



Teaching Other Caregivers

Children with hearing loss need consistent access to speech to develop spoken language. It is common for children to have more than one person tending to their daily needs. It may be two parents, extended family members, friends, or other care providers.

All people who care for your child need to know how to manage your child's hearing technology, including checking device function, putting the hearing devices on your child, managing your child's behavior to maintain consistent hearing device use, and how to use language strategies when talking with your child.

Caregivers can experience barriers, even when they are supportive and want to help. They may feel unsure about their role, unclear about the importance of the tasks, lack confidence in how to do the tasks or fear doing something wrong.

First, make a list of the people you need to teach.

Set aside time to explain key information. Talk about what your child can and cannot hear. It can confuse caregivers when they see your child reacting to sounds without their devices and they may mistakenly think it is ok to go without them. Explain that your child needs amplification to hear all the speech sounds and that consistent hearing leads to better language development; in fact, children who wear their devices 10 or more hours per day have better language outcomes. Also, explain that your child needs extra exposure to language strategies as part of their everyday routines throughout the day to learn how to talk.

Show how to perform routine tasks. This includes how to check that the devices are working and how to perform simple maintenance tasks like changing the battery. Because young children may take off their devices, caregivers need to know how to put the devices on your child and how to turn them on. As you learn new language strategies, teach caregivers how to use them too. It may help to provide written instructions and you may need to explain how to do the skills a few times.

Ask the caregiver to show you each skill, describing what they are doing as they show you. This can help you see what they understand and where they may need additional help. Use the resources on Hear to Learn to support learning. You can show video tutorials, and print language activities. The videos can be viewed as often as needed to help them gain confidence doing each task.



Ask each caregiver what they think will be a problem. Anticipating their concerns gives you an opportunity to find solutions. Ask them what they think will help them address the challenge. Together, make a specific plan.

Check in with the caregivers until they are comfortable and confident with the tasks. Remember to teach caregivers new language strategies and steps you are taking to teach your child self-advocacy skills, so they can support your efforts. Your audiologist and other providers are great resources to help you teach others. You may want to invite caregivers to come with you to an appointment.

To summarize, make a list of the people to teach, explain your child's hearing loss, show them how to do each skill, use teaching resources to help you explain, explore their barriers with them, and check-in to see how they are doing with the skills over time. By training the people in your child's life to help, your child will have more consistent access to speech, and this will help them learn to listen and talk.