

M A N U A L

# Considerations for Teaching a Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing in the Mainstream Setting

Christine Roy, M.S. Ed

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## Part 1

### Introduction

Mainstreaming into a public school is a trend for many students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Most regular education teachers need more instruction on how to work with the student who is deaf or hard of hearing. This manual aims to inform these teachers, school administrators and others who work in the school system how to better serve students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Hearing loss is not an issue for the majority of students in a public school. The situation will be unique for each student who is deaf or hard of hearing, yet similar in that a hearing loss needs to be addressed. Technology has improved dramatically but a child with digital hearing aids or a cochlear implant does not have normal hearing. They still need accommodations. Some students and their parents may not know about the options available to a child with a hearing loss such as assistive listening devices, special schools and sign language. They may also be unaware of Deaf Culture and the potential benefits of meeting other students with a hearing loss.

I say this from experience, as I was a student mainstreamed from the 1980's and 1990's who only knew about mainstreaming. It is important to be aware of the myriad of choices available to a student with a hearing loss. Parents and students of today should be much more aware of their options.

I have been successfully mainstreamed. My hearing loss has been progressive during my school years. I did well academically and seemed to understand much of what was going on in school.

Nevertheless, my hearing loss gradually worsened, and I missed more than I realized. I continued to excel in my studies, and my good speech never showed the degree of my hearing loss. I have been legally deaf throughout most of my life.

The situation was not entirely ideal for me socially as I was the only student with a hearing loss in my school. It could have been a better situation. I hope through your understanding and work that you touch another student's life and make it much better and more inclusive than mine has ever been.

This might seem far-fetched if you have not had any experience with a student who is deaf or hard of hearing. I understand the challenges that

arise. However, I know that there is hope when a teacher has a greater understanding of the deaf or hard of hearing student's mainstream situation.

In Part 1 of this manual I include two case scenarios, one regarding a student who is hard of hearing and one regarding a student who is deaf. You will find these after the questions that follow.

Do you wonder how to approach the situation of having a student who is deaf or hard of hearing in your school or classroom and how to treat these students? Read on.

### **How should you perceive a student who is deaf or hard of hearing in your school?**

To make a general comparison it is best to treat the student as if he or she is from another country and whose native language is different from our English. In most cases it will seem as if this is the reality due to the student not always catching or understanding what you are saying the first time you say it. The student will need to adapt to his/her environment and learn how to socialize with others.

Time is needed to adjust to the unique situation these students bring with them. It may take a while to learn where these students are coming from and what their potential is. A child may be born with a hearing loss or may develop it later due to illness or trauma or sometimes, unknown causes. Ninety percent of children who are deaf have hearing parents. Communication will depend on the child's residual hearing (including the amplification used), lip reading skills and the child and family's knowledge of sign language. Students may have hearing aids or have had cochlear implant surgery. For some, these are very successful technologies; for others, results are variable. They may have been encouraged to lip read and speak or to use sign language, or both (Total Communication). Many times these students are from homes where parents and/or siblings do not have successful communication with them. Oftentimes these students arrive to school without language. This is frustrating not only for the student and family, but also for the teachers involved.

This is the likely case many times of young students who are deaf or hard of hearing. These students most likely will be in a special classroom (resource room, self-contained classroom or recently known as center program)

for most of the day. Some are mainstreamed for the specials such as gym and art or even for an academic subject such as social studies.

At any age, students may be mainstreamed into more academic subjects and specials. Some may even be fully mainstreamed and only have occasional visits from a hearing therapist, speech therapist and/or audiologist to make sure that they are succeeding. Usually the focus is on success in the academic subjects as well as how much they can hear and speak.

### **How do you welcome/introduce a student who is deaf or hard of hearing?**

Introduce the student as you would any other student. He or she does not want to be singled out and looked at as strange. Mention to others that the student has a hearing loss. Consider educating the other students about hearing loss. Using the student or the support person who is knowledgeable on the subject, it is important to explain how others can best converse with the student who is deaf or hard of hearing. (Some middle school and high school students may not be comfortable informing others about their hearing loss. You should discuss this with them first.) It is important that all the students in your classroom or school feel welcome.

The most important consideration for any situation is one's approach, namely, one's attitude. All children and adults want to be fully accepted human beings. This is what we need to remember. When we accept others just the way they are and give them the hope and encouragement they need, things usually turn out for the best.

Imagine if you approach a situation or student who is deaf or hard of hearing with the feeling of being stressed and overwhelmed. Imagine how the student sees you look at them. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing look to others for the encouragement and reassurance that they can do well in school and outside of school.

It is a long road for most of them especially if they are the only student in the school who is deaf or hard of hearing. They feel the loneliness of being the only one with a hearing loss. It may take a long time to build up the hope and encouragement that they need. When you show encouragement and believe in them, they will soon shine brightly!

### **How well will the student hear you and others?**

There may not be a simple answer to this question. Students with a profound hearing loss may hear very little or nothing at all. For other deaf or hard of hearing students, each person's hearing will be different depending on what frequencies they do or don't hear. This may also change over time because of a progressive loss or temporarily because of ear infections. An audiogram is a graph revealing an individual's hearing loss but two people with the same audiogram may function very differently. Many deaf people can hear some sound at some frequencies but not in the range typically used for speech. A person who is deaf or hard of hearing may or may not be able to speak clearly. Accordingly, it is wise not to make any initial assumptions about your student before getting to know them.

How well a student hears you and others depends on the degree of the student's hearing loss as well as the amplification the student has, not to mention the training they may or may not have had with their amplification. Experience in situations with or without noise can affect the student's success.

Room acoustics are important when considering how well a student is hearing. (An audiology booth is set to be an ideal room for hearing tests.) For example, a room with carpeting and curtains helps lessen the reverberation of noise. Less echo means more access to the sounds of words. The greater the degree of hearing loss, the less the student tends to hear without significant amplification, adjusted room acoustics and minimized background noise.

When I mention the word "hear," I mean it in the sense of perceiving sound. It is separate from understanding. One needs to hear first to understand. What happens when the capacity to hear sounds is not enough to understand sound? (What happens when understanding is the problem?)

This is the case many times with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. They can be given a device to help them hear, but it depends on their specific type of hearing loss (as well as the access to visual clues) on whether or not they understand. Read that again.

For example, I am deaf, but given hearing aids I can hear sounds. How much I can actually hear depends on having the hair cells available to

perceive and send sound information to my brain. I lack functional hair cells at certain frequencies and pitch. I cannot accurately predict what words or sounds I can actually hear. What I do know is that I can hear high frequencies and pitches best.

### **How well will the student understand what you are saying?**

Understanding has nothing to do with amplification although it does provide input when it comes to hearing sound, yet comprehension may not necessarily be improved. The degree of understanding is not predictable because it depends on the conduction of the sound, the functioning of the cochlea, and the brain's interpretation of the sound. Understanding also depends on the access to visual clues and the environment where the student is located. The language level of students will affect understanding as well.

If the student speech reads, it may help him or her to be more accurate in understanding. However, even the best speech reader will pick up about two-thirds of speech and it is very context and speaker dependent. Different words may look the same on the mouth such as "queen" and "white" or the sentence "Buy my pie."

No doctor or test can predict the potential to understand accurately in every particular circumstance. A specialized person such as an audiologist or teacher of the deaf can help you understand what the child's capabilities are. Do not expect to figure this out on your own.

### **How well will the student understand what is happening around him or her?**

This usually depends on environmental factors. Is there background noise? Is lighting sufficient? Where is the speaker in relation to the student? Is the student familiar with the speaker's voice or speaking pattern? Is the environment predictable? Is the student able to access the sound or voice source with his or her amplification or by being close to the speaker? Is there an interpreter present for the student who signs?

Background noise refers to any type of noise in an environment. A school has a lot of background noise during lunch, recess and group discussions in a classroom. Even an overhead projector or heater creates potential background noises.

I recall the school environment as being a tough place to focus on one sound source such as a peer talking to me. It was frustrating and sometimes when I would start to understand, I would be interrupted by some other background noise.

Background noise is unfortunately a constant reality. One cannot control easily the volume or the extent of background noises (unless, of course, a hearing device can adjust this). A successful hearing/listening environment is one where there is the least amount, and a low volume of background noise. (For example, a carpeted room with curtains. If the room isn't carpeted, tennis balls or felt can be put on the legs of chairs.)

For the student who wears a hearing aid or cochlear implant, background noise can be a significant obstacle to improved listening. If there is too much background noise, it may lessen the success of amplifying the desired sound source. An FM system includes a microphone for the teacher and a receiver (often wireless nowadays) for the student. An FM system can focus on the speaker and exclude background noise. Students using amplification should have an FM system for use in school.

Additional suggestions for improving reception of speech include the following:

- Seat student close to speaker
- Speak clearly at a normal pace without rushing
- Do not pace about the room
- Limit background noise

Lighting is something most of us do not think about when it comes to being able to understand someone, but for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing, lighting is a significant factor in understanding. Visual clues to a speaker's message and meaning are often looked for on the face and lip reading is enhanced when the lips are visible.

Sufficient light should be on the speaker's face. It is not necessary to have a spotlight on the speaker, but I bet it crossed your mind! Make sure there is good lighting where the speaker stands and not on the student. The speaker should not have light shining directly on them from behind as it can create a blinding light effect. If you need to comment about an overhead or a movie, consider doing that before you turn off the lights.

