
Making the Best Choices for Your Child and Your Family



COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES

The goal for all children is to learn how to communicate. Communication is the sharing of information, and can occur through signed or spoken language, gesturing, and even through technology. It is the process of understanding other people and having them understand you. Every child is unique, and so is what works best for him/her to learn to communicate with others. There is no single method of communication that has been scientifically proven to be the best option for ALL deaf and hard of hearing children.

Other parents may have different opinions on what is the best way to provide these communication opportunities for their child and what will be best for their family. You will also encounter many professionals who have different advice, and you may see examples of children who have been very successful using different methods of communication. But you know your

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child the best. You understand what helps your child learn, and what works best for your family. The best decision you can make is to use whatever opportunities make communication successful for your child and your family.

Language is a system that is used to communicate, such as spoken English, written English, American Sign Language, and other spoken or written languages. Family involvement and early intervention have been identified as the most influential factors in language development for children with a hearing loss (Moeller, 2000). Thus, a family must be committed to consistently communicating with their child using the communication approach that works best for their child and their family, and work to support their child's development in all possible ways.

It is important to realize that you don't have to choose only one communication approach for your child, and whatever communication approach(es) you use may change over time. A communication method can change as the child's needs and preferences vary, or as the child gets older. There have been children who have chosen to take off their hearing aids and use sign language as their primary means of communication, while other children who are fluent in sign language choose to get a cochlear implant later in life.

You must have an understanding of critical periods of development while making decisions, as not all opportunities are available at all times. In addition, one approach does not preclude another. Some families adopt more than one communication approach for their child. Other families will choose one communication approach, find it is not working as well as they had hoped, and will make adjustments or changes later.

The most important thing is that families work as much as possible to develop their child's ability to communicate, and to have the language to understand and learn from the world around them. Some parents may not feel qualified, educated enough, or ready to make communication decisions for their child. Others may be afraid that they will make a wrong decision.

Talk to other parents about their experiences. Just remember that what works for their child and their family might not work as well for your child and your family, and that is when you need to rely on your judgment as a parent. Hopefully you will also be working with a team that can help you evaluate and assess the progress your child is making with the choices you have made and the opportunities you have provided for your child.

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If your child is not progressing as quickly as you desire in spoken and/or signed language development, you can make changes. In any case it is important that you and your child are successfully communicating.

There are several different communication approaches for children who are deaf/HH. The Communication Approaches Chart that follows shows communication modes as a continuum, ranging from a fully visual approach to a fully auditory approach with many combinations in between. It is useful to view these approaches as communication opportunities that can be combined rather than choosing one communication method and eliminating all others. Each communication approach will then be explained a bit further, and resources will be provided for learning more about each approach.

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COMMUNICATION APPROACHES CHART

BEGINNINGS for Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, Inc :: www.ncbegin.org

	AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE	ENGLISH OR OTHER SPOKEN LANGUAGE			
	AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) / ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (Visual Approach)	AUDITORY VERBAL (AV) (Auditory Approach)	CUED SPEECH (CS)	AUDITORY ORAL (A-O) (Combined Visual & Auditory Approaches)	SIMULTANEOUS COMMUNICATION (SimComm or Total Communication)
DEFINITIONS	A bilingual approach which includes the development of both ASL and English. ASL is a natural, visual/manual language totally accessible to children who are deaf, that has its own grammar and linguistic principles. The acquisition of English is addressed through the use of teaching strategies for English as a Second Language.	An approach emphasizing spoken language development through listening. Child develops spoken language through one-on-one therapy and use of residual hearing with optimal amplification. Strives to make the most of a child's ability to learn through listening; therefore, the child does not rely on visual cues.	An auditory-visual communication approach combining a system of hand cues with the natural mouth movements of speech, specifying each sound (phoneme) of spoken language clearly. A hand shape (consonant groups) at a location (vowel groups) cues a syllable. This integration provides clear access to all the phonemes (sounds) as parents coo, babble and talk.	An approach that teaches a child to use his/her remaining hearing through amplification and the use of speechreading/natural gestures/visual cues to aid the child's understanding of language. The use of any form of sign language communication is not encouraged.	An educational philosophy that uses spoken language and sign language simultaneously. Uses an English-based sign language system which can include speech, speechreading, fingerspelling, natural gestures and the use of residual hearing.
PRIMARY GOALS	To acquire an age-appropriate internal language as a basis for learning a second language and opportunities for academic achievement. To develop a positive self-image and cultural identity providing access to the Deaf community. To provide a basis for learning written and, when possible, spoken English as a second language.	To develop spoken language through listening by following the stages and sequence of typical development. To develop the skills necessary for successful mainstreaming in school and integration into the hearing community. To promote a positive self-image through natural family and social interactions using spoken language.	To provide clear communication in the spoken language of the home. To develop the phonemic language base to achieve full literacy in conversation, reading and writing. To support speechreading, speech and auditory skill development.	To develop spoken language through listening and visual cues. To develop spoken language and communication skills necessary for school success and integration into the hearing community.	To provide a bridge to the development of spoken language in the very young child. To provide communication between the child and his/her family, teachers and peers using sign language. To support integration into both the hearing and the Deaf communities.
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (RECEPTIVE)	The child develops early language concepts as well as higher order cognitive skills by utilizing the visual nature of ASL.	The child develops understanding of spoken language through early and consistent intervention that emphasizes learning through listening in a developmentally appropriate sequence. Optimal listening opportunities require the use of appropriate hearing technology.	The child absorbs language through early, consistent, clear communication using Cued Speech, speechreading and hearing. Cueing boosts auditory awareness, discrimination and understanding.	The child develops internal language through early, consistent listening experiences and developmentally appropriate therapy, which includes speechreading and the use of hearing technology.	The child develops language through speechreading, listening and exposure to a combination of speech and sign-based systems in English order.
EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE	ASL fluency and written English. Ability to code switch from ASL to English (signed, spoken or written as needed).	Spoken and written English.	Cued, spoken and written English or other languages (60+ cued languages).	Spoken and written English.	Spoken English using sign language in English word order, and written English.
HEARING (AUDITION)	Encourages individual decision about amplification. Amplification may provide access to spoken language and allow the child more opportunity to become bilingual.	Early, consistent and appropriate use of hearing technology (hearing aids, cochlear implant(s), FM system) is critical to this approach. Requires ongoing auditory management.	Early, consistent and appropriate use of hearing technology (hearing aids, cochlear implant(s), FM system) is important with this approach. Requires ongoing auditory management.	Early, consistent and appropriate use of hearing technology (hearing aids, cochlear implant(s), FM system) is important with this approach. Requires ongoing auditory management.	Consistent and appropriate use of hearing technology (hearing aids, cochlear implant(s), FM system) is strongly encouraged.
FAMILY/PRIMARY CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES & GUIDANCE	Parents are committed to learning and using ASL consistently. Families emphasize literacy in the home. Families provide opportunities for interaction with the Deaf community to help ensure a future independent and fulfilled Deaf citizen. ASL is learned through classes, media, websites, and interaction with members of the Deaf community.	Parents are expected to actively participate as partners in sessions with therapist(s) in order to learn strategies and techniques that promote the auditory learning of goals. Families need to carry over the goals established in therapy into the child's daily routines and play activities. Parents learn to create an optimal "listening" learning environment. Parents must also provide a language-rich environment, to make learning through listening a meaningful part of all experiences.	Parents are expected to learn to speak-and-cue at all times in order for children to absorb the phonemes critical to language and reading readiness. Families need to provide consistent use of cues and speech during daily routines and play activities. The system is taught in less than 20 hours through multi-media, classes, and Family Cue Camps. Consistent daily use and practice leads to conversational ease within a year.	Families are expected to provide appropriate carry-over of goals, strategies and techniques from the child's classroom setting and/or individual therapy sessions into daily routines and play activities. Parents need to work with the child's teacher(s) and/or therapist(s) to learn strategies and techniques for developing listening, speechreading and speaking skills in an oral learning environment.	Families are expected to learn and consistently use the chosen English-based sign language system. Parents need to work with the child's teacher(s) and/or therapist(s) to learn strategies that promote language expansion.

