

We believe that...

**You're not alone.** Over 90% of deaf or hard of hearing children are born to hearing parents.

**There are options.** It is important to get informed about the various communication and education options before making decisions.

**Your role is critical.** As the parent, you play the most important role in your child's development. You are their first teacher.

**Your child can succeed!** There are many successful Deaf adults, and your child can also grow into a self-sustained, fulfilled adult.

## A Parent's Guide to Deafness

To read more, visit:

[www.deafnessforparents.wordpress.com](http://www.deafnessforparents.wordpress.com)

## A Parent's Guide to Deafness

Quick facts for parents of deaf children.



## Deafness

There are three main types of hearing loss:

- **Sensorineural Hearing Loss:** Comes from a problem in the middle ear and can occur before or during birth or by genetic causes.
- **Conductive Hearing Loss:** A problem in the outer or middle ear that keeps sound from reaching the inner ear.
- **Mixed Hearing Loss:** A sensorineural hearing loss mixed with problems with the middle ear such as fluid in the middle ear.

Your child's audiogram will show the degree of loss and how much residual hearing your child has.

## Speech

Most Deaf children who communicate orally have some residual hearing and use hearing aids or a cochlear implant.

Usually, these children are not taught sign language and go through intense auditory training and speech therapy.

## American Sign Language

Exposure to language, whether through speech or sign, is one of the most important factors in your child's development.

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete and official language. It is said to be the fourth most commonly used language in the United States. ASL has its own grammar system that differs from English grammar. There are other sign systems that are English based, such as Signed Exact English (SEE 2).

## Education

Deaf children attend schools for the Deaf or are mainstreamed in a school among hearing peers. Schools for the Deaf follow different communication philosophies:

- **Total Communication:** Uses sign and speech.
- **Bilingual/Bicultural:** Classes are taught in ASL and English is taught as a second language.
- **Oral:** Focuses on speech only.

Deaf students who are mainstreamed can receive services such as a sign language interpreter, a resource room, or an FM system.

## Deaf Community

The Deaf have a unique culture. They do not consider their deafness to be a disability. They are proud of their identity and of American Sign Language.

Members of the Deaf community prefer the term "Deaf" as opposed to "hearing impaired" or other terms implying a handicap.

We encourage you to connect with Deaf adults in your community. Ask a Deaf school in your area for contacts or find a Deaf club near you.

## Amplification

Many deaf children can benefit from using a hearing aid or a cochlear implant.

Cochlear Implants are for moderate to severe sensorineural hearing losses. Though it does not provide normal hearing, it gives useful representations of sounds and is clearer than hearing aids.

Talk to an audiologist about what option would be best for your child.