Along with sufficient lighting, consider the speaker's location in relation to the student who

is deaf or hard of hearing. The student needs access to visual clues and distance can impact the ability to hear. It is ideal to position all speakers in front of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Speakers should limit pacing around the room so that the student can speech read to receive visual and gestural clues about what is being said.

Seating everyone in a horseshoe or circle shape can help all students see who is speaking. I would be concerned whether or not seeing the speaker alone is sufficient. Hopefully the student who is deaf or hard of hearing is also wearing some kind of amplification and/or has an interpreter. I remember preferring that the teacher repeat what was being said so that I could at least have another attempt to get the message.

Visual clues are very important because the student will not understand everything from just hearing it alone. You can supplement what you are talking about with your gestures, facial expressions, pictures, writing, and demonstrations. The more visuals, the better!

A student who is deaf or hard of hearing will understand a familiar speaker much more easily and accurately than a stranger (and persons with an accent). It takes a while to become adjusted to lip reading a stranger and to become familiar with the voice and speaking pattern. Many of us are predictable in having our unique voice and set way of speaking. Some of us even repeat ourselves.

Predictability in the environment helps a student who is deaf or hard of hearing understand what is going on. Predictability helps in that there is less chance to be confronted by something unexpected and to be stumped. So, if there is a change in routine from the normal, such as a new subject or special events happening during the day, make sure the student who is deaf or hard of hearing is aware of the change. This can be done by approaching them and showing him or her a schedule of happenings on paper. It is better to make sure they know. When there are set patterns or a schedule, the student is able to keep up with his/her classmates.

If the student who is deaf or hard of hearing knows sign language, he or she may have an interpreter. Students who prefer lip reading may use an oral interpreter; someone who shows the student what was said by silently displaying what was spoken on his/her lips. The

interpreter's role is to facilitate communication, and he/she can significantly improve access to information for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

When a sign language or oral interpreter are not available resources to the student, technology to interpret the spoken word may be used. There are remote interpreting methods that involve the use of computers and web cams. Some students may prefer to use real time captioning by an on or off site provider (CART, C-PRINT or other newer technology). Also available are voice to text systems such as iCommunicator. What is chosen should match the desired intent.

### **What does the student use to hear and understand you?**

Most considerations noted for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing should be found in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP). You will find the type of amplification they are to wear as well as the other accommodations that are to be made.

Other accommodations include a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), more widely known as "TTY." This is a special phone that types out messages when the student may need to make a call home. Newer technologies have developed such as videophones and cellular phones that use relay services and text. Some of these have the capabilities of a TTY. We should be open to and aware of what is available.

A TTY or access to a video relay system on a computer or on another phone such as a videophone should be available in the school where the student attends. They should be given equal opportunity to call home when necessary just like the other students. What if there was an emergency and the student who is deaf or hard of hearing was the only one to make the call?

The use of closed captions or Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) on video is also a necessity. The student has a right to these accommodations. If video is not captioned, the use of an interpreter or providing script is helpful. In addition, schools should have alarm systems that have flashing lights as well as audio alarms in the classrooms, hall, and bathrooms.

The passing of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act started the call for accommodations to be made for those who are disabled in the educational setting. This includes those with hearing losses. Ignorance is no longer

an excuse for not considering accommodations. More and more people are noticing the students' rights and are standing up for them.

### **What if the student does not talk? How do I communicate with him or her?**

In this case there would most likely be a sign language interpreter with the student. One should converse with the student as if there is no interpreter with him or her. Eye contact, expressions and any other interaction should be equally shared between you and the student as with any of the students. The student will need to look at the interpreter to get your message. Continue eye contact despite the fact that the student is looking mainly at the interpreter.

During instruction follow the same steps as discussed earlier about having sufficient lighting, being close to the student, providing visuals, using the amplification that is worn, etc. In this case, the interpreter will voice for the student. It is easy to forget who is talking. Due to the student receiving communication from speech to sign, there is a lag time that calls for patience. Also, wait until the interpreter has finished signing before opening up the floor for questions or discussions so that the student who is deaf or hard of hearing can keep up and fully participate. Encourage students to speak one at a time.

### **Do I need to know sign language?**

No, you do not need to know sign language because an interpreter can translate your speech to sign (and not all students know sign language, yet some may choose to learn it). However, it would certainly be an asset to know it, and to integrate it into your own teaching style or to have more direct communication between you and the child who uses it. Your school or college may educate you. You could include someone who knows the language into the classroom such as a sign language interpreter, if one is not present already.

If your school has some teachers for the deaf or some interested interpreters, they may set up a class to instruct students. For example, some interpreters have taught students early in the morning before school. (I have taught basic sign language for a Sign Language Club at one school.)

Learning and/or teaching sign language can be a ton of fun depending on your attitude and dedication. The student who is deaf or hard of

hearing and signs will have a broader world of potential friends and understanding because of it.

This does not exclude other possibilities, as there may be other preferred methods of communication. Cued Speech may be used with students who are either familiar with or have the potential to be familiar with speech sounds. Briefly, this involves the use of a few hand shapes and positions that indicate the sounds of words to improve the accuracy of speech reading English. Oral education, another method, emphasizes using residual hearing, amplification and speech reading. Total Communication refers to the use of all means and methods of communication, i.e. lip reading, amplification and sign language.

### **What will the student who is deaf or hard of hearing have difficulty with academically?**

The student may have difficulty with understanding written and spoken language if they are not fluent in English. It is a challenge for the student who primarily uses sign language. (Remember the earlier analogy of the foreign student.)

The student who uses American Sign Language (ASL) has been exposed to a unique language with its own grammar and syntax. ASL cannot be written like the English language. These students would most likely be from the ten percent who are born and raised from parents who are Deaf (of Deaf Culture). Students may also use a more English sign system instead of ASL. (This sign language system is not a true language, but includes the language of ASL and English.) They arrive to school with this first language with English being the second language. Whether or not they use ASL, another sign system, speech with sign or speech alone depends on the parents' language and philosophy. These students must become bilingual to succeed academically.

Many students who are deaf or hard of hearing arrive to school without a full language. Parents and siblings may not know how to communicate with the student nor are many willing to learn how to communicate especially when the student needs to use a visual language. (If children and families have had access to early intervention services this is less likely to occur.) It is much harder for students to learn a language written or spoken if there is no experience with a primary language. Therefore, exposure to a

language system at the time the hearing loss is identified is crucial.

If the student has a primary language, it is recommended that this language be used when communicating with the student. Research reveals that Deaf students whose primary language is American Sign Language (“Deaf students” are students who are raised by Deaf parents who are from Deaf Culture and use ASL) do better with the acquisition of English than those without access to a full language. (We can infer this to be the same situation if the student uses another sign system.)

As sign language tends to depend on visual input only, many people who are deaf or hard of hearing report it to be a natural and easy way to communicate (with preference to ASL). Therefore, the use of sign language with a student with no prior first language should not hinder the child from accessing the English language when the child is ready to begin to understand it. It is a challenge for everyone involved when the child is to learn two languages at the same time, as is the case when the child arrives to school without a language. It is more difficult to learn English through the sense of hearing alone. It would obviously be easier for the child with a mild hearing loss. When given powerful hearing aids or cochlear implants, English, as a first language may be possible for the child with a more severe hearing loss. Parents are ultimately the key persons in deciding what language the student will have access to at home and when they are attending school.

Overhearing conversation or being able to listen to the television while talking with a friend are not likely options for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Experience in both spoken and written language is usually lacking. Once in school, students learn the need and importance of both and how to use it.

Incidental learning, defined as knowledge, vocabulary and language that hearing children pick up just by overhearing language in their environment is lacking in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. For this reason, students with hearing loss have gaps in their knowledge. Johnson (2005) in the Hands & Voices Website states:

All children need full access to all communication in their homes, community, and special settings. For

young children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), this need is magnified by the “Swiss cheese” effect that emanates from their hearing loss. That is, without careful planning, children at best hear/see bits and pieces of words and phrases; at worst, they hear/see very little that is meaningful to them. As a result of these inconsistencies, their receptive and expressive language may be full of holes, like Swiss cheese. Since young children’s language skills are not fully developed, they are unable to fill in words and other information that is not heard/seen, missed or are left out. Thus, targeted and purposeful intervention is required to provide experiences that build language and a knowledge foundation (§ 1).

Spoken and written English is the primary communication means in the mainstream school setting. This is a huge factor in learning in all subjects. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing are definitely affected and usually delayed.

A child with a hearing loss may be very bright or have learning challenges. It is important to realize that a hearing loss does not correlate with lower intelligence. Be open to having high expectations for your student that can be adjusted as needed for your student’s capabilities.

Refer to the student’s IEP for more precise detail on what level the student has achieved in each subject. Any challenge that far exceeds what they are capable of will not be a goal. A challenge that helps them succeed in using what they know in addition to what they are ready to learn should be encouraged.

### **How can we accommodate the student socially?**

One of the most overlooked aspects of the needs of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing is whether or not the student is able to effectively socialize with his or her peers. It seems that most of us leave it up to the student to figure out a way.

The reality is that without others the student is isolated and chances for socialization are not successful. Oftentimes, the student who is deaf or hard of hearing is vulnerable to bullying. I remember the awkwardness of my social

experiences and know they affect one in a profound way.