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American Sign Language (ASL)

As with all signed language, ASL is a manual language communicated through hand signs, facial expressions, and gestures. American Sign Language is a true language, with its own grammar and syntax rules. Early and consistent exposure is needed for all language development. Parents and early intervention professionals must utilize the first years of life to foster this type of communication, as this is a critical time during which children develop language skills. Early language learning experiences affect other areas of development and are critical to children's future success (ie. learning a first language early allows one to more easily acquire skills in a second language). Sign language is visual and therefore fully accessible to children who have typical vision. Using sign language, even with babies who can hear, promotes earlier expressive communication and language development. Studies have shown that children can benefit from the use of sign language, with no risk to other language skills (Malloy, 2006). There are no studies that support the myth that learning sign language will prevent a child from learning spoken language.

Children who are learning American Sign Language need access to adults who are fluent in ASL, and thus most hearing parents may need to learn ASL if they don't know it already. This will take a serious commitment to learn a second language. Many sign language classes are available throughout the state of Arizona. Several classes are free of charge to parents of children who are deaf/HH. See the following page for a non-exhaustive list of these classes, with more information available on the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) website.

Sign Language Classes

ASDB Early Childhood & Family Education	520-770-3464
ALOHA-Tucson	520-795-9887
Easter Seals Society	520-745-5222
Phoenix Day School for the Deaf	602-771-5300
LDS Church: Phoenix	602-242-0694
LDS Church: Mesa	480-964-8335
St. Mathew Methodist Church	602-838-7309
Tri-City Baptist	602-838-5430
Valley Center of the Deaf	602-267-1921
Community Parks/Recreation Programs	
Local Community Colleges, Universities, and Churches	
Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH)	
www.acdhh.org	
602-542-3323	

There are also several websites available that provide resources for ASL. For example, Sign2Me is a site promoting ASL tools for early literacy, and also offers courses and baby sign language products for purchase.

Sign2Me

www.sign2me.com

425-493-1903

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Other websites serve the needs of the ASL Educational community by providing free reference and learning tools to enhance in-classroom learning for ASL educators and their students. Signing Savvy is one example.

Signing Savvy

www.signingsavvy.com

There are also a variety of free and paid ASL or sign language applications for tablets and smart phones.

The National Association of the Deaf is a civil rights organization of, by, and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States. The organization supports the right of the American Deaf community to use American Sign Language, and their website includes extensive information on law and advocacy.

National Association of the Deaf

www.nad.org

301-587-1788

Auditory-Oral (AO) or Auditory-Verbal (AV)

Although the communication approaches chart separates these two approaches, they are similar in that the goal of each is to teach children who are deaf/HH to learn to use listening and spoken language. With newborn hearing screening and improvements in technology (hearing aids, FM systems, and cochlear implants) this is becoming a far more attainable goal for children with significant hearing loss than it has been in the past. However, technology alone will not enable this to happen. Again, early and continual access to sound and intentional intervention is needed for spoken language development. Parents and providers trained in this approach must utilize the first years of life, as this is the critical window for developing natural spoken language skills through listening. Those early experiences will affect a child's ability to receive and use auditory information later in life. The later the child is amplified, the greater the need for didactic intervention.

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In the Auditory-Oral approach, speech reading, natural gestures, and visual cues are also used to communicate. Factors that influence a child's ability to succeed with oral-auditory skills are: a) age of identification and amplification, b) presence of other disabilities, c) consistent use of hearing devices, d) strong family support, e) a team that shares common communication goals, and f) a language-rich environment. Oral Deaf Education is an organization devoted to the promotion of oral deaf education as a collaborative, family-centered education approach. Their website provides a list of oral deaf education schools, videos highlighting children who have been educated in this manner, and downloadable materials for parents, educators, and professionals.

Oral Deaf Education

www.oraldeafed.org

Cued speech

Cued speech employs 8 hand signs to give cues to the child about the sound a speaker is making and enable the child to read lips. This approach helps the child to distinguish between sounds that look the same when spoken (for example p, b, and m look the same when they are spoken) and is a visual system designed to support the development of spoken language. Parents can typically learn to cue in a relatively short period of time and should be expected to cue with their child at all times until it may no longer be needed. The National Cued Speech Association supports effective communication, language development, and literacy through the use of Cued Speech. They are primarily an advocacy organization, focusing on outreach, family and education support, and community-based education.

