

Module 7: Parenting a Child Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Section: Positive Impact and Journaling



Activity 7.2: Supporting a Family's Journey Through Journaling

As discussed in *Setting Language in Motion*, journaling is a great activity to support families in seeing their child's growth and progress and looking at the whole child, not only at the ear and hearing.

- A. Work with the family to establish the best way for them to journal:
- Check with the family to see if they are already documenting their child's milestones, such as his or her first smile, first signs, and/or first spoken words in some way (e.g., blog, baby book, media posts, family newsletter). If so, discuss how to include journaling as part of what they are already doing.
 - Ask the family whether they'd prefer a paper or an electronic journal. Some people prefer one medium over the other. For parents who use a smartphone, encourage them to jot down notes throughout the day to remind them of what to later add to their journal. For families who are so inclined, encourage them to include video journal entries of the child's accomplishments.
 - Let the family know that anyone in the family can write something down and add it to the journal.
- B. Discuss with the family the types of information they may want to include in their journal. Some types of information to address may involve the following topics:
- having a child who is deaf or hard of hearing when they did not expect it;

- adjusting to a “new normal” of being a family with a child who is deaf or hard of hearing;
- the impact of multiple medical and audiology appointments;
- entering the world of early intervention, home visits, and “hearing”;
- the important role of being a parent while also functioning as therapist, nurse, case manager, and/or hearing aid technician;
- reflecting on what has made them happy, proud, and able to celebrate the “little things”; and
- one daily thing that their child did that they want to remember. It can be something new, funny, uniquely them, or just a happy memory. Encourage the family to focus on the positive, but also include the “I know I’ll laugh about this later” stories (e.g., when the child threw his or her hearing aids in the toilet or used a marker to turn his or her sibling into a zebra).

C. Consider various ways that you can use the journal as a part of a home visit:

- Use the journal as a jumping off place to begin a home visit and discuss what has happened during the week.
- If the family has not been journaling during the week, write down the things they talk about so they can create a journal entry from that.
- Engage the family, as appropriate, about how their documentation makes them feel. (e.g., sad, proud, excited).
- Guide families in understanding the implications of what it means when a child is not able to hear (e.g., spoken language does not develop in a manner similar to children who can hear, why visual language is beneficial, what hearing aids can/cannot do).

Developed with Kimberly Leong