The student may be happy in their current environment especially if they have friends like themselves with a hearing loss. It is recommended that the student be paired with others like him or herself or with those that are sensitive to the needs of the student.

There are a few options available to help with teaching and enhancing the student's social skills such as socials at school, church or at an organization. It would be more beneficial if the student has peers similar to him or herself and can attend socials involving these people.

In addition, the student will benefit from mentors who are also deaf or hard of hearing. They can assist the student academically and socially and be positive role models. Mentors should be a part of the school team in advising staff on the needs of the student.

There are social skills programs or strategies that can be used for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Most teachers are unaware of these and therefore do not use any in their instruction. It is a good idea to incorporate social skills learning in the classroom. Therefore, some examples are included below:

- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) Curriculum by Mark Greenberg at Penn State University for elementary age students:  
<http://wch.uhs.wisc.edu/13-Eval/Tools/Resources/Model%20Programs/PATHS.pdf>
- English, K. (1997). Self-advocacy for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Austin TX: Pro-Ed.
- Watson, D., Schroedel, J.G., Kolvitz, M., Decaro, J., & Kavin, D. (Eds.). (2007). Hard of hearing students in postsecondary settings: A guide for service providers. Knoxville, TN: University Of Tennessee, College Of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, Center On Deafness:  
[http://www.pen.ntid.rit.edu/resources/documents/other/PEPNet\\_Resource\\_2007.php?lang=en](http://www.pen.ntid.rit.edu/resources/documents/other/PEPNet_Resource_2007.php?lang=en)

Other programs and strategies are being developed and are rather new. Some have limited or no literature to refer to, for example, teaching students behavior management skills. One needs to attend workshops on topics and/or ask the speaker for information.

### **What can we do to help make the student feel more included in our school/classroom?**

When the teacher is awkward and hesitant with the student (and/or the interpreter), the whole class is as well. It may take some work at being confident and comfortable for some teachers, but is worth the effort. The way the teacher approaches the student affects how other students, teachers, and administrators perceive the student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Teachers can set a good example and encourage the social acceptance of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Remember a student who is deaf or hard of hearing is a student who wants to fit in and be like everyone else. Have high expectations while you remain familiar with any specified "special" treatments as stated in the student's IEP. Learn what works in communicating effectively with the student (being close to the student, speaking clearly, showing your face to the student when speaking, lighting, amplification, etc.). You can learn what to do by observing the student first and then talking with the professionals that are working with the student as well as the parents.

One must get to know the student who is deaf or hard of hearing and learn what his/her capabilities are while being careful not to falsely prejudice them. This includes talking with professionals and the student's parents. The next question will address this.

### **What professionals does the student meet with?**

The student will meet with professionals during the course of the school day according to need and requirement. These professionals may include a teacher for the deaf, hearing therapist, audiologist, speech therapist, interpreter, notetaker, as well as others who work with the student. Some students may meet with professionals outside of school as well.

All professionals the student meets with are mentioned in the student's IEP. The names of the professionals can also be found. (The

frequency of the service will also be noted.) Getting to know these professionals and how they work with the student and how they can assist you is a great asset in making everyone's job a little easier.

Last, but not of least importance are the parents of the student. Professionals who work with the student consult with the parents to enhance the success of their services. Parents are influential when it comes to what they want for their child, and what is actually done. Unfortunately, from time to time parents are wrong, misinformed, or simply ignorant of what is needed and available for their child.

Professionals should be sure to keep parents in the loop with current developments and the recommendations suggested for the student. Collaboration and a team approach to the needs of the student are very important.

*Following are two case scenarios, the first involving a student who is hard of hearing and the second involving a student who is deaf. Unique to their hearing losses, both students' situations have similarities and differences in approach. One can infer from these scenarios how to assist others who are similar.*

### **Case Scenario 1**

Sarah is labeled hard of hearing. (Anyone who is hard of hearing can have a loss ranging from mild to profound.)

Sarah's speech is intelligible. Anyone can understand what she is saying, and if she has trouble pronouncing a word, she can learn it. Sarah can lip read well and usually understands what is going on. She misses out on details, but seems to do all right academically.

Sarah struggles socially. She seems more quiet and unsure of herself compared to the other students. When she tries to get involved, it is frustrating for her to follow along with the other students. She does not know how to explain her hearing loss or what to say about it except to say that she does not understand her peers.

Many of Sarah's peers do not know how to interact with her successfully, so they do not bother her if they do not have to. They tend to think that Sarah is just shy and are often unaware that she has a hearing loss. (Sarah only tells a select few that she has a hearing loss.) It is frustrating for Sarah's peers to communicate with her and therefore involve her in what they

are doing. They have never been educated about hearing loss.

Sarah is fully mainstreamed. No one else who has a hearing loss is in her school. She has occasional visits by an itinerant teacher for the deaf. He assists her with any academic problems as a result of her hearing loss. He will help her figure out new words that she encounters through pronunciation and through hearing it alone (he covers his mouth while saying the word) and by discussing its meaning and usage.

Recognizing words through hearing it alone is not always successful for Sarah, but it helps in guessing the word better. It is ideal that Sarah has access to sound than none at all. Sarah wears her hearing aids because the FM system she used to wear made her feel more singled out. She only heard the teacher during instruction time and missed out on being able to hear the other sounds in the environment such as her peers talking. Most of all, she felt too different with it even though it helps her a lot more than her hearing aids will. Sarah has everyone convinced that she does fine without the FM system and is happy without it.

Sarah is a very dedicated student and her grades reflect this. She is responsible for her own notes and assignments. Quizzes and tests are given to her no different than anyone else, as her IEP does not state that any testing adjustments be made. It is a challenge for her, but she does not seem to mind it. Most of her time is spent on schoolwork and less on socializing, as this is uncomfortable to her.

If Sarah has trouble understanding an assignment in class or the homework outside of class, she asks the teacher and/or her family for clarification. She is not afraid to ask questions because if she did not she would not do well in the class. Sarah focuses more on what she can succeed at which is her academic work.

Sarah informs each teacher that she is hard of hearing and reads lips. She knows that a front seat near the teacher's preferred speaking location is where she should be. Most teachers remember to paraphrase what the other students say because not all the students are near Sarah. Sarah does not ask for more since she thinks the teacher already knows what to do for her.

An ideal situation for Sarah is instruction in a well-lit room preferably with curtains and carpet (for sound absorption). Since and when a student who is hard of hearing relies on using what they can hear and understand with any type

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of hearing device like hearing aids, it helps that sounds are not reverberating around the room. Curtains and carpet and even cork-boarded walls reduce the unnecessary noise reverberation.

The ideal speaker for Sarah faces her at all times. The speaker is one with a positive attitude who is in no rush, does not pace about the room, and speaks clearly at a very good volume. Hands and long mustaches are kept away from the face to allow for lip reading. If a speaker has an accent, then lip reading will be particularly challenging. Allowing for additional accommodations (such as CART and/or an interpreter) for the classes with an accented speaker will be critical.

She must wear the amplification that she has available--her hearing aids. The hearing device should be working well and is used wherever and whenever necessary.

For another example, while a movie is being shown, an FM system's microphone is placed near the speaker equipment. Closed captions or SDH should be used in this situation also.

It is best for Sarah to see movies with the caption option or to view the written dialogue the day before the movie. She can then prepare for the movie and follow along with the other students when watching the movie. If there are any questions to be answered during or after the movie, it should be given to Sarah the day before the movie also. This makes it less frustrating for Sarah to try to understand everything when the movie is shown (although understanding is dependent of her knowledge of the English language).

Visuals are beneficial to Sarah. Visuals (including gesture, body language and facial expression) are pictures or objects representing the subject being taught or how to do something. This helps Sarah to better understand a subject or the steps to a process.

Demonstrations are also helpful to Sarah. Demonstration can be done through the use of pictures or the steps in a process (such as a math problem) shown on the chalkboard. There are many other ways to do demonstration. It is important to present information sequentially so Sarah has time to process the visual input before focusing back on the speaker. Time needs to be given for Sarah to look at the visuals before she can focus back on the speaker and be ready for further comments.

Following a demonstration can be an example of the end product. The steps to the

writing process can be shown in this way with the final draft or a published piece as the end product. The final work of a project can be shown and the smaller parts of it discussed. This confirms for Sarah what the final product is and the steps to getting there. (The other students in the class can benefit from this as well as it increases their confidence in understanding.)

Another challenge for Sarah is group discussions. In a large group, paraphrasing by the teacher is the preferred way of giving Sarah a second chance at better understanding what was said. In a small group it is not easy to access communication or information without assistance.

When Sarah is in a small group, following along with discussions is a task in itself. There usually is background noise of other small group discussions taking place. The students may not be familiar to Sarah. Sarah must be able to speech read well (lip read in addition to visual clues) and she may also use her FM system.

What usually happens is Sarah becomes lost. Too many distractions happen in small group discussions. The teacher should guide the groups to stay together, identify who is speaking, and take turns. The teacher can control the pace to one more reasonable for Sarah.

Sarah can concentrate on the speaker when there is a notetaker. It is ideal to have the notetaker sit near Sarah so that she can reflect back on what was being said and can have equal access to notes as do the other students.

