

Raising a Deaf or Hard of Hearing Child



Hope! Dream! Achieve

November, 2010

The complexity of raising children who *can* hear, in meeting their social, psychological, and educational needs is a tough enough job for parents. When our babies are identified as deaf or hard of hearing, that job is made even more complex and, at times, overwhelming. Parents often experience a sense of loss, anger, guilt and confusion. As parents, we have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and understanding about our child. Often, we are unprepared for raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child. Our child is often times the first person we have ever met who is deaf or hard of hearing.

All too often, parents are preached to, lobbied, and pushed into decisions based on the philosophies of others, rather than being allowed to arrive at their own conclusions. The best decisions that parents make for their children are the ones that are the most informed. We must not deny the inherent ability in ourselves to know our children even in the midst of confronting and learning about something we've never had to face before-hearing loss. How does one sort through the information provided in books, articles, web sites, from professionals, family and friends, and from other sources to arrive at decisions that are right for your child and family? Here are some tips that may help.



Review each suggestion you receive carefully

Do you fully understand what is being recommended, or do you need further information? Do you know what the positives and the negatives are? Does it sound like something that will work for you and your family? Ask to see/read about the research that supports the recommendations you are given. Inquire as to the other options and who you can discuss that philosophy with.

Meet other Parents

All parents want what is best for their child. Meeting other parents and learning about their experiences can help you find out about opinions, options and resources. You want to parent effectively, and this can give you an opportunity to learn about "real life" strategies that work. Meeting other parents also can help you recognize that you are not the only one raising a child with hearing loss. For some parents acceptance of the hearing loss comes easily, while others may struggle with it for some time. For most, it is an ongoing process. Even before our children are born we have dreams and expectations for them. When we discover that they have a hearing loss, those dreams disappear and expectations may change. Fear often replaces the anticipation of all our child can accomplish, and many parents grieve over what they perceive can never be. In time, most parents come to realize that these dreams can still be accomplished, regardless of the hearing loss. One of the best ways for parents to realize this is by contact with other parents who have gone through this.

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

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Education
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Serving the
Deaf and Hard
of Hearing, Inc.**

No decision needs to be forever

Support what is working for your child and modify or eliminate what is not working. The goal should be optimum communication outcomes, not adhering to a particular ideology.



Finally . . .

Love and value your child for the wonder that s/ he is. The days will not all be easy. The nights will not all be serene. You can learn the right questions to ask, determine with wisdom the answers, and make informed decisions that best accommodate your child. It is so easy to look at all of the things we still need to do and forget to celebrate the joy that take place every day in the lives of our children and ourselves. Reaching the day when your infant makes eye contact with you, when your toddler wears the hearing aid for 30 minutes, imitates the sound you are making, being able to sign even a simple phrase to your child, when just one month ago those goals seemed impossible, is a success. It is a

common mistake to feel like you are never doing enough to help your child, and it is good to be reminded of how far you have actually come when you are going through a rough period. Raising a child with a hearing loss is an awesome responsibility but when a child is raised with a sense of knowledge, dignity and identity, we have done our jobs. Happy parenting!

resources



Looking for More Information about hearing loss? - Below is a list of online websites that are filled with just what you may be looking for.

California Department of EDUCATION

Assembly Bill 1836
The Deaf Child's Bill of Rights

A Historic Change

In September of 1994, Assembly Bill 1836, "The Deaf Child's Bill of Rights" was signed into law by then-Governor Pete Wilson. The bill was authored by Assemblymember Coloma Escabi, who later served as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (1999-2003). This historic legislation acknowledges the essential need for children who are deaf and hard of hearing to be educated in an environment that respects and uses their preferred mode of communication. AB 1836 was amended as Education Code 51000.03.

Key to the development and ultimate passage of AB 1836 was the Deaf Education Coalition (DEC). Six years of arduous work preceded the passage of this historic legislation. Approximately 25 organizations coalesced to become the DEC. These common goals were to significantly change the way education and related services were delivered to deaf and hard of hearing children.

What issues does AB 1836 address?

AB 1836 addresses some fundamental human issues -- the ability to communicate with others and the ability to have friends who can talk to you and listen to you. It is also important that deaf and hard of hearing students are educated with a sufficient number of other deaf and hard of hearing classmates to allow free, open and spontaneous communication.

AB 1836 does not provide one form of communication over another. There is a clear understanding that whatever the mode of communication being used is a deaf or hard of hearing child's must be respected.

This historic legislation acknowledges the importance of deaf and hard of hearing children being able to associate with others who are also deaf or hard of hearing and who are proficient in the language utilized by the student. That communication involves regular contact with other children, as well as with professionals, including teachers and other school personnel.

Deaf Child Bill of Rights (AB 1836)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/dh/ab1836.asp>

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my baby's hearing
Verbalize not required

what's NEW?

first STEPS

If you are reading this site for the first time, it may be because your child is due for a second hearing screening test or for follow-up hearing testing.

It is important to know that many babies need a repeat screening test. It does not necessarily mean your baby has a hearing loss. A newborn with normal hearing may fail the first screening due to debris in the ear canal, fluid in the middle ear or inactivity during the test.

Follow-up testing is very important. If your baby does have hearing loss, it is important to catch it early. Babies begin to develop speech and language in the earliest months of life. If babies know about a baby's hearing loss, much can be done to encourage communication development.