National Cued Speech Association

Susan Price, Arizona Cued Speech Representative

www.cuedspeech.org

520-770-3471

Simultaneous or Total Communication

In the simultaneous communication approach, sign language cues are given to the child along with spoken language, but these signs are presented in the syntax that the English language follows, not American Sign Language. In Signed Exact English (SEE), the signs are a literal

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word-for-word match to the spoken message, whereas Pidgin Signed English is a mixture of both ASL and SEE. Pidgin Signed English focuses more on conceptual accuracy, with some but not all of the words in the spoken message signed to the child. This approach is also called Total Communication when every means is used to communicate with the child such as SEE, finger spelling, speech reading, natural gestures, and amplification. The Signing Exact English Center is a non-profit organization established to work with parents and educators to promote an understanding of the principles of SEE and its use.

Signing Exact English Center

www.seccenter.org

562-430-1467

Bilingual ASL-English

This approach, which is considered to be both a bilingual and bicultural approach, stresses the development of two languages, American Sign Language (ASL) and the native language of the family. ASL is usually taught as the first language, and the second language is taught through reading, writing, speech, and the use of residual hearing. The American Society for Deaf Children is a national independent non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and educating families of children who are deaf/HH. They believe deaf children should be fluent in both sign language and English for optimal academic success. They emphasize that research consistently demonstrates that fluency in sign language and in English offers deaf children (including those with cochlear implants) and hard-of-hearing children optimal opportunities for social and academic success, and should both be part of their language-rich environment.

American Society for Deaf Children

www.deafchildren.org

1-800-942-2732

The following “Decision Guide to Communication Options” was designed to guide you through the steps in deciding about communication.

Step Three: Plan the Next Steps Based on Your Needs

This final table will suggest specific steps that may help you feel confident about your decision. Don't give up. Keep looking for the resources you need to get to a level of comfort with this process. You will begin developing an understanding of your long term goals for your child, which may in turn shape your decisions and provide motivation. *You can do it!*

If you are having difficulty	What you can do
Do you feel you do not have enough support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your options with a trusted person • Find out what help is available to support your choice
Do you feel pressure from others to make a specific choice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the opinions of others that matter most to you • Share your guide with others • Ask others to complete this guide • Find a neutral person to help you and the other people involved
Do you feel you do not have enough facts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out about the advantages and limitations • List your questions and note where to find the answers
Are you not sure which advantages and limitations matter most to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the stars in the Advantages and Limitations table to see what matters most to you • Find people who know what it is like to experience the advantages and limitations • Talk to parents who have made the decision • Read stories of what mattered most to others • Discuss with others what matters most to you

Are there other factors that make the decision difficult? If so, list them here:

- Here are some of the resources available to help in your decision-making process:
- Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/nchs/ehdi/ehdi.html
 - National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management www.infanthearing.org
 - Boys Town National Research Hospital and National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) www.babyhearing.org/
 - Hands & Voices www.handsandvoices.org

Disclaimer:
We provide links to other web pages if you want to learn even more about a topic. One of these pages is on the CDC web site and others are on outside web sites. Links to organizations outside of CDC are included for information only. CDC has no control over the information at these sites. The views and opinions of these organizations are not necessarily those of CDC, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), or the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS).
Format is based on the Ottawa Personal Decision Guide, University of Ottawa, Canada

Decision Guide to Communication Choices



For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

"I wish I knew when my son was little that the decisions I made for him were my decisions for that time. I wish I knew I could change course and that was okay. It would have taken a lot of pressure off. I wish I realized that as he grew older, he would become the decision-maker and I would become his consultant and biggest fan."

Cardice Lindow-Davies, Lakes town, © 2006 MN - Hands & Voices




You may use separate sheets if you need more space.

From whom have you received support?	Name:	Name:
Which option does this person prefer?		
Is this person pressuring you?		
How can this person support you?		
What part of the person's background affects their opinion?		

The following questions refer to the "Comparison" table below.

Advantages and Limitations of Communication Options

This chart helps you work through your needs in the four categories (A, B, C and D) in Step 2 above.