If Sarah (or any student who is hard of hearing or deaf) knows a little bit of sign language, the use of a sign language interpreter can lessen misunderstanding of what is being said. It will take the student a while to become accustomed to focusing on an interpreter if he or she is learning sign language and had never used an interpreter.

*(Interpreters have a code of ethics they must follow and there are roles and duties that are wrongly assumed of them. Interpreters in the educational setting are not confined to these as they may assume a more teaching role although they should not have to take on this responsibility. Educational interpreters are not required to be certified interpreters or teachers. Today, standards may be higher such as the need for educational interpreters to achieve a specific level of sign language proficiency.*

*You may find that one educational interpreter has a different view of the roles and duties aside*

*from the interpreting than another. However, the interpreter is there to mainly facilitate communication for the student. We need to remember that the interpreter was not hired as a certified teacher and should not be expected to do a teacher's job.)*

Another accommodation that could benefit Sarah is Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART). This is commonly used for adults or students who are deaf or hard of hearing in meetings. Another similar accommodation is C-Print, a speech-to-text system that is used at the secondary and college levels. Both CART and C-Print are getting consideration in the mainstream setting for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sarah can very well benefit from either of these or other newer programs.

To implement accommodations, meet with the team of professionals that work with the student or whoever can help make these changes possible. Discuss your concerns with the parents. Some changes such as having an interpreter for the student cannot be made unless it is approved of at an IEP meeting for the student.

Consulting with Sarah's parents and professionals about how to best meet her needs if it is not already considered in the IEP is the way to go. Sarah does not know any better and takes what she can get. As long as she's doing well on paperwork and tests, she seems to be doing all right. However, advocating for additional accommodations can allow Sarah to achieve more with less frustration and exhaustion.

Sarah's daily struggle is to understand what she can hear through her hearing aids and whatever she can lip read on the face of the speaker. There is no surefire way to know that she understands all the words the speaker is saying or the message being conveyed. When one considers her grades, she seems to be doing fine in school. When one observes her in the classroom, lunchroom or during recess, one may see a lonely child who does not know where she fits in socially.

This is most likely the case for students who are deaf or hard of hearing and mainstreamed fully without peers who have a hearing loss. Most struggle to fit in their environment and end up putting all their energy into their academic studies or worse, they do not put in any energy into their studies and fail. They may get their strength from earning good grades. If they are

with others who are hard of hearing or sensitive to their needs, they can have a few understanding friends and a chance at better socialization.

To summarize, a hard of hearing student who speaks well may still be struggling with reception of speech (and with language) and may feel socially isolated. Attention to improving her access to verbal information is important. In addition, educating her peers about hearing loss, facilitating social communication, and encouraging Sarah to interact with peers (and a Mentor) who are deaf or hard of hearing may be beneficial. Sarah may also learn to advocate for herself to improve her ability to socialize.

### **Case Scenario 2**

James is deaf and does not wear any amplification. He has been deaf all his life. Like most children who are deaf, both of his parents are hearing. He did not learn sign language until he entered school. Sign language is used mainly at school. His family uses basic gestures with him and occasionally fingerspell. They assume James can understand them through lip reading, but sadly, their communication is limited.

James does not speak. He can do very little lip reading successfully as long as it is predictable what the needs are of the others in the environment.

Sign language is his preferred mode of communication. (His sign language is not ASL, but Pidgin Signed English. It is signing in English word order as influenced by the signs he learned in school.)

James has a sign language interpreter in school. In the cases when he does not have an interpreter with him, communication exchanges are challenging. James understands what is happening best through the use of his interpreter.

Socially, James seems like a good-natured student. He usually has a smile on his face around the other students. James is outgoing and tries to communicate with the other students without his interpreter. Most of the students know that James is deaf and relies on sign language. Many will talk to James while his interpreter is with him.

Some students know a few signs and have been taking some sign language classes in the morning before school. James participates in this class whenever he is not busy with another professional. The students benefit from his participation as they can get to know James and he becomes a new friend to them.

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James is almost fully mainstreamed as he goes to a self-contained classroom only for social studies. There, he is with other students who are deaf or hard of hearing along with a teacher for the deaf.

For the remainder of the day, James is with students who are hearing with his interpreter. His interpreter sits facing him usually near the front of the room, but where they can both still witness what is happening in the room.

James does not wear an FM system. Therefore, reliance on his interpreter for the interpretation of the sounds happening around him is greatly needed. Any speaker who wants to talk with James must realize that communication whether auditory or visual (such as eye contact) must be directed towards James, not the interpreter (as commented earlier).

James is a very dedicated student and has reasonably good grades, although not necessarily high. It is not easy for him to understand English since it is based on what he can understand spoken or written. English-based sign language is used when discussing grammar and the English language.

During instruction time in social studies while James is watching his interpreter for what is being said, there is a notetaker to write down the important notes. The notetaker is a student who takes good notes, and sits near James. Sometimes the teacher will give James an outline of what is discussed.

Whenever there is a quiz or a test, it is modified for James. It takes him a little bit longer to read and comprehend the questions. If the test was not modified by the teacher of the deaf or the regular education teacher, James may need a little more time to complete the test. Due to his IEP, all of his tests are modified.

The teachers know not to expect James to finish tests in one sitting, although over time he has become better at understanding English and turning in tests on time. This challenges James, but he pulls through with good grades.

Whenever James has a question about an assignment it is hard for him to remember to ask the teacher. He often assumes that he can wait and ask the interpreter. The interpreter tries to help James establish independence in this respect. Over time James realizes that it is his responsibility to ask questions to understand an assignment before he leaves the classroom.

The teacher of the deaf is often the person who informs the regular education teachers about

James' needs. (James' needs are similar to Sarah's in the first case scenario with a few obvious exceptions.)

James is lucky to have a sign language interpreter with him. One must realize though, that an interpreter cannot interpret every sound or speaker in the room. There are sounds that are heard but not necessary to describe such as the ticking of the clock or an overhead projector near James.

In the case that there is a group discussion and a few people are talking at the same time, the interpreter will have to decide whom to interpret. It may certainly help if the students know to take turns with speaking during small group discussion.

An important consideration is the lag in time between the spoken message and the interpretation. Teachers would be more considerate of James if they extend their wait time especially after asking questions. When visuals are given during a demonstration, ample time should be given to James to look at what is presented before continuing on with comments.

Again, as in the first case scenario, any additional accommodations may be tried. Consider meeting with the team of professionals and/or with the parents. Most times it takes an IEP meeting to implement the accommodations needed for a student.

In addition, James, as well as Sarah, may benefit socially by being involved in any clubs, activities or sports. Consider motivating students who are deaf or hard of hearing to find their interest in any of these. These suggestions could become part of the solution to involving students who are deaf or hard of hearing more socially with their peers and later, the world.

See "A Quick Guide for Teachers" at the end of this manual for more ideas. A great resource to also see is "...but what about my deaf child?: a guide to special education in Pennsylvania for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, 2009 School-Age Edition" from the Parent Education Network based in York, PA. Following are a few more tips using Sarah and James as the examples and a summary of the questions in the manual.

### **Helpful Tips for Conversation with Sarah who is Hard of Hearing:**

1. Get her attention before you speak.

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2. Allow her to see your face when you are talking so that she can read your lips and listen.
3. Speak clearly at a normal pace and volume. Shouting does not make you easier to understand.
4. When you change the subject, make sure Sarah has heard the new subject.
5. If she asks what you said, try saying the same thing using different words.
6. If she does not understand you, don't give up or say "it's not important" or "I'll tell you later." Try saying it in a different way or writing it down. Doing that shows you care about her understanding your message.

### **Helpful Tip for Conversation with James who is Deaf:**

To communicate with James, look at him, and speak as you would to your hearing friends. He may look at the interpreter to help him understand but you can continue to speak to him directly. There is a lot you can share with your facial expressions and gestures!

In addition to these tips, explain to the students in your class that hearing aids amplify sound but do not fix a hearing loss. (Be sure to have the permission of the parents and/or the student who is deaf or hard of hearing, especially in the case that the student is older and more independent.) The student who is deaf or hard of hearing may hear sound but it may be muffled and certain sounds are often inaccessible such as the "s" sound in words. You can remind the class what it is like to watch TV when the volume is turned too low. Like glasses, hearing aids help kids hear better, but unlike glasses, they do not fix the problem. Both hearing aids and a cochlear implant may be very helpful but are challenging to use in background noise.

### **Summary**

There are many questions to be answered when one encounters a student who is deaf or hard of hearing in a mainstream setting. Having considered some of the possible questions, I have sought to answer them.

Below are the questions and their main points. Further information and explanation can be found in the manual.

### **How should you perceive a student who is deaf or hard of hearing?**

- Look at the student as if he or she is from another country with a different language.
- Time is needed to adapt to the student and his or her needs.
- Many students who are deaf or hard of hearing arrive to school without language or with limited language exposure.
- Students can be mainstreamed into more subjects according to capability.

### **How do you welcome/introduce a student who is deaf or hard of hearing?**

- Do what you would do for another student and share information about their hearing loss as permitted by the student.
- One's attitude is an important consideration in providing encouragement and reassurance to the student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

### **How well will the student hear you and others?**

- This depends on the hearing loss and the amplification the student has as well as the training they had with amplification.
- Room acoustics are important to consider.
- To hear is to perceive sound, not to understand it.
- Students may have trouble hearing enough sounds to understand language, due to their specific hearing loss.

