

Deaf Identity in a Nutshell

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Introduction

- Identity
- Deaf Children of Hearing Families (DoH)
- Deaf Children of Deaf Families (DoD)



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Argument

- Medical/Pathological view
- Focus on the hearing loss
- Perceived as disabled, deficit, problem, or medical condition
- Passing for hearing

Counterargument

- Sociocultural view
- Focus on language & culture
- Embrace differences, feel valued, function within hearing world
- Strong ties to one's identity



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We firmly believe that early visual language use and incorporating Deaf culture in hearing families foster a strong Deaf identity development.



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Reframing the Issue

- **Support counterargument → sociocultural perspective**
 - support solid, positive, healthy Deaf identity
 - most effective route
 - being Deaf is foundation of their identity
 - claimed by half a million American Deaf citizens
 - position as cultural, linguistic minority
 - view themselves as having a difference rather than a deficit



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Research Question

What components are necessary for Deaf individuals to establish a strong Deaf identity in today's society?

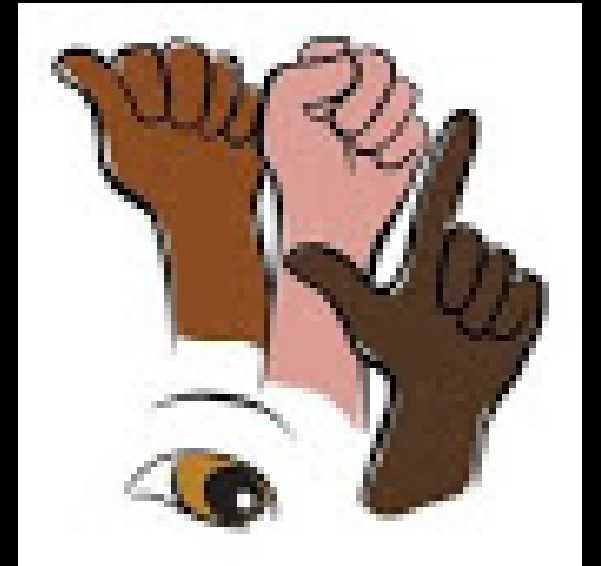


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Supporting Evidence #1: ASL in Development of Deaf Identity

- ASL as an accessible and visual language
- Effect of early language acquisition and the brain
- ASL and spoken language
- Importance of early access and exposure



Supporting Evidence #2:

Deaf Culture

- Culture
- Importance of incorporating Deaf Culture early in life
- Importance of cultural identity
 - Deafhood
 - Deaf Gain



Supporting Evidence #3: Social-Emotional Development

- Strong, positive Deaf identity
- Sense of belonging
- Self esteem and self-confidence
- Satisfaction and quality of life



Discussion

- Identity is an **important** part of human development
- Identity development is **strongly related** to social and cultural expectations
- **Secure, healthy**, Deaf identity includes **three** building blocks
- Journey to establish **strong, confident** Deaf identity must start **early**



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Implications

- Critical need for parents and educators to **understand** how Deaf identity emerges
- Important to understand how to **support** and **secure** positive Deaf identity development in Deaf children early in life
- Importance of resources, tools, and best practices



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Future Research

- Need to gain more insights from Deaf of Deaf Families who do not use ASL
- Need to understand how Deaf individuals identify and represent themselves



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Thank You!

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