



COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS A-Z™

Early Intervention

1. What is early intervention for children who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Early intervention for children with hearing loss focuses on the development of receptive and expressive language using the communication mode chosen by the parents. The focus of intervention is on language development, communication of language, and teaching parents how to facilitate their children's language development through the use of everyday activities. Children's progress should be measured at regular intervals using typical language development milestones as goals.

2. What issues are at the forefront of early intervention for children who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Accessibility. Parents and children should have access to early intervention provided by educational interventionists who have been trained to work with infants and toddlers who have hearing loss. Intervention should be provided in the primary language of the home using the communication method chosen by the parents regardless of where the family resides.

Professional Capacity. There is a significant need for early intervention professionals who are trained to work with young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Further, there is a lack of trained professionals available to provide early intervention using visual and spoken communication options in all communities across the United States.

3.a. What questions should every parent ask about early intervention?

- Does my early interventionist have the specialized skills needed to teach my child? Does he/she have the necessary skills to teach me how to work with my child?

- How will my child's progress toward receptive and expressive language be assessed? How often?
- Will the communication method I have chosen for my child and family be honored?

3.b. What questions should every professional ask about early intervention?

- What skills do I need to work with children who are deaf and hard of hearing and their parents?
- How will I engage the parents in providing the necessary follow-up to early intervention sessions?

4. Where can I go for more information on this topic?

BEGINNINGS For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc.

http://www.ncbegin.org/early_intervention/early_intervention.shtml

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

http://listeningandspokenlanguage.org/Early_Intervention_What_It_Is_and_Why_It_Is_Important/

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center

[http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center/information_and_resources/info_to_go/help_for_babies_\(0_to_3\)/early_intervention.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center/information_and_resources/info_to_go/help_for_babies_(0_to_3)/early_intervention.html)

Hands & Voices, "A Parent's Wish List for Early Intervention"

http://www.handsandvoices.org/articles/early_intervention/wishlist_early_int.html

Additionally, many US states will have information about their early intervention services. To find these and more, search the web using: early intervention deaf and hard of hearing

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Communication Considerations A to Z™ is a series from Hands & Voices that's designed to help families and the professionals working with them access information and further resources to assist them in raising and educating children who are deaf or hard of hearing. We've recruited some of the best in the business to share their insights on the many diverse considerations that play into communication modes & methods, and so many other variables that are part of informed decision making. We hope you find the time to read them all!