### **How well will the student understand what you are saying?**

- Understanding depends on the potential of hair cells, ear mechanism or the brain to process sound.
- Understanding also depends on the student's access to visual clues and on the environment.
- Even an expert speech reader will not understand all that is being said.

### **How well will the student understand what is happening around him or her?**

- Environmental factors play a part in understanding:
  - Background noise
  - Lighting
  - Where the speaker is located
  - Familiarity with the speaker's voice and speaking pattern
  - Amplification
  - Visual clues
  - Predictability of the environment
  - If there is an interpreter present
  - Seating position

### **What does a student use to hear and understand you?**

- The student's Individual Educational Plan, IEP, informs you of what type of amplification the student is to wear.
- There are other accommodations to consider such as a TYY and closed captions or SDH.

### **What if the student does not talk? How do I communicate with him or her?**

- With an interpreter present, converse with the student as you would with any student.
- Be sure that the environment is conducive to good sound and understanding.

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- Be aware of the lag of time between the spoken word and the interpretation.

### **Do I need to know sign language?**

- No, but it would be helpful if the student uses sign language.
- You can learn it and use it in your teaching and communication with the student.
- Your school can set up sign language classes for students.
- Be open to and learn about the student's preferred methods of communication.

### **What will the student who is deaf or hard of hearing have difficulty with academically?**

- Written and spoken language is a challenge and depends on how well the student understands English.
- Students who use ASL or any combination of languages as their primary language need to become bilingual to succeed academically.
- Many students who are deaf or hard of hearing start school without a full primary language.
- The student's primary language should be used to communicate with them.
- Parents are key when it comes to deciding what language the student will use.
- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing are often delayed in language learning and the school subjects because of language challenges. They may have the same range of intelligence as their hearing peers so encourage them and have equal expectations.

### **How can we accommodate the student socially?**

- One needs to assess whether or not the student is able to effectively socialize with his or her peers.
- Pair the student with others like him or herself or with those who are sensitive to the needs of the student.

- Mentors who are also deaf or hard of hearing can assist academically and socially.
- As mentioned in the second case scenario, involvement in clubs, activities or sports is beneficial.
- There are social skills programs and strategies to use for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. See the examples.

### **What can we do to help make the student feel more included in our school/classroom?**

- Work on being comfortable and confident with the student. Your approach will set the example for others and encourage the social acceptance of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Use effective communication strategies with the student:
  - Being close to the student
  - Speaking clearly
  - Showing your face to the student when speaking
  - Lighting
  - Amplification, etc.

### **What professionals does the student meet with?**

- These professionals may include a teacher for the deaf, hearing therapist, audiologist, speech therapist, interpreter, notetaker, as well as others who work with the student.
- Communicate with these professionals and consider them a resource to help you.
- Collaboration with professionals and the parents is the recommended approach to meeting the needs of the student.
- Parents are ultimately influential in getting the needs of their child met.

*Following is a quick guide for teachers with additional information.*

## Considerations for Teaching a Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing in the Mainstream Setting

### **A Quick Guide for Teachers:**

The information in the guide are my notes taken from participation in a workshop given by Mary Ann Stefko, Mainstream Coordinator of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.

These guidelines below can be considered in addition to the other suggestions found in the manual and can kick-start the process of helping a student who is deaf or hard of hearing mainstream successfully into your school and classroom.

Parents or a “support person” (such as a teacher for the deaf) should talk with you before the student goes to school. They should assist you with modifying your teaching to include the student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Teachers should consider the following key points:

- ~Advocacy: In general, parents or a support person are responsible for the student.
  - The student can become responsible to advocate for themselves in school.
  - 3 questions to teach the student to ask him or herself:
    - What do I need?
    - Who can help? (Not always the interpreter.)
    - How do I get it?
  
- ~Informing others (students, administrators, etc.) about deafness:
  - This is the role of the parents, teachers, support person and/or student.
  - What to teach about:
    - Sign language
    - Equipment: Hearing Aids, boot, FM system, Cochlear Implant, etc. (Back-up equipment should be in office.)
    - How to talk with (and teach) student:
      - Face the student, give time to view pictures and/or read information, speak clearly, etc.
      - The student’s interests through questions and/or in a “Star of the Week” or similar
  - Parents can write a note for teachers and other staff about the student and his/her needs including the parents’ phone number to call if there are any questions.
  - Consider the many options of teaching such as having the student who is deaf or hard of hearing talk about his or her hearing loss (if they are comfortable doing this).
  
- ~Encourage the student to feel good about mainstreaming.
  - Give the interpreter and student an outline of the lesson and schoolbooks they can take home.
  - Give the interpreter and parents a list of names of all the students in all classes in the grade, list of birthdays and special days.
  - Include sign language information as enrichment to a lesson. (The support person may have resources you can use.)
  - Learn about the role of the interpreter.
    - Interpreters are there to interpret, not to teach for the teacher.
    - Interpreters may communicate with the student’s parents on issues relating to interpreting such as a better method or sign language challenges.
  
- ~Have a plan B for when the interpreter or yourself are sick.
  - You should leave a note about the student relating to the hearing loss and equipment.
  - You should leave textbooks and outlines for the lesson.
  - The interpreter should leave a note for the substitute interpreter about the student and how to interpret for the student in the classes.

Good luck on the start of your wonderful journey as an important person in the life of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing!

## Part 2

*The information presented in Part 1 is from my knowledge of deaf education, mainstreaming experiences, the input of other professionals and a mother of a child who is deaf.*

*It is also important to know that children who are deaf or hard of hearing face challenges due to language issues and are exposed to other risks just as children who are hearing. Following is research I have done regarding the maltreatment of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.*

### **Hearing loss places children who are deaf or hard of hearing at risk**

It is important to note that ninety percent of children with hearing loss are born to hearing parents, who most likely know nothing about deafness (Gartner, 1996). This means that there is both a communication and cultural issue for the child with a hearing loss. The communication aspect is obvious, but the cultural issue is not. Both issues are linked, however, as language is part of culture.

Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan (1996) states:

Families in America are influenced by the expectation that their children will live better than their parents. The birth of a Deaf child to hearing parents alters this expectation, less because the child does not hear than because of the way Deaf people are understood and valued in the culture of the larger society (p. 30).

Naturally, children have the innate ability to learn language, and they are dependent on other language users. “But deaf children born into hearing families often do not have access to such models; they do not hear the spoken English of their parents and neighbors, and they are isolated from Deaf signers.” Many deaf students have never met a Deaf person or have seen American Sign Language. Mainstreaming may bring about “a new kind of isolation” (Padden & Humphries, 1996, p. 116).

“Deaf people for the most part have always lived within the world of others” (Padden & Humphries, 1996, p. 56). We must keep in mind that children who are deaf are living among the hearing, which linguistically, and ultimately, presents a different culture of living, which is more hearing oriented. Children who are deaf, lack access to spoken language through the sense

of hearing and therefore, cannot be wholly included. This is not to say that they cannot be successful in a hearing society or in a mainstream setting. (My intent is to inform you of the challenges present so that you are aware.)

One parent states:

‘As a parent of a deaf child, I figured out fairly early that American Sign Language is not just a language, but a culture as well. At first, it feels almost like you are engaged in a tug of war over this child—will she be part of my culture or will I have to give her up to another for her own good?’ (Miller, 2006, p. 24).

(Whether or not parents decide on the appropriate language and school placement for their child is a controversial issue. It is not my intent to hint at any correct methods or placement, but rather to emphasize that culture and language choices influence the life of the child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

The capital “D” in “Deaf” indicates one who, according to proponents of this group, is involved in Deaf Culture. The lower case “d” refers to children who have a hearing loss that is between moderate to profound. The term “hard of hearing” includes those who have a mild loss and those who may be deaf and can use speech to communicate.)

### **Impacts of hearing loss on a child who is deaf or hard of hearing**

A child born deaf, never having hearing before, does not experience a sense of loss. “Information normally obtained through the modality of hearing is not available, leading to profound influences on subsequent psychological and social development.” Once the child (between age 2 and 5) realizes the differences between themselves and others, and “understand that there is such a thing as hearing, they begin the work of adjusting themselves to life in a hearing world” (Mindel & Vernon, 1987, p. 19).

Social isolation occurs depending on the degree of the deafness of the child. Deafness isolates the child from a parent’s voice that conveys feeling. This creates the loss of the early parent-infant relationship. “A more profound progressive isolation from the hearing world begins at the point when children begin to depend upon auditory stimulation for the

development of language and general knowledge” (Mindel & Vernon, 1987, p. 19).

A critical finding based on the social-situational model of Parke and Collmer (1975), indicates:

An interference with the mother-infant attachment may lead to an increase in abuse...During the first 2 years of the child’s life, an interference with communication and bonding between infant and mother may develop and lead to a variety of frustrations for both parties (Sebald, 2008, p. 380).

