

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

### Section: Tips for Early Intervention Providers

#### Tips for Early Intervention Providers

- Provide complete and accurate information.
- Actively support parents' needs.
- Empower parents to be part of the team.
- Be ready with resources to meet the families' needs.
- Focus on the positives.
- Focus on the whole child.
- Avoid complex terminology and jargon.

### Activity 7.5: Considerations for Early Intervention Providers in Their Work with Families

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- A. Support each family in goal setting for their child in various areas of development (not only related to language and communication):
- Include discussion about typical development in all areas (e.g., motor development, social-emotional development, cognitive development).
  - Guide the families in identifying achievable goals and priorities. Discuss what might be expected “next steps” in various areas of development for their specific child, and help develop a plan to achieve those steps.
- B. Guide the families in making connections to learn about local and national organizations and agencies that support children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families:
- Inform families of national organizations that may provide information to them on their journey (e.g., [American Society for Deaf Children](#), [Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center: Info to Go](#)).
  - Identify available resources for families in your community or state. Professionals within those agencies may have ideas about or provide resources to support families as their children grow. They may also have resources to support early intervention providers. (See [Info to Go's Statewide Services for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#) and [State-by-State Resources](#).)

- Contact local schools for the deaf that may provide outreach support for working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  - Inform families of various national conferences that they may be interested in attending to meet other families (e.g., EHDI Meeting, AG Bell, American Society for Deaf Children).
- C. Explore opportunities for families to connect with other families who use a variety of language and communication strategies with their children (e.g., bilingual approaches, listening and spoken language, Cued Speech).
- Guide families in exploring support groups, playgroups, online chat rooms, etc.
  - Introduce families to adults who are deaf or hard of hearing who have been raised using various language and communication approaches.
- D. Support families in becoming an advocate for their children:
- Provide families with a range of information from various perspectives on raising a deaf or hard of hearing child.
  - Identify resources to support families in becoming advocates for their deaf or hard of hearing children:
    - [Deaf Child's Bill of Rights](#)
    - [The Hands & Voices Advocacy, Support, and Training \(ASTra\) Program](#)
    - [Advocating for Your Deaf Child's Education](#)
- E. For families of **children who are deaf or hard of hearing and have additional challenges**, take the following into consideration:
- Acknowledge that parents may need additional time in the early years to process the different needs their child may have.
  - Define and redefine what success means and what it looks like for children who are deaf with additional challenges.
  - Seek out videos or parents with older, happy, successful young adults that are deaf with additional challenges.

- Provide avenues to support the family in celebrating their child's growth and milestones. Acknowledge any milestones that may be delayed. At the same time, provide opportunities for the families to see positive next steps with achievable outcomes.
- Work with the parents on developing an *All About Me* book that highlights their child's development and includes the child's strengths. Encourage families to share their books with service providers so they may look beyond the additional challenges the child may have.
- Do not limit communication and language approaches being considered for a child with additional challenges. A child's challenges may or may not impact choices (e.g., some children with motor challenges may do just fine with sign language, children with various challenges may still obtain benefit from cochlear implants but have unique expectations that align with their challenges).
- Guide families in exploring possible parent-to-parent partnerships with other families who have experience raising a child who is deaf with additional challenges.
- Discuss streamlining multiple therapies that may be impacting the overall quality of the family's life at home.

**Additional Resources:**

- [Raising a Deaf or Hard of Hearing Child - Family Support](#) (Hands and Voices)
- [Case Management Services](#) (Mass.gov)

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