



Building Positive Partnerships

When your child was diagnosed with a loss of hearing, your world changed. New people from different professions came into your life and the life of your child. You will work with these professionals for many years. Developing a positive partnership with professionals is important for your child's future.

You will work with professionals such as an Ear, Nose and Throat doctor (also called an ENT), audiologist, early interventionist, teacher, and speech-language pathologist. Parents are essential members of the team. You know your child best, and have the greatest stake in your child's well-being and success.

Parents are the first and most important teacher in their young child's life. The professionals will help you as you learn about hearing loss and how you can best help your child learn. Together you and your experts make up your child's team.

As a team, you will work together to help your child learn to listen and talk.

Good team members respect and trust each other enough to share what is working well and what is hard. They share decisions about intervention and they share accountability for child progress. Good teams celebrate successes and solve problems together.

They know the underlying values that motivate each parent, agree on an agenda for each session, and have clear goals, that have been broken down into small steps. A good team works together and each one knows what he or she needs to do.

Good team members talk about how things are going and change what they are doing, when needed.

They are reliable, on time, and do what they say they will do. It is important that you understand how everything you and your team are doing will help your child learn to listen and talk. Professionals want you to ask questions and to tell them when you do not understand. Expect the professionals to ask you questions too; they need to understand your individual needs.

Developing positive parent and professional partnerships helps children prepare for school. Children learn language, social and emotional skills, and this is important for helping them to make friends.



Positive partnerships help parents have confidence in what they know and what they need to do. It provides support for parents to consistently help their child every day. For example, putting the hearing aids on their child. When parents understand their child's needs and are confident, they are good advocates for their children.

Positive partnerships can also help when challenges arise. Parents may experience difficult emotions, such as sadness or guilt. Talking through emotions can help work through them. Other challenges could include learning new skills and remembering how to do them at home, or teach them to others, or working with children when they have behavior problems.

To reach the goals you have for your child, you must participate in the activities that will help your child learn to listen and talk. This means working on listening and talking activities with your child every day,

and participating in discussions with professionals by being ready to share what you have learned and asking questions about the things you do not understand. Take your role as your child's most important teacher willingly and seriously.

You will need to learn many new things to help your child. You may need to be flexible or do things you have never done before. The lessons you learn will help you to be the best teacher you can be for your child. Learning can take time, be patient with yourself and with other caregivers. Being kind to your team members and work through issues when they occur.

As you work together with your team as equal partners you will have success and you will build trust. Trust has to be earned. Your professionals will need to earn your trust and you will need to earn theirs. People who are reliable, communicate, and participate, show by their actions that they can be trusted.

When you know you can trust your professionals to help you reach your goals for your child, you will become confident with the decisions and choices you make for your child. You will have peace of mind. It is important for professionals and parents to get to know one another. Maybe you are a single parent or have other children, have the support of other family members and friends, or work outside your home. The professionals need to know your unique needs so they can provide guidance that fits into your life, the life of your child and the life of your family.

Always keep in mind the goals you have for your child. Let these goals guide you as you make important decisions. Remember, you can always change providers if you need to. Make sure you have positive, supportive professionals working on your team. When you do, everything is possible.