



Early Intervention Needs and Services: What will it take for all students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Children to Enter Kindergarten with Age-Appropriate Skills?

Beth S. Benedict, Ph.D
Gallaudet University
American Society for Deaf Children

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What Do Families Have In Common?

- *Discovery of Having a Deaf Child Unexpected*
- *Impact of Having a Deaf Child Unknown*
- *Opportunities and Potential Unknown*
- *Education and Communication Unknown*
- *Resources Unknown*
- *Struggle with Communication & Technology*
- *Without Support ---Experience Stress*

First deaf person they met was...



A Look at Rural Families Weighting Educational Options (Wolfe, 2001)

- Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina & Tennessee
- Use of resources
 - Themselves
 - Families and friends
 - Medical Professionals
 - Did not mention educational professionals
- Three Parenting Styles
 - Trusting self
 - Trusting self/others
 - Trusting others

A Look at Rural Families Weighting Educational Options (Wolfe, 2001)

- Findings
 - Large % of families, limited to one educational placement option
 - Communication advice - both beneficial and biased or slanted toward a particular ideological opinion or philosophy
 - Families wanted to know all possible options, although not available in the area
 - Services were not easily found
 - Qualified teachers
 - Qualified interpreters
 - Inadequate service providers
 - Expectations of teachers
 - High turnover (30%-50%)
 - Not have specialized certification or training with deaf children
- Advantages in rural areas (special bonds, trust, close family ties, work with same students for few years)

A Look at Rural Families Weighting Educational Options (Wolfe, 2001)

Recommendations

- Research and explore all options
 - Internet to check for availability
 - Go outside the community
 - Visit programs of all kinds
 - Talk to a lot of people
- Be realistic
 - Change if not working
 - Ignore pride
- Become an advocate
 - Someone knows someone who knows someone
 - Call around
 - Assertive
- Practice patience
 - Keep in mind, being a parent is not easy



Family Involvement

- Age of enrollment and family involvement effects language outcomes; family involvement can buffer the effects of late enrollment (Moeller, 2000)
- Active parental involvement promotes strong reading and writing skills for deaf post-secondary students (Toscanp, McKee, and Lepoutre, 2002)
- Deaf Mentor Program promotes language, cognitive and social development (Watkins, Pittman, & Walden, 1998)
- Parent involvement as a predictor to language, & social emotional development (Calderon, 2000)
- Families want more involvement with schools (Benedict, 2003)

If families knew....

Early Intervention and Language Development

- Children enrolled in effective EI programs by 6 months have better outcomes in language, speech, social-emotional development (Yoshinaga-Itano, 2003)
- Families may feel less stressed when provided EI by 6 months or earlier (Pipp-Siegel, Sedley & Yoshinaga-Itano, 2002)
- Children enrolled in EI prior to 12 months have better language (Yoshinaga-Itano, et al; Moeller, 2000; Calderon, 2000)
- Critical age for language appears to be earlier than speech (Sedley & Yoshinaga-Itano, 2002)
- Sign Language can provide a “piggybank” to spoken English phonology (Yoshinaga-Itano & Menn, 2003)



Meaningful Differences

Hart & Risley (1995)

Low SES Family – 616 words/hour

Mid SES Family- 1,251 words/hour

Professional Family – 2,153 words/hour

Quality of Parenting Styles

- They just Talked
- Talking for Sociability
- Talking to Stay Involved
- They Added Information
- They Encouraged Commenting
- They Prompt for Elaboration
- They Give Choices
- They Give Choices as Reminders
- They Give Choices as Instruction
- They Tell Children About Things
- They Point out What is Important/Worth Remembering
- They Tell What to Expect/How to Cope
- They Pass Style on to Next Generation

Research

- Communication is not always “either/or”
- Decisions take time and may change over time
- No evidence that signs impede speech
- Evidence that signs facilitate language acquisition
- Better Language means better speech
- Focus must be language access and use – not form
- Language delays are difficult to overcome

Misinformation Passed on to Parents



- If children sign then they won't talk
- Children who are deaf cannot learn to talk
 - You have to choose signing or talking
- Depends on the extent of the hearing loss
 - All children should try speech first
 - ASL is not a “real” language
 - Children who speak don't need signs
- Children with cochlear implants should not sign



Messages Sent to Families

Communication Options

Hearing Loss

Intervention

Failed hearing test

Diagnosis

Fix the ear

Deafness

Hearing Impaired

Vocationally limited

Grief Process

Disability (cannot)

Technology

Communication Opportunities

Hearing Level

Involvement or Identification

Refer

Identification

Modify or coping

Deaf Beings or being deaf

Deaf or hard of hearing

Unlimited Opportunities

Journey

Cultural (adapt)

Visual and Audio Technology

What Can You Do?

- Be familiar with programs
 - Deaf Mentor Program
 - Shared Reading Program
- Organizations
- Educational Professionals
 - EHDI
 - JCIH
- Provide Information
 - Deaf Related Issues
 - Services
- Encourage Family Involvement
- Support continuous family communication
- Use of Visual Technology
- Connect with Other Parents
- Increased involvement of Deaf/HH adults/communities
- Improve training and resources for language and literacy development
- Partnership & Collaboration
 - Audiologists
 - Medical Professionals
- Training
 - Training, training, and training



Joint Committee on Infant Hearing

- Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and HH
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Audiology
- American Academy of Otolaryngology
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- Council on Education of the Deaf
- Directors of Speech and Hearing Programs in State Health and Welfare Agencies



Effective & Comprehensive Early Intervention for Deaf/HH Children and Families

- Early intervention (6-12 months)
- Trained and experienced providers
- Family-centered
- Extensive family support/social-emotional development
- Development of auditory skills, speech, language stimulation
- Sign language instruction for families
- Connections with Deaf communities/resources
 - » Yoshinaga-Itano (2003)