Indicating that the mother is key in the impact of the health of the child, the quote below is another example of the importance of communication between the child who is deaf and the mother. **(In these quotes “mother” is used to reference the role of the primary caregiver, recognizing that a father, grandparent, or other guardian may fulfill this role.):**

More effective communication between mothers and their deaf children also lead to better mental health outcomes, and neither spoken language nor sign language appears to have any advantage in that regard. Those mothers who have less efficient communication with their deaf children, in contrast, tend to have children who are less securely attached, who may exhibit unacceptable behaviors in school settings and at home, and be more prone to mental health difficulties through the teenage years (Wallis, 2006) (Marschark, 2007, p. 102).

As a child’s life starts at home:

The home is the place where any young child should be able to feel safe, understood, and loved. It is the place that should provide deaf children with the emotional strength and resources to handle a world that is not entirely able to deal with them. Most deaf children will grow up to be just as emotionally well adjusted as hearing children, but they need the same kind of parenting and the same kinds of experiences as hearing children (Marschark, 2007, p. 101).

Support for parents and infants can be found in early intervention services making early detection of hearing loss key. “Per Part C of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, states are required to provide early intervention services...The literature on early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities indicates that early intervention works (Cole, Mills, Jenkins & Dale, 2005)” (Sebald, 2008, p. 380).

### **Parents are influential in the lives of children who are deaf or hard of hearing**

Upon finding out that their child is deaf, parents, usually panic-stricken, first think to “normalize” their child, “to make him behave as much like a child with perfect hearing as possible.” This involves thinking that the child can “eventually speak and ‘hear’ visible speech [and] is quite a heady thing for anxious hearing parents...” (Jacobs, 1980, p. 10). One parent commented, “there was room for precious little of anything else” regarding the focus on speech and lip reading for her child. She further comments that sources on such methods, under the term “oralism,” are readily available and are mentioned first (Jacobs, 1980, p. 11).

It can be frustrating. One parent remembers thinking, “This is just not fair!” (Gartner, 1996, p. 14).

“Reliance on spoken English as the sole means of communication with a Deaf child restricts parent-child interaction severely and interferes with the natural bonding process. When communication breaks down, the child’s cognitive, linguistic, emotional and educational progress suffers” (Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996, p. 40).

“Fearful and frustrated hearing parents may not be able to communicate substantively with their Deaf child, who, in turn, is frustrated and tantrum-prone” (Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996, p. 40). Speaking more about parents, a mother of a deaf boy explains more of what it may be like for them:

What they cannot accept or understand is that they can’t communicate with this important member of their family...I have seen cases where hearing parents have rejected their deaf child. Virtually every week there is a new story to be told of how deaf boys and girls are facing problems because they cannot

communicate with their parents. It is almost always the parents who are blamed for not accepting and adjusting to their deaf child's handicap. But how can we blame the parents, when they have never truly been told and shown how to communicate with their child? (p.26) (Jacobs, 1980, pp. 11-12)

The limitations on communication with the child with a hearing loss "have an early and profound impact on families and on parent-child communication" (Moore, 1996, p. 141). Due to the child's situation being viewed as an educational one, the teaching in the family falls on the mother. Not only is the mother frustrated facing the strain of communication, but also because of the demands on her time and attention (Moore, 1996, p. 142).

One can infer from the above research that parents are key persons in the lives of the child who is deaf or hard of hearing. Parents and family members are impacted by the presence of the child's hearing loss. This impact affects the life of the child. A resource states this point well: "Parents' early reactions to the discovery of deafness and their resolution of feelings about it influence all future decisions" (Mindel & Vernon, 1987, p. 25).

A hearing parent gives her perspective on this:

Hearing parents of deaf children have a big responsibility to educate people about deafness. Parents' attitude toward the deaf child is the single most important factor in how that child is perceived by others. When I started breaking news to family and friends that Meira was deaf, it was me who comforted them and helped them grieve. Although it was the biggest shock of my life, I knew I had to set the example of how people should view Meira. So I let everyone know that Meira would grow up happy and successful, hearing or not. If my attitude was that her deafness was a tragedy or a handicap others would adopt my view and feel sorry for Meira. They would treat her like an object of pity instead of a human being to be respected. The language of disability does not evoke images of happiness, success, or respect (Garretson, 1993, p. 141).

The child's hearing loss will affect his or her behavior and personality and how the "parents and other family members view the child's hearing loss will help determine the child's self-perception (Scheetz 1993)" (Adams, 1997, pp. 79-80). This is critical to the development of self-esteem (Olivia, 2004).

### **Typical behaviors of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing**

It is important to first realize that we may be influenced by what we have been taught to think by the larger society of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing. It is also important to distinguish between what is normal for a child who is deaf and what is not so that we can notice where (and when) a child needs help. We should be aware of the possible reasons behind the behavior as well, (not to mention Deaf Culture).

Adams (1997) states:

Because limitations determined by a condition could influence a child's behaviors and activities, determining what behavior is 'typical' is more difficult. When behavior is influenced by a condition, a parent must consider what is typical in light of the unique circumstances placed upon the child due to the specific condition (p.74).

It is recommended that behaviors be compared with the typical behavior of children at the same age and to refer to literature about the child's disability (Adams, 1997).

Delays in language and social development are dependent on one another since they are closely related. Here is an example of how this can come to be for children who are deaf:

Deaf children in a hearing family where only spoken English is used and who have very little spoken language skills, must rely more on facial expressions and gestures in trying to understand another's reactions to them. Interpretations based on these nonverbal communications may be less accurate, and this may lead deaf children to give inappropriate responses. For example, a child who does not hear a

person's tone of voice, which indicates a feeling or warns of possible wrongdoing, may not know that he or she is about to break a limit placed on behavior. Hence, deaf children with limited access to language interactions often have difficulty developing appropriate behaviors toward other people (Boothroyd 1982) (Adams, 1997, p. 75).

Since a deaf child's communication is more visual than auditory or vocal, the child is more likely to use visual and physical ways to communicate feelings, ideas, and thoughts. While hearing children may yell and scream to get their thoughts and emotions across, deaf children may gesture, stomp their feet, or even hit along with vocalizing their ideas and feelings (Deyo and Gelzer 1987) (Adams, 1997, p. 79).

Being aware of the many possible reasons for behavior problems will help you understand problems better. With understanding comes a clearer perspective in a situation between a parent who is hearing and a child who is deaf.

### **Issues to be understood when a child with a hearing loss is in school**

When the child who is deaf or hard of hearing enters school, "acquiring the roles, rules, attitudes, and values of one's society" is something that they learn to do. Peer relationships become an important part of social development in this regard. The best way to support the development of this relationship is not easy (Marschark, 2007, p. 157). Remember, as mentioned earlier, there are a few resources available to help a regular education teacher encourage successful socialization with their hearing peers (under "How can we accommodate the student socially?").

"Students with positive social interactions in school tend to have higher academic achievement..., better mental health..., and are more likely to succeed in their careers." Based on several recent studies, findings indicate that in a more full mainstream setting (not partial), "deaf students generally are not accepted by their hearing peers and as a result they may report feeling lonely, rejected, and socially isolated

(Kluwin & Stinson, 1993)" (Marschark, 2007, p. 158). Social contact with peers does not depend on the "nature and quality of their attachment with mother or any other single aspect of the mother-child relationship." Yet, if they have "better social relationships with their primary caregivers [they] also tend to be those who develop good social relations with peers and [have] higher self-esteem" (Marschark, 2007, p. 103).

It is noted that there is a tendency for these students to have more problems of "self-identity, emotional security, and in starting and maintaining friendships." Contacts with hearing peers are reported to be "less than positive." There is no way to measure the long-term effects of this (Marschark, 2007, p. 159). In a research done by Sullivan and Knutson, it was found that "children who were both maltreated and disabled [were] missing the most school days and nondisabled nonmaltreated children missing the least,..." (2000, p. 1267).

This reminds me of my experience with mainstreaming as I have been fully mainstreamed in public school. One student had shared her perspective, which is similar to mine:

As a fully mainstreamed deaf child—the only one in her school—Rachel began to realize that she was 'not the same' as other students. 'I knew I was different,' she says, 'but I didn't clearly understand why.' The other children 'snickered at my speech—and were scared away by my FM system,' she recalls.

Rachel, whose lip-reading skills on a one-to-one basis were reportedly good beginning at an early age, tried her best to make friends and 'fit in.' 'I wanted so much to be accepted and to be like them. I laughed when they laughed, I acted sad when they were sad. I just put on their emotions. I pretended to understand, but I didn't. It was such hard work—it was too hard. It was too frustrating.

'I paid attention really hard when kids talked to me,' she remembers. 'I was always in such fear that if I misunderstood or asked them to repeat something they would reject me—which they did' (Sanfratello, 1996, p. 24).

(Rachel has a severe to profound hearing loss.)

Access to language simultaneously influences the degree of success in the culture of the larger society, the hearing society, as seen in the above example. When someone like Rachel has tried her best to succeed socially and had failed in this area, intervention or accommodations are needed. As in the case with Rachel, including her with other peers who are deaf or hard of hearing in a special classroom was what she needed.

I did not get the same benefit as Rachel and stayed fully mainstreamed in my public school. This is partly due to my not disclosing any information on social difficulties to anyone in my school district. Only my mother was aware of some things happening with me in school.

Again, as mentioned before, there are not many strategies for social skill learning for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. On the positive side, there are more now than when I was in school. (More issues and strategies can be found in “What will the student who is deaf or hard of hearing have difficulty with academically?” and “How can we accommodate the student socially?”)