	How much it matters. Add * to * * * * *	Reasons to choose this option	Reasons to avoid this option	How much it matters. Add * to * * * * *
Option 1				
Option 2				
Option 3				
Combination of Options				

B. Knowledge

- Are you confident that you know all the options available? Yes No
- Have you considered the advantages and limitations to each option for your family? Yes No
- Have you looked for more information or talked with others who can help you find more information? Yes No

C. Values

Are you clear about which advantages and limitations matter most to you? Yes No

In the Advantages and Limitations table above: Use stars (*-*) to show how much each advantage and limitation matters to you. Five stars (******) means that it matters a lot. Zero stars means it matters not at all.

D. Certainty

- At this point do you feel confident that you know enough about each option and how it might affect your family? Yes No
- In the Advantages and Limitations table above:** Circle the option or combination of options with the advantages that (1) matter most to you and (2) you believe are most likely to happen.

See Step Three on next page...

Learn all you can about the different communication options. You can get information from organizations that support children with hearing loss. You may also want to talk to professionals, other parents of children with hearing loss, and adults who have grown up with hearing loss. Check out books, journals, and quality web sites, too. A list of resources at the end of this pamphlet will help you get started.

This pamphlet will guide you through three steps:

1. Find your starting point in the decision-making process.
2. Identify and explore your decision making needs, and plan your next steps.
3. Plan your next steps.

The keys to making a good decision for your child and your family are:

- Knowing all of the options.
- Learning all you can about those options, and
- Resisting pressure to make a decision until you have enough information and you feel ready to choose.

Step One: Find your starting point

This step will help you describe your starting point in exploring communication options. Please remember, this decision about communication involves the whole family.

How far along are you with your decision?

- I do not know what my options are.
- I am considering the options.
- I am close to making my choice(s).
- I have already made my choice(s).

Are you leaning toward certain communication options(s)?

- No
- Yes. Which option(s)? Why?

Step Two: Identify and explore your decision-making needs

This step will help you move forward in the decision-making process. It will help you assess the knowledge you already have about the communication options and weigh the advantages and limitations of each one. It will also help you evaluate your support system and identify any pressure you might be feeling to choose certain options.

Families that answer "No" to one or more of the questions in this section may be more likely to:

- Delay their decision.
- Feel regret about their choice or
- Blame others for bad outcomes.

Therefore, it is important to focus carefully on your needs. Ideally, after working through this guide, you will be able to answer "Yes" to each of the questions posed. Likewise, if you've already made your decision, you should be able to answer "Yes" to each question.

A. Support

- Do you have family members, caregivers, and others who support you and who can help you make an informed choice for your child and family? Yes No
- Are you choosing without pressure from others? Yes No

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For children from birth to age three, the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) provides services to families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing through a division of the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB), called the ASDB Early Childhood and Family Education Program. The early intervention program provides support to families and children using any individual approach, or combination of communication approaches. There are also private and non-profit organizations that support individual approaches.

Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP)

<https://www.azdes.gov/AzEIP/Family-Information>

602-532-9960; 888-439-5609

Arizona State Schools for Deaf and Blind Early Childhood and Family Education

http://www.asdb.az.gov/asdb/index.php/home/Early_Childhood_and_Family_Education

520-770-3464

ADVICE AND SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

Parents may feel overwhelmed when trying to make the best decisions for their child, and may have several questions that need to be answered. The important thing to remember is that you are not alone. Each year approximately 12,000 children in the United States, or 3 in every 1,000 children are born with hearing loss. This makes hearing loss the most frequently occurring birth defect (White, 1997). Although you will undoubtedly receive advice and support from your extended family and friends, there are also many other parent groups and organizations that would love to offer advice and support.

A great place to start when looking for support from others is to find other parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing through organizations such as The American Society for Deaf Children and Hands and Voices. The websites for these organizations offer a wealth of information and resources, and the organization offers printed materials. Members of the American Society for Deaf Children receive a quarterly publication, *The Endeavor*, and members of Hands & Voices also received a quarterly newsletter, *The Communicator*. The American Society for Deaf Children hosts a Biennial National Conference for parents and professionals. It is also partnered with the parent-founded organization called Deaf Autism America.

The American Society for Deaf Children

www.deafchildren.org

800-942-2732

Hands & Voices

www.handsandvoices.org

303-492-6284

As the state chapter of Hands & Voices, Arizona Hands & Voices (AZHV) holds several events throughout the year to provide opportunities for parents to meet and talk with other parents of children who are deaf/HH, or gain information on topics that are unique to this population. Arizona also offers the Guide By Your Side (GBYS) program that links families to parent guides who can offer advice and support on a variety of topics. Parent guides are parents of children

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who are deaf/HH who have completed special training programs and have become knowledgeable about related issues. Every effort is made to connect families with parent guides who have chosen similar communication approaches with their own children. Parent guides work with families at no charge. You can find out more about the GBYS program on the Arizona Hands & Voices website. There you can also view upcoming events in our state, see a list of the board of directors, read family stories from members, and register to join the organization.

Arizona Hands & Voices

www.azhv.org

866-685-1050

There are several other organizations throughout Arizona that offer support to parents of children who are deaf/HH. The ASDB Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) Program is the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) provider of early intervention services for children who have bilateral hearing or vision loss, under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). They provide services to families living all over Arizona, in order to meet the needs of families in their local communities. They recognize that the relationship between parents and their child is of primary importance to a child's physical, mental and emotional development. Educational mentoring and therapy services are provided in the home or other natural environments by professionally trained staff. ECFE also works with families by providing information, education, and support during the transition into preschool.

ASDB Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE)

http://www.asdb.az.gov/asdb/index.php/home/Early_Childhood_and_Family_Education

520-770-3464

The EAR Foundation of Arizona provides services to people who are deaf, have a hearing loss, or a balance impairment. The EAR Foundation sponsors several programs for persons with hearing loss and rallies for early detection of hearing loss. The "Hear for Kids" program provides loaner or permanent hearing aids to children from birth to 18 years of age whose families are without insurance or in financial need.

EAR Foundation of Arizona

www.earfoundationaz.com

602-685-1050

The Arizona Association of the Deaf is organized and operated exclusively to promote the welfare of deaf/HH residents in the state of Arizona. They are concerned with educational and economic rights, security, social equity, and just privileges for citizens. Their website contains legislative information, a newsletter, and links to Arizona activities including the Arizona Deaf Festival.

Arizona Association of the Deaf

www.azadinc.org

Every year in Flagstaff, Arizona the Northern Arizona Deaf Expo features exhibits, interpreter and family workshops, and opportunities to practice sign language. Anyone who is interested in learning more about services available for individuals who are deaf/HH are invited to attend this event.

Northern Arizona Deaf Expo

www.nazdeafconnection.com

The Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) is a statewide information referral center for issues related to hearing loss. The organization strives to ensure accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing to improve their quality of life. Their website includes a searchable resource directory with information on many topics related to deafness and hearing loss. In addition, the website includes a section with responses to frequently asked questions and a list of upcoming events.

Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

www.acdhh.org

800-352-8161; 602-542-3323

The Arizona Blind Deaf Children's Foundation began as a foundation to support programs at the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and Blind, and are now committed to ensuring that all children who are blind, deaf, or hard of hearing in Arizona have access to experiential learning in key areas that encompass and expand upon traditional education including art, fitness, and literacy.

Arizona Blind Deaf Children's Foundation

www.azblinddeafchildren.org

520-577-3700

There are also other local organizations that provide support for children with special needs, not just those who are deaf/HH. The Arizona Department of Health Services Office for Children with Special Care Needs (OCSHCN) is Arizona's Title V Program for children and youth with special health care needs. This program works to improve systems of care, provides information and referrals to families who would like assistance in finding services available to their child, and provides advocacy to help maximize existing benefits. Their website contains links to many programs and services available to children with special needs and their families.

Arizona Department of Health Services Office for Children with Special Care Needs

www.azdhs.gov/phs/ocshcn

602-542-1860; 800-232-1676

Raising Special Kids is a non-profit organization of families helping families of children with disabilities and special needs in Arizona, through parent-to-parent programs, special education information, and community outreach. The organization is Arizona's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to provide assistance in special education to families and schools. The organization has recently combined the PTI program with the Parent Information Network, known as PINS, to strengthen and improve the delivery of parent training and assistance in special education across

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the state. Their website contains information on special education and a list of workshops and courses available online or at their facility in the Phoenix area.