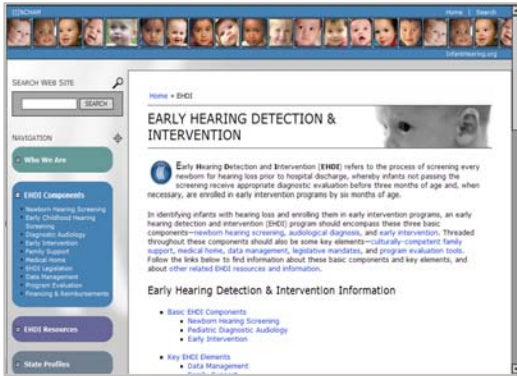
next steps
My baby has a hearing loss.

Resources for Professionals

My Babies Hearing

www.babyhearing.org

Babyhearing.org is brought to you by a team of professionals at Boys Town National Research Hospital. We are: Audiologists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Teachers of the Deaf, Geneticists, Doctors and Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. Have resources for parents and professionals in English and Spanish



NCHAM: Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI)

www.infanthearing.org

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) refer to the process of screening every newborn for hearing loss prior to hospital discharge.



What is the Best Program for My Deaf or Hard of Hearing Child?

Each child has a given set of strengths and weaknesses. Each child has individual needs based on their strengths and weaknesses.

Educational,

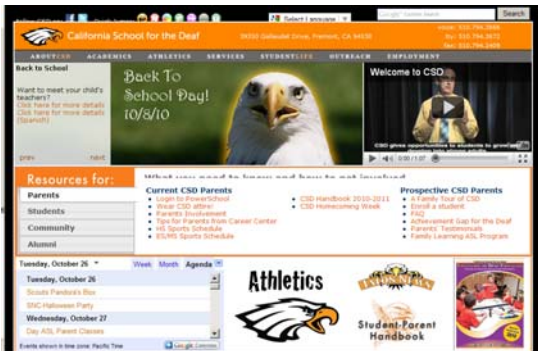
physical, social and emotional needs must be met in order for a child to grow. The program that meets an individual child's needs is the "best program".



Alexander Gram Bell Association For the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

www.nc.agbell.org

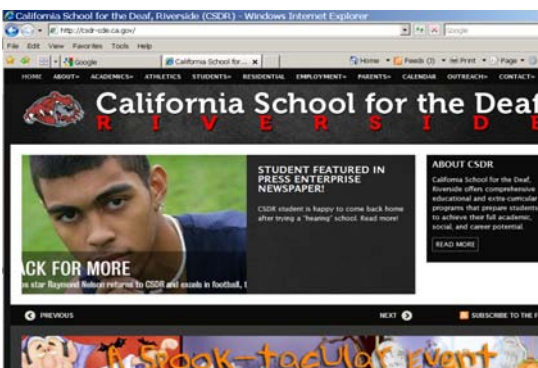
The Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing helps families, health care providers and education professionals understand childhood hearing loss and the importance of early diagnosis and intervention. Through advocacy, education, research and financial aid, AG Bell helps to ensure that every child and adult with hearing loss has the opportunity to listen, talk and thrive in mainstream society.



California School for the Deaf Fremont

<http://www.csdf.k12.ca.us/>

The California School for the Deaf, Fremont is a school for deaf children in Fremont, California. The school educates deaf children from all over Northern California birth to 22 years. Campus offers boarding facilities for out of town families free of charge.



California School for the Deaf Riverside

<http://csdr-cde.ca.gov/>

The California School for the Deaf, Riverside is a school for deaf children in Riverside, California. The school educates deaf children from all over Southern California birth to 22 years. Campus offers boarding facilities for out of town families free of charge.



"Sign Language is....

not just deaf and hard of hearing children who use sign language. Another large segment of sign language users is hearing nonverbal children who are nonverbal due to conditions such as down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, trauma, and brain disorders or speech disorders. For parents, sign language provides a means of quick communication, particularly for those whose attention spans may be very short or language very limited. Or it may be a tool for language development prior to developing spoken language. For children, it is a means of expressing themselves so that they are less frustrated." (Jamie Berke, 2009)



Refer To Parent Links

It is now possible to refer to Parent Links online or by fax. California Department of Education program consultant for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Nancy Grosz Sager will receive the referral and forward it to the Parent Links area representative.

Who can Refer: Anyone including parents and professionals. Forms available in English/ Español

How to Refer:

- Go to *Professionals and Parents Make a Referral* at www.myparentslinks.com
- Fill out the interactive form
- E-Mail back or print out form and fax

Did You Know....

December 1984, the cochlear implant was no longer deemed experimental and was given the stamp of FDA approval for implantation into adults. Throughout the nineties, other improvements were made in speech processors and other implant technology, particularly the miniaturization of the speech processor so that it could be incorporated into a BTE hearing aid-like device.

Today children as young as one year old can now receive a cochlear implant.





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

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

Barbara Matusky
April Chauhan
Irma Sanchez
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,
Humboldt, Lake
Lassen, Marin
Mendocino, Modoc
Napa, Nevada, Placer
Plumas, Sacramento,
Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou
Solano, Sonoma, Sutter,
Tehama, Trinity
Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba

