

TIPS FOR CREATING A DEAF/HARD OF HEARING FRIENDLY HOME ENVIRONMENT

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INTRODUCTION

- Roughly 2-3 out of every 1,000 babies in the US are born with hearing loss (NIDCD, 2016)
 - Over 90% of these families have NO familiarity with hearing loss nor how to provide support in the home
- Many challenging communication situations within the homes
- Hearing children learn language naturally
 - D/HH children don't have this luxury
 - Struggle from inadequate visual/auditory access to language
 - Miss out on most communications during typical family interactions
 - Frustration, isolation and inadequacy feelings

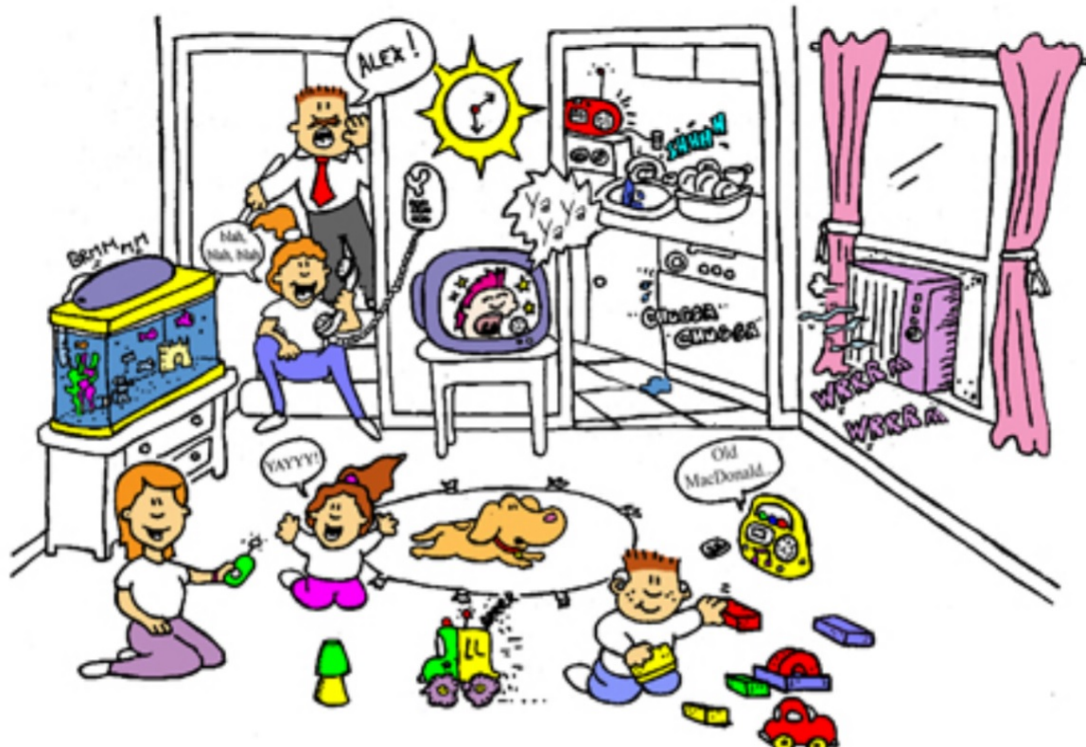
- **GOAL:** Help create a home environment conducive to D/HH children REGARDLESS of their communication mode
 - Increased language exposure
 - Bigger vocabulary growth
 - Inclusion
 - Positive family relationships
 - Independence
- Tips are NOT comprehensive but will help your awareness of the home surroundings to best support your child
- Explore lighting, accessible communication, incidental learning opportunities, ways to gain their attention, and fostering independence