### **Number of children who are deaf or hard of hearing who experience maltreatment**

Child Welfare Information Gateway states:

Researchers have had difficulty estimating rates of maltreatment among children with disabilities. One reason is that States do not collect the same data about maltreated children in the same ways. Another reason is that researchers identify disabilities among maltreated children in different ways (2001, p. 2).

“While more research is needed to determine the exact rate at which children who are deaf/hard of hearing experience child neglect and/or abuse, it is known that children with disabilities are MUCH more likely to experience child neglect and/or abuse than their hearing peers, and that when the experience occurs it continues over a longer period of time” (Hands & Voices, 2005, ¶1). Research has focused on the incidences and causes of child abuse and neglect as experienced by school-age children who are deaf or hard of hearing (Hands & Voices, 2005). “Other topics, e.g., literacy, language, cochlear implants, academic performance, etc., are perceived to be more

important, have more funding opportunities, and a larger research base” (Hands & Voices, 2005, ¶3).

“Deaf children are more susceptible than other children to abuse” (Edwards, Vaughn & Rotabi, 2006, “Overview”). Incidences are likely to occur at the child’s home and within their own family. “Hearing parents of deaf children are more likely to physically abuse these children than are parents of hearing children (Knutson, Johnson, & Sullivan, 2004)” (Edwards, Vaughn & Rotabi, 2006, “Increased Risk of Maltreatment for Deaf Children”). “Findings indicate that physical abuse is more prevalent among this population, as compared with children who are hearing, and that lack of a common communication mode between parent and child may be a factor” (Sebald, 2008, p. 380).

Child Welfare Information Gateway compared two studies on “the likelihood that children with disabilities will experience a particular type of maltreatment.” It was found for both children with and without disabilities that neglect was the most common. One particular study found that “‘children with disabilities tended to be maltreated multiple times and in multiple ways’ (p.9)” (2001, p. 5).

One can infer further from research that children who are deaf are more susceptible to emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2006, p. 32). Sebald explains how each one of these maltreatments relate to children who are deaf and about the lack of research findings for this population in pages 379-381 (2008).

[A] Study of deaf adults (mainly college students) found:

\*50% of deaf children are sexually abused

\*41.6% of deaf children are physically abused (Sullivan & Knutson, 1989)

\*26% of deaf children are neglected

\*True abuse statistics are likely much higher, as only 4% of deaf people attend college (Allen, 1994).

\*Those who do attend college are more likely to have more supportive families, financial

resources, and access to education via American Sign Language and interpreters (VanCleve, 1989) (Edwards, Vaughn & Rotabi, 2006, "Increased Risk of Maltreatment for Deaf Children").

Compiling several research studies on the incidence of abuse, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network states that the "methodological differences among these investigations limit the conclusions that can be drawn regarding the incidence of maltreatment in the general population of deaf and hard of hearing children" and concludes to be true based on the research findings:

\*The incidence of sexual abuse for deaf children is higher than for their hearing peers.

\*Deaf boys are more likely to report abuse than deaf girls, whereas with hearing children, girls are more likely to report abuse.

\*The abuse tended to occur in vans or buses when children are being transported to and from school [including day and residential schools], or in their bathrooms and beds.

\*Approximately 20 to 25% of deaf children were abused both at school and home (2006, p. 31).

Not only has research been lacking in this area, the process of diagnosis is complex. "Because the number of deaf children with emotional, behavioral, and learning problems is relatively small, their needs have received little attention" (Moore, 1996, p. 123).

The reason for the lack of focus in this area can be supported in the following facts:

There is a relatively low incidence of hearing loss in school-aged children and adolescents. And to complicate matters further, the children that are considered to be 'deaf' may vary widely in any number of characteristics, ranging from degree of residual hearing, ability to use residual hearing, degree of sign language used and fluency in sign

language, intelligibility of speech, etiology of hearing loss, additional special education considerations, and so forth. The educational setting may vary as well...It is the collaboration of deaf and hearing professionals, working side by side, that will lead to strategies for providing the highest quality services, including research, to deaf and hard of hearing children. (Gutman, 2002, p. 55).

Further, "many physicians who come into contact with young Deaf children and their families fail to recognize all that a hearing family with a Deaf child must be grappling with, linguistically, psychologically and socially." Training is needed to educate these physicians and other health professionals in the "diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of early childhood deafness" (Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996, p. 37). Obviously, more research needs to be done to facilitate such training and as a result, the treatment procedures these professionals use for children who are deaf or hard of hearing will improve. There is literature, however, from Gallaudet University such as *Ethics in Mental Health and Deafness* to address these issues.

We can infer if the child or an adult reports abuse, any future service providers for the child would also need to be able to communicate effectively with the child.

### **Signs of emotional and sexual abuse in children who are deaf or hard of hearing**

"Psychological abuse is the most difficult of the four forms of maltreatment to articulate due to a variety of factors such as child-rearing preferences, individual and cultural differences, and issues of intent." A report on child maltreatment from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is given to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services every year. "One challenge with the information reported is that disability type is not disaggregated" (Sebald, 2008, p. 377). We can conclude, due again to the lack of research, that it is most likely more difficult to verify the prevalence of emotional abuse in children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

However, emotional abuse seems to be important to address, as there is evidence of this maltreatment happening when we consider what a child's family situation may be like due to

language factors. There is also evidence of emotional abuse in reports of students who are in a mainstream setting such as the girl I quoted earlier, Rachel, whose situation is very similar to what mine was. She had experienced some signs of emotional abuse that would be characteristic to some children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

While in her full mainstream situation, Rachel became tired of “*pretending* to fit in...A serious depression and threats of suicide finally landed Rachel in the hospital. ‘But even then,’ she says, ‘the focus was on other problems—not on my experiences as a deaf person’” (Sanfratello, 1996, p. 25).

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing (and are in special education classes) are “less knowledgeable about sexuality and have not been taught about personal and sexual boundaries, [are] more conditioned to obey authority figures, [and] less able, due to communication limitation, to raise questions about abuse or to report it.” Most children who are deaf do not try to inform hearing adults about abuse. The vocabulary and fluency in sign language is lacking in hearing adults to be able to make sense of a disclosure of abuse (Edwards, Vaughn & Rotabi, 2006, “Reasons for Increased Risk of Maltreatment”). “Deaf adults have reported that as children, they had experienced more frequent sexual abuse by a greater number of perpetrators...(Embry, 2001)” (Chandler, n.d., p. 7).

In an unpublished paper written by Montoya (2004) for school personnel, possible signs of sexual abuse in children who are deaf or hard of hearing are given:

- \*Sexually explicit drawings
- \*Sexually suggestive communication
- \*Sexually inappropriate behavior for age (e.g., exposing is within normal limits for younger children, not for older children, knowledge of oral sex, knowledge of and reenactment of vaginal or anal intercourse for younger children is not within normal limits)
- \*Vaginal and anal intercourse and oral sex are learned behaviors (one needs to think about how a child learns about these behaviors, depending on the child’s age, ability to communicate with others, etc.)

\*Child initiates inappropriate sexual behavior

\*1/3 kids who are abused exhibit no outward signs of abuse (p. 2)

As mentioned earlier, the number of children with hearing loss is small and research is lacking in the many areas and situations of children who are deaf. Until there is more supporting research, we can only assume what signs a child who is deaf and is emotionally or sexually abused will display as with the other forms of maltreatment.

### **Reasons for increased risks to children who are deaf or hard of hearing**

Communication is an important issue to consider for children who are deaf or hard of hearing because it causes trauma. Trauma is experienced by children who are deaf or hard of hearing due to “communicative isolation in their families” (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2006, p. 31). Based on a study on adults who are deaf, Harvey concludes the following experiences are re-visited from childhood in deaf adults:

\*the feelings of isolation and being misunderstood they had as children within their hearing families;

\*thoughts of being socially isolated or actually withdrawing from contact with hearing persons in order to avoid stimuli associated with the trauma of communicative isolation with their families; and

\*hyperarousal and hypervigilance as they become aware of the inadequacy of their communication, resulting in reactions that may be overly assertive or resigned and passive (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2006, p. 32).

A more interesting fact is that “childhood sign language is very different from sign language taught in formal ASL [American Sign Language] courses, so many non-deaf ASL speakers do not understand a child’s cry for help” (Edwards, Vaughn & Rotabi, 2006, “Reasons for Increased Risk of Maltreatment”). Earlier research stated hearing parents tend to resort to and encourage a more oral method of communication with their child. Even if sign

language is used, speech may be used along with it, making it more English than ASL along with any English signs they use. Families may also incorporate their own created signs, called “home signs.”

American Sign Language cannot be spoken or written and is a language with its own structure and grammar. Persons from Deaf Culture use this as their primary form of communication. Even a child (deaf or hearing) with deaf parents may not use ASL, but another form of sign language such as what I mentioned above, one that is more English (and this is a topic, I won't discuss in length here). “Only one parent in ten could communicate with his or her Deaf child” (Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996, p. 40). Some parents may not wish to learn sign language and therefore cannot communicate with their child who is deaf and uses sign language as their sole form of communication.

