our son to nap before his test and to arrange his feedings so that he would eat and fall asleep for the test. During the test our son would occasionally fidget, so I thought to myself, Oh, Thank God, he hears the sounds so everything is ok. After 1 1/2 hours of testing the audiologist walked in and said, "We are done for today I have enough information. I can give you the results of the test." The audiologist gently informed us that our baby boy does indeed have a moderate to severe hearing loss. Although we had a few weeks to get used to the idea that our son may not hear we were still in shock. The audiologist showed us a photo of an ear and explained sensorinueral hearing loss, yet we still felt lost and wished that we had more information to take home in our hands. How many other families have heard this news? Where are they? Where do we get more information?

The first time I saw the hearing aids on my sons ears was the day I started to realize that this is really true and that our son does have a hearing loss. In the last five years, I have met so many incredible people that have supported me and gently guided me along the way. Although the first days and weeks of my son's life were emotional and wonderful, I am grateful that my son was identified at birth. I joined statewide parent organizations, national organizations, met families online, called the deaf community center in my area and attended monthly events for families with deaf children. I am grateful to all of the support that surrounds my family. With everyone's support, our son is age at or above age appropriate in all areas, including language.

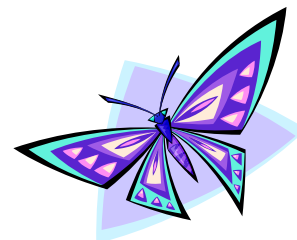
He plays on community soccer teams, he rides bikes, he has a ton of friends, he tells great jokes, he swims, he fights with his sister, he brings me flowers from our garden and he tells me he loves me every single day. Each and every step of the way is a new branch to the tree of raising a deaf or hard of hearing child and just like with life, you are never finished learning all there is to know about raising a happy, successful, independent deaf or hard of hearing child.

Our son, like your son/daughter, can do anything with your support. The sky truly is the limit for your child. Congratulations!

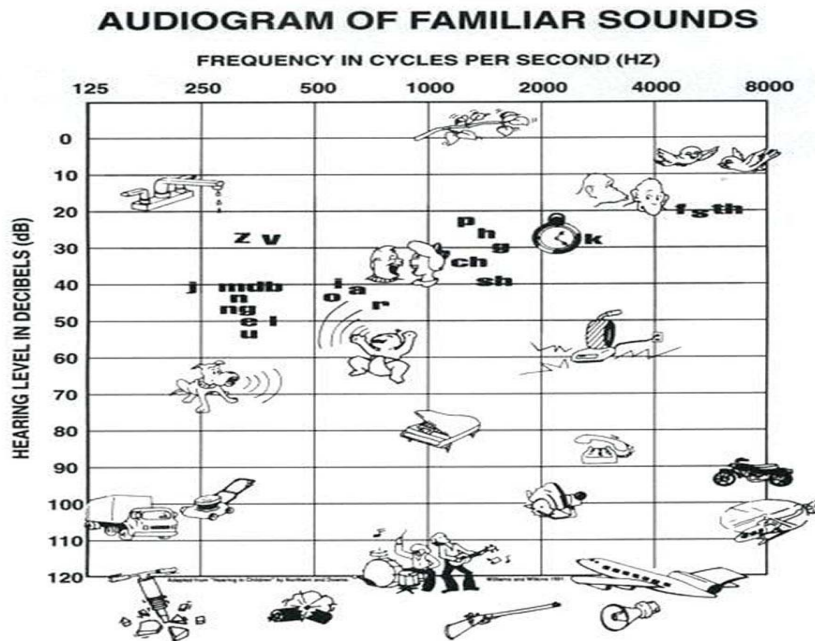
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Available online in English/ Español at www.myparentlinks.com



Understanding an audiogram can be difficult. Below is a version that make it a little easier.



Adapted from: "Hearing in Children" by Northern and Downs.

What is an IFSP?

Individualized Family Service Plan or **IFSP** is a written plan which is the framework for meeting the unique needs of a child and a family. This plan is developed at the IFSP meeting by a team which includes the parents/guardians, the service coordinator or anyone who has evaluated the child. Parents may also invite other family members, friends, advocates, or other supportive people.

Getting Started with Early Intervention Boys Town National Research Hospital

You live in a state that provides a public education program for children age 0 to 3 years through your Local Education Agency, LEA. In California, the early intervention program is called Early Start. A parent infant teacher will be assigned to come to your home and support your family in working with your baby. This professional has earned a deaf education credential and understands communication development.

All children learn from their environment. Babies absorb language, thinking skills, and social skills as they experience the world with their caretakers and others. Most children acquire these skills, especially language, effortlessly, because others are fluent in the language and use it all the time. Sometimes children are not able to acquire language easily and need teachers who use special methods.

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing can usually acquire language in the same way as hearing children, but they need a teacher and they need parents who can help them access the language environment.

Helping DHH children is often different than helping other children needing special education. Your infant/family specialist has special training to give you and your baby access to language. For example, they know about hearing aids and audiograms, and they can help parents turn their home into good visual environments. Infant/family specialists can recognize the cues our children give us about how to best communicate with them. And they can help parents meet deaf or hard of hearing adults, and involve these individuals in the children's development.

Infant/family specialists understand the unique needs of deaf or hard of hearing child. They are here through Early Start Programs to work WITH the family to ensure that the child's language, social, and cognitive growth develops according to plan!

What an Infant Family Specialist Does

- Work with you to identify priority needs for the child and family.
- Work with you to evaluate the child's strengths and current developmental skills. This information will be used to write an Individual Family Services Plan. This document is like a road map. It will guide you and the infant/family specialist as you go about learning and growing with the baby.
- Work closely with your family to address priority goals you have set for yourselves and your baby.
- Work with you to evaluate the progress you are making and to set new goals.
- Help you and your family communicate with your baby and support in evaluating how your child is responding. All children learn differently.

For complete article, please visit our website at www.parentlinks.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

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