



Making Connections

When you learned your child was deaf or hard of hearing, you may have felt very alone. You may have worried about what to do and how to help your child. You may have felt scared. The good news is you are not alone.

Support can come from grandparents and other family members, the professionals you are working with, your community, and other parents. There are many other parents who have had a child identified with hearing loss and have experience. These parents want to share their story with you and they want to help you.

Talking with and learning from other parents can be very helpful as your child grows and develops.

Other parents can help you know what to expect, or give you practical advice, such as how to keep the hearing aids on your child. They can share their experiences about cochlear implants, or finding high quality services. They can also talk with you about how to help your family and other people understand deafness, or how to help your child develop friendships.

When a child is identified with a hearing loss, parents say the biggest impact they have is on their emotional wellbeing. Parents who have emotional support have said they feel less stress. Talking with other parents who have been there can help you feel connected. They can comfort you, provide you with perspective, and offer you hope for your child's future. Other parents can help you adjust to having a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Support from other parents can help you provide better assistance to your child. Parent to parent support can help you learn new information, improve your ability to problem-solve, and connect you to resources. Parents who are supported feel more confident and more empowered to partner with professionals to meet their child's needs. Talking with other parents who have been there can help make your learning process feel more manageable.

How do you find parents who are willing to help you along the way?

Your team of professionals is a good place to start. You can ask your child's audiologist, teacher or other professionals if they will introduce you to other parents.

They also may know of a parent group in your community that meets from time to time. If you are not comfortable talking with other parents in person, there are ways to connect online.



Connecting to another parent has never been easier. Text messages, video chats, on-line groups and email make it possible for you to talk with other parents even if you live far from them.

To find parent support you can check resources in your local area, for example the state Early Hearing Detection and Intervention coordinator. There are organizations specific to helping parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, such as Alexander Graham Bell and Hands and Voices, and many states have chapters. There are also Facebook groups just for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and who have chosen listening and spoken language. The most important thing for you to remember is you do not have to do it alone. Reach out! Connect! Get the support you need from another parent who understands what you are going through! Be sure to check the resources tab for links to support organizations.

Sharing your feelings and thoughts about your child's hearing loss with another parent will benefit you and your child. And, one day, you will be able to provide the same support to other parents.