

***A Resource Guide for  
Parents of Infants and Toddlers  
Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing***



**California Department of Education  
2013**

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

At the California Department of Education, we believe it is important to address the needs of the “whole student” – the cognitive, physical, social, emotional and cultural aspects of each child’s growth and development. Students learn best when they are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. The “whole child” approach to education encompasses methods, strategies, and services that enable schools to support this comprehensive approach to learning and development.

To effectively address the needs of the whole child, schools should collaborate with families, caretakers, and community agencies to deliver integrated services that promote improved access to health and learning supports, high expectations, and a positive school climate – all of which are necessary for students to thrive in the twenty-first century.

The “whole child” approach is so important in the education of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The goal of the California Newborn Hearing Screening Program is to identify infants who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and ensure they are enrolled in appropriate Early Start programs by six months of age. When these children are identified very young, their parents, with the support of Early Start professionals, can provide them with a language rich environment that can help them thrive and learn at the same rate as hearing children.

The purpose of the Parent Resource Guide, written by parents for parents, is to provide you with an introduction to the benefits of both signed and spoken language, as well as to the various communication tools and educational approaches available to assist you in helping your child learn. Your Early Start teachers will provide you with more information, answer your questions, and support you in the process of making informed decisions about raising your child.

You will know that what you are doing is working if your child is developing skills at the same rate as hearing children. With the help of your Early Start teacher, it will be important to assess your child’s development on an on-going basis, to ensure your child is learning.

Congratulations on the birth of you beautiful child. Please use the Parent Resource Guide to get you started on the exciting journey of raising a child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Tom Torlakson  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
2013

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE CALIFORNIA PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE COMMITTEE**

In 2011, a panel of parents convened at the California Department of Education (CDE) to create a document for parents of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, that contains evidence-based and balanced information. It is our intent that this information will help you understand the services provided through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) focusing on your child's language development. Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing have a right to early language development programs, regardless of their hearing levels, with the ultimate goal of achieving skills needed to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

When you make informed decisions regarding your child's education, it is important to know your rights as an IFSP team member within Early Start (ages birth to three), and later, as an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team member (ages 3-22). It is also important to consider all language opportunities and communication tools that are fully accessible and available to your child.

You are encouraged to see your baby as a whole child by seeing beyond his or her hearing level and to focus on kindergarten readiness. The Parent Resource Guide Committee has developed this resource guide that includes resources from national, state, and local organizations, camps, and Deaf agencies, which explain all of the opportunities available to your child. The CDE seeks to empower you to take steps in preparing for your child's education by using this resource guide. To view the complete Parent Resource Guide, go to [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/dh](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/dh).

The following parents of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing gave generously of their time, talents, and labor to make this Parent Resource Guide possible:

Diane Black, Bakersfield  
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Jaclyn Vincent, Riverside

## **ACCEPTANCE TO CELEBRATION**

The birth of a baby is a wonderful reason for celebration. Between 90-95 percent of babies who have been identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing are born to hearing parents. Usually, those parents are not expecting their baby to be Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Some parents may be unsure of what to do and what to expect for the future.

## **The Coping Process**

So, what do you need to know or look for in getting through the coping process? You need to know that you are not alone. Other parents, like the members of this Parent Resource Guide Committee, have gone through the same thing. There is an enormous amount of information and a great deal of support out there for you. The graph on page five of this guide shows you some of the places where you can find information and support. This Parent Resource Guide will help you get started and sort things out.

## **Coping Tips**

- Meet other parents in your area or online. You are not alone.
- Ask lots of questions of parents who have been through the process or have a child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- Ask questions of audiologists, doctors, teachers, and Deaf adults in the community. The more you know, the more confident you will feel about your child's future.
- Meet Deaf or Hard of Hearing role models for your child.
- Learn about opportunities in your community that can benefit your child.
- You will receive a lot of suggestions from family, friends, and different professionals. Think about each suggestion carefully. Will it work for your child and your family?
- Keep focused on moving forward in your journey.
- Remember, your child is a child first! Play, laugh, and have fun together.

## **Acceptance**

Your journey begins when you accept the need to have a plan on what to do. As you gain experience following your plan, you will see your baby for the whole child that he or she is. You will marvel at his or her abilities. You will move forward. You will also start seeing possibilities rather than limitations.

## Celebration

Now we can get back to celebration. The birth of a baby is a wonderful reason to celebrate. Start your journey, and find your direction. You will mostly realize that the dreams you had for your baby are still possible. You will have the joy of watching your baby grow and develop into a happy adult.



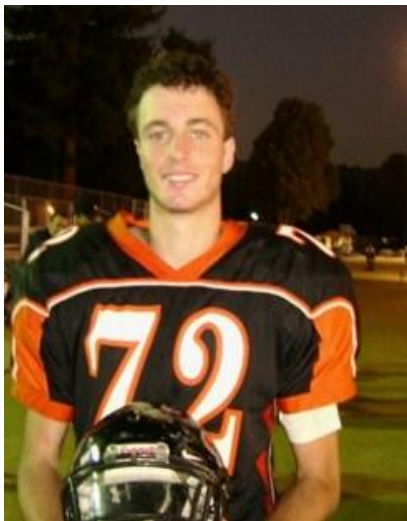
Anaya is a 22 month old girl who loves to cook with her mom – especially cookies! She also loves gardening and watching things grow.