Raising Special Kids

www.raisingpecialkids.org

800-237-3007

Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona was created by a small group of interested parents and professionals who are committed to providing encouragement and support to families who have children with special needs in Arizona. Services include peer-to-peer support, a parent training and information center, and a library of books and videos addressing issues related to a child's special needs.

Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona

www.pilotparents.org

520-324-3150

Many organizations outside of Arizona also offer information and support for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. For example, Beginnings for Parents of Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc. is a non-profit agency providing an impartial approach to meeting the diverse needs of families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The agency was created to be a central resource for the state of North Carolina, but their website also includes information for all families and professionals and covers a range of topics from early intervention to school issues.

Beginnings for Parents of Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc.

www.ncbegin.org

919-715-4092

Arizona Parent Resource Guide for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center was mandated by Congress in the Education of the Deaf Act (EDA) to provide information, training, and technical assistance for parents and personnel throughout the nation to meet the needs of children who are deaf/HH. Their mission is to improve the quality of education for this population throughout the United States, and they maintain two demonstration schools for elementary and secondary students. Their website contains a resources section with a centralized source of information related to children who are deaf/HH, formerly known as the National Deaf Education Network Clearinghouse. They also provide trainings and technical assistance, publications, and cochlear implant education.

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center

www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center.html

202-651-5855

The Better Hearing Institute is a not-for-profit corporation that educates the public about hearing loss. Their website provides a wealth of information on hearing loss, including a special section for children with information for parents, and a list of hearing loss resources by topic.

Better Hearing Institute

www.betterhearing.org

202-449-1100

Raising Deaf Kids is a website created by the Deafness and Family Communication Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Their goal is to provide a wealth of information and resources on hearing loss and to help parents make better decisions for their child. The website includes a section of parent talk on a range of issues pertaining to hearing loss and communication opportunities.

Raising Deaf Kids

www.raisingdeafkids.org

215-590-7440

The John Tracy Clinic provides free worldwide parent-centered services to young children from birth to five years old with a hearing loss. The organization was founded by parents of a child with a profound hearing loss who studied how deaf children could be taught to communicate in the hearing and speaking world. The clinic provides distance education courses for parents, international onsite summer sessions for families, and professional education. Their website also features information on common concerns, and an “Ask the Expert” section with issues that might be of interest to families.

John Tracy Clinic

www.jtc.org

213-748-5481

The House Research Institute works closely with physicians from the House Clinic. The institute’s Children’s Auditory Research Evaluation (CARE) Center is devoted to improving the communication ability of infants and children with auditory disorders. The center provides comprehensive evaluations of children’s hearing abilities to determine appropriate treatments and make recommendations for long-term care. Their website also includes a section with educational resources for parents.

House Research Institute

www.hei.org

800-388-8612

The Deafness Research Foundation is a national source of private funding for basic and clinical research in hearing and balance science. The foundation publishes a magazine called Hearing Health, to keep persons who are deaf/HH informed of the latest discoveries in the field. Their website features a dictionary of hearing conditions and options, with a glossary of associated medical terms.

Deafness Research Foundation

www.drf.org

866-454-3924

The Rochester Institute of Technology Center for Education Research and Partnerships was created to serve as a source of factual information for parents, teachers, and others interested in the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Questions posed on this site are answered by either members of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education or other experts. Current and past responses are listed by topic.

Rochester Institute of Technology Center for Education Research and Partnerships

www.rit.edu/ntid/educatingdeafchildren

585-475-2411

There are other sites that are concerned with larger issues, such as health and communication disorders, but also include hearing loss. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention includes a webpage with information on hearing loss in children. This division of the Department of Health and Human Services features articles, materials, and statistics about hearing loss, as well as issues related to hearing loss in the A-Z index.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

800-232-4636

In addition, the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the federal government's focal point for support of biomedical research. This particular institute is mandated to conduct and support research and

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training programs in the processes of hearing, balance, smell, taste, voice, speech, and language. Their website has a section on health information that includes issues related to hearing loss.

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

www.nidcd.nih.gov

301-496-7243

Finally, other organizations offer special services and information to their members. One example is the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a membership organization and information center for families, health care providers and educational professionals. Their mission is to advocate for independence of people with hearing loss through listening and talking.

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

www.agbell.org

202-337-5220