“Children will be unnecessarily disadvantaged when there is a mismatch between the languages of home and school” (Kuntze, 1998, p. 3). “Many parents and educators fail to realize the critical need for ‘full communication.’ This means an open, facile communication where meaningful responses are the rule, not mere monosyllabic utterances such as ‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘Mommy,’ etc.” (Jacobs, 1980, p. 13). (More on this can be found earlier in this manual under “What will the student who is deaf or hard of hearing have difficulty with academically?”)

The method of communication seems to be key to whether or not the child who is deaf or hard of hearing would be able to disclose information about abuse. However, Child Welfare Information Gateway (2001) states there is “general acceptance that no single factor places any child at risk for abuse and neglect. Rather, it is the interaction of factors that seems to be important” (p. 5).

It is further said that Sobsey's integrated ecological model of abuse “takes into account cultural and environmental factors as well as characteristics of the parent and child and their interactions...Sobsey [1994] focuses particularly on power inequities between the potential offender and potential victim” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2001, p. 5).

There are certain factors parents present that increase the risk of maltreatment. Many researchers identify parental substance abuse as a factor. Other factors are “poor coping skills, poor impulse control, and a history of violence

(Ammerman & Baladerian, 1993; Sobsey, 1994). Parents with low self-esteem or who have been diagnosed with depression may be at greater risk for maltreating their children (Sobsey, 1994; Sullivan & Cork, 1996)...” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2001, p. 6) and so on.

There are factors related to disability, and can be found in the 2001 Child Welfare Information Gateway publication on pages 6-8.

Taking this and earlier research into consideration, we can infer the intertwining factors that play a part in the maltreatment of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

### **Procedure for reporting suspected abuse**

A resource points out the importance of educators and the school community:

Educators play a vital role in the identification, prevention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect, given their unique opportunity to advocate for children and the fact that schools are the only places in which children are seen outside of the home on a daily basis (Tower, 1992). Dealing with abuse and neglect is becoming a community issue and within that wider milieu, the schools must assume a major role (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000, p. 1272).

Your school should have an intervention or an at-risk team set up in the case that there is a student that is maltreated. In Pennsylvania, there are Student Assistance Programs in each school district managed by Student Assistance Core Team. School and specially trained agency personnel to work with at-risk students, team together to help at-risk students (South Middleton School District, 2009).

Your school or school district should have a policy on reporting abuse. You should follow this policy. Failure to do so can put you in risk of losing your job and not informing in the correct procedure can put you at risk as well.

In general, abuse is reported to Childline, as it is the central agency for reports. Reports are then sent to the local children and youth agencies. The agencies will investigate the suspected abuse or neglect of children.

After reporting this, do not expect to become too involved. It is a good idea to keep a record of things you see and hear. This record can stand

as evidence in court if it should become a case.

If possible, get to know the team of professionals who work with the child. If no supports are set up or available, you can certainly see about setting one up. If a support system falls apart, build another one. Having a team of support persons is important for the child and for you to learn about the child (e.g. a teacher for the deaf).

Here are suggestions for handling disclosures with a student who is deaf or hard of hearing:

\*Most obvious: optimize clear communication. Use a qualified interpreter or staff with strong ASL skills, trusted by the child when fielding a potential disclosure from a student

\*Keep front in your mind there is lots of room for misunderstandings with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

\*Important to clearly convey to the child that he/she is not in trouble.

\*Important to convey neutral facial expression (not overly upset or judgmental).

\*It's not your job to decide whether an allegation is truthful or not. It is our (school personnel, healthcare professionals, etc) obligation by law to report suspicions of abuse. Law enforcement and the Department of Human Services have the duty of determining the validity of any allegation or suspicion.

\*When a disclosure/suspicion is reportable, school personnel should not participate in the interview investigation. School personnel can assist with establishing clear communication, by familiarizing the sign fluent professionals or deaf-hearing team of interpreters interviewing the child with the child's language, set of name signs and idiosyncratic communication; however you should recuse yourself from the investigation process. Advocate for qualified interviewers and the use of certified deaf/hearing interpreting teams.

\*If a child is interviewed by an investigator at school, the child should

be interviewed in a neutral setting, not in rooms where there is clear authority over the child or room used for disciplining students. (e.g., principal's office, disciplinarian's office).

\*Don't assume you understand what the child means. Your meaning and the child's meaning can be very different. It's important that you understand specifically what the child means by such terms as rape, touch, kiss, etc. Once you feel you understand, double check by restating your understanding to the child to confirm your communication accuracy.

\*If you don't understand what the child is trying to tell you, be honest and let the child know you don't understand and ask them to explain to you through a drawing, gesturing or using dolls (Montoya, 2004, p. 2).

### **The needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing**

Due to the lack of sensitivity of most hearing people, children (and adults) who are deaf "must develop special coping skills" (Moores, 1996, p. 147). Teachers can teach these students to self-advocate for things that they may need such as accommodations. (See "A Quick Guide for Teachers" in Part 1 of this manual.) During my time in the mainstream setting as a student, I informed teachers that I needed to sit up front, see their face, etc. as needed. All teachers knew that I have a hearing loss, and at that time, I advocated for myself and dealt with the stresses having a hearing loss alone. (I did not tell my peers that I have a hearing loss.) Students of this day will be more understood by teachers and persons like yourselves who are reading this manual.

A last resource says it all. Students need:

- 1) Loving, supportive parents
- 2) A communication system which is effective for them
- 3) A good school with full accessibility
- 4) Consistent parental involvement at school and at home
- 5) Successful deaf role models
- 6) High expectations—from both parents and teachers

- 7) Lots of reading and writing
- 8) More reading and writing
- 9) Repeat 7, 8, 9 as necessary  
(Drolsbaugh, 2008, p. 173)

### **Conclusion**

Children with hearing loss are at risk due to the link between communication and culture. They are dependent on the modeling of language of other language users, who are in most cases, their hearing parents.

Due to the discrepancy of access to language and the likely language used (speech with some sign language), psychological and social development is impacted. Access to the language of the parent is lacking in degree and this is an important relationship in the beginning of a child's life. Frustration builds in families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Home should be a place for the child who is deaf or hard of hearing to feel safe, understood, loved. They need the emotional strength and resources from home to help them with the larger world. Early intervention can help provide the support families need.

Parents, especially the mother, are influential in the lives of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. "Normalizing" the child with spoken language can build frustration in the child and create communication challenges. Parents need guidance as to how to use language with their child as communication limitations can create profound impact on families and the parent-child relationship.

The typical behaviors of children who are deaf or hard of hearing may be influenced by the opinions of society. It is important to separate this and look at both the typical behaviors of children and then the behaviors characteristic of children with hearing loss. This is the key to understanding situations and issues with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Peer relationships are important to develop once the child is in school. Positive social interactions with others are parallel to the positive social interaction with the child's caretaker. Succeeding in academics and having positive mental health is dependent on this. Children who are disabled and maltreated miss more school than the general population.

Due to the way data is collected and how disabilities are identified differently across states, the numbers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and maltreated are vague. We do

know that maltreatment is prevalent in children with disabilities more than those without disabilities and that it occurs over a longer time period. Research done on school children that are deaf or hard of hearing has drawn several conclusions. More accurate research is lacking due to other topics receiving attention, funds and having a larger research base.

The diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of children with hearing loss are complex due to the small numbers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Therefore, physicians are not well aware of the many issues a family may experience. More research and therefore, training, is needed to assist these physicians, therapists and others who may work with the family and child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

It is not easy to know or all the symptoms of maltreatment because it depends on many factors. Again, research is lacking because the numbers of children with hearing loss is small. The examples of emotional and sexual abuse were given.

The responsibility of reporting abuse may fall on teachers and school personnel as students who are deaf or hard of hearing spend a lot of time in school. Every school has a policy set up for reporting, and this is to be followed. Familiarize yourself with the team of professionals involved in the report process, as they can be an important part of the support team for the student. Suggestions for handling the disclosure of abuse are given.

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing need to learn and use coping skills. Self-advocacy can be taught to them. You, among many things, are an important support in the life of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

### **Resources**

This section includes Internet resources with information on maltreatment in children and children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Additional resources are listed for educators and parents to help with understanding the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Childhelp  
<http://www.childhelpusa.org>

National Council on Child Abuse & Family Violence  
<http://nccafv.org/>

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Child Welfare League of America  
<https://www.cwla.org/>

Child Welfare Information Gateway  
<http://childwelfare.gov>

Focus Adolescent Services  
<http://focusas.com/Abuse.html>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network  
<http://www.NCTSN.org>

Administration for Children and Families  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/>

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare:  
Child Welfare Services  
<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/ChildWelfare/>

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare:  
ChildLine and Abuse Registry  
<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/partnersproviders/childwelfare/003670361.htm>

Disability Rights Network  
<http://www.dlp-pa.org>

Hands and Voices  
<http://handsandvoices.org>

About.com: Deafness  
<http://deafness.about.com>

American Society for Deaf Children  
<http://deafchildren.org/>

National Association of the Deaf  
<http://www.nad.org>

Raising Deaf Kids  
<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org>

Parent Education Network  
<http://www.parentednet.org/>

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania  
<http://www.parenttoparent.org/>

Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership Center  
<http://www.pealcenter.org/>

Pennsylvania Education for All Coalition, Inc.  
<http://www.paedforall.org/>

Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and  
Early Learning (OCDEL)  
<http://www.pakeys.org/>

Pennsylvania Training & Technical Assistance  
Network  
<http://www.pattan.net/>

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