

Parent & Professional Partnerships

Professional's Perspectives

For most parents, the news that their child has a hearing loss is unexpected and learning about hearing loss and the new things you need to do every day can feel hard. It's easy to forget that what you know about your child and your family is really important to helping your child learn how to communicate.

You are the expert when it comes to your child and your family. You are with your child every day, you can see what is working, and what is hard, and this is important information to share with the professionals you are working with.

The professionals you work with are knowledgeable about hearing loss, hearing devices, and they know how to help your child develop spoken language.

Together, you and the professionals you work with can help your child reach his full potential.

What is really helpful is when parents share with us their routines, what is a typical day like, how do things go for you what is the rhythm of your day, who is caring for your child. Helping us understand what your typical environment is like, can really help us understand you. Also, let us know what is important to you and your family, what are your hopes and your dreams. If things are really going well for you, what does it look like to you. That gives us a perspective that is really critical because our goal is to help you. And within your day, if there is challenges that you are having, help us understand your challenges in implementing the interventions that we are working with you on, because there is a lot of different ways that we can approach things and do things, and what is ultimately the most important is that it works for you and your family. So, if there is something that is not going well, it is better to talk about it and together we can work out pathways and solutions that really are right for you, so that you can help your child in the best way that you can to reach your hopes and dreams, and to help your child succeed.

Some of the things I think that are really helpful that parents can do is ask us lots of questions because many times as audiologists we think we know the information that you are interested in or that you need, but unless you tell us by asking questions, we may not be able to match up with the information that you need. So, we really like it when we get lots of questions, and there really is not such a thing as a stupid question when it comes to hearing loss because we are all sort of in this together to help children and to help figure these things out. I feel like the parent-professional partnership is working best for me, when a parent is willing to push back

against my recommendations or my thoughts and disagree, and then offer up what they think needs to happen with their child, in the context of their own family, because we all know that the parents understand their families best. One way that you can partner with your audiologist is to let the audiologist know that someone in the family is having difficulty accepting the fact that the baby has a hearing loss, and if you explain that to your audiologist, chances are your audiologist will encourage you to bring that family member in for the next appointment, and if the audiologist understands that ahead of time, they can help the other members of the family to understand what is happening with your baby.

Things happen to hearing aids, they go through the laundry, sometimes the dog or cat might find the hearing aid and the next thing you know the hearing aid is chewed up or it has been left at the school and it gets lost. If any of those things happen your audiologist will understand. The important message is to notify your audiologist as soon as possible, because we can provide a loaner for you in many cases, and we can often get a replacement if the hearing aid is lost permanently, but the sooner we know that information the better. As a member of the team, and as an audiologist, and an interventionist many ways that you can assist me is by telling me what you want to know more about. What information is important to you. What is it we are doing together that is working for you, and what is it we are doing together that is not working for you.

When you go to an appointment, it can be easy to forget to bring up your questions, concerns, and observations you have had about how things are going. Some people find it helpful to write down their thoughts as things come up at home, and then they bring their notebook to appointments to help them remember to bring up issues that are important to them.

The whole family is important and part of the process for helping your child learn to listen and talk. Ask for help teaching other family members so they can understand and feel confident in their role.

Learning about hearing loss and how to adjust your daily routines to help your child can take time and effort. Talk about this with the professionals you work with and ask them to connect you with resources that can support your needs.

Just know parents that you are the key valuable member of the team in developing your child's brain and we count on you to be able to work together and to be your child's best and most important teacher.