LIGHTING CONSIDERATIONS

- Major impact on effective communication
- Bright windows, lights, or sun
 - Silhouette
 - Difficulty lipreading, seeing signs, facial expressions, gestures, body language
 - Dimly lit rooms
 - Big eye strain
- https://youtu.be/r_Xd4DPcmEA
- STRATEGIES:
 - Don't have the child facing the window
 - Move away from the light source
 - Close blinds/drapes if possible
 - Turn on all lights, add lamps if needed

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Why is this important?
 - Majority of language learning through communication and incidental learning
 - Multiple conversations and background noise a challenge for all
 - Easy to feel frustrated, lost, isolated, and fatigued



COMMUNICATION CONT'D

- How to improve communication at home
 - Reduce background noise or move away
 - <https://youtu.be/9GyZAaxiEMI>
 - Seating arrangements
 - Remove centerpieces/obstacles
 - Round/oval tables
 - L/U shaped couches
 - <https://youtu.be/Xfm-tbxCU9o>
 - Get child's visual attention
 - Get down to their level
 - Face them while communicating
 - <https://youtu.be/sNRNEJY81Yw>
 - <https://youtu.be/czPpjcdFjP4>
 - Check the lighting situation

COMMUNICATION CONT'D

- Visual access to signs, gestures, facial expressions at ALL times
 - Speak/sign one at a time
 - Make sure mouth/hands are not obstructed
 - Be as close to your child as possible
- Play time
 - If you hear something, explain
 - <https://youtu.be/qhT5hv22Ajl>
 - NEVER leave the room without telling them why
 - <https://youtu.be/jUZTnqXRTI8>
 - <https://youtu.be/fh2DKklkEOY>

COMMUNICATION CONT'D

- Storytime
 - Positioning
 - Remove/turn off/auditory/visual distractions
 - Make it a relatable and tangible experience
 - <https://youtu.be/VLVK-MBYR7I>
- Closed captions
 - On TV/tablet at ALL times!
 - Fosters inclusion, literacy, and language development
 - <https://youtu.be/jUaka5Om0vk>
- NEVER tell your child, “never mind”, “it’s not important”, “I’ll tell you later”.

INCIDENTAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Ability to overhear/see what's being said and learn from it
 - Big part of what happens at home
 - Important for vocabulary, concept development and world knowledge
 - Critical for social interactions, language, and slang
- Challenging for D/HH children
 - Reason why struggle at home/school/community
- Ways to increase incidental learning opportunities
 - Optimal seating arrangements for good visual access to all
 - Optimal lighting conditions
 - Communicate one at a time, help child see who is talking
 - Visual language support/access at ALL times
 - Reduce auditory/visual background clutter
 - FM, Mini Mic, Roger system if using amplification
 - Closed captions

INCIDENTAL LEARNING CONT'D



APPROPRIATE WAYS TO GET ATTENTION

- Can't always see/hear when someone is "calling" you
 - Wave hands/arms
 - Tap shoulder
 - Tap on table if at table
 - Stomp on floors – wood
 - Flash lights on/off
 - <https://youtu.be/5SGS2SlkEc0>

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE IN THE HOME

- Technology provides visual/tactile support
- Decreases dependence on parents/caregivers
- Devices
 - Door bell



DEVICES CONT'D

– Fire/smoke



DEVICES CONT'D

- Phone
- Alarm clock
 - <https://youtu.be/1ppraVEV0Zw>
- Baby cry alert
- Video phone
 - <https://youtu.be/X9eAkUNxIq8>
- Closed captions on TV/tablet

A FINAL WORD

- Tips are by no means comprehensive, but it's a good starting point for within the home and beyond
- Now that you're more mindful of your surroundings and how to promote open and accessible communication at all times, REGARDLESS of what communication mode you are using, you are well on your way to having a D/HH child who is an equal member of your family!
 - Allows for a more inclusive, language rich experience for all
- Seize every opportunity to communicate with your child in a natural, accessible, and enjoyable manner!
- Happy child = strong family dynamics!

Remember:

“Deafness is not about hearing; deafness
is about communication”

The Silent Garden

Paul Ogden



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