Dakota is a 10 year old girl who performs with a children's circus in her spare time!



Zahra is a 10 year old girl who loves to act. She hopes to become a professional actress or a photographer when she grows up.



Bradley excelled in all sports in high school.



Shaina is working on a graduate degree in organic chemistry.



Amaris is an 11 year old honor student who loves to swim with the dolphins!

You get to this point step by step. There is no fast or magic way to this point of celebration. But you will get there. Again, we want to emphasize that you are not alone.

This chart, adapted from North Carolina's BEGINNINGS Program, shows some of the people and places from which parents may find support as they go through the coping process.

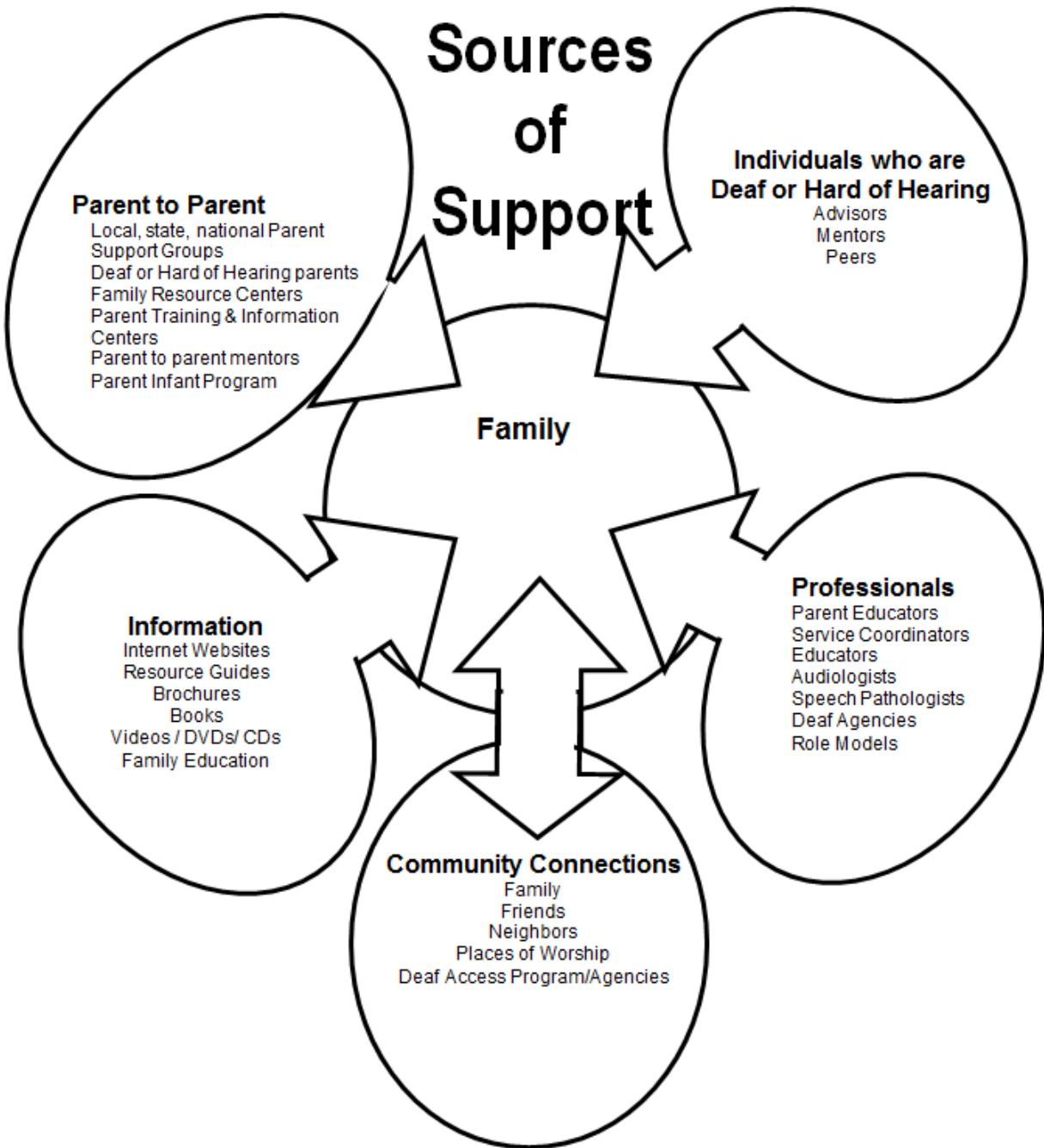


Diagram adapted from North Carolina BEGINNINGS (Joni Alberg)

## WHAT IS EARLY START?

Early Start is California's name for programs that provide services to infants and toddlers (birth to three) with disabilities, and their families.

Your audiologist will refer you and your baby to your local Early Start program. Then, the Early Start staff will contact your family and make an appointment to meet with your family. A teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students or a speech/language pathologist will be part of the team that meets with your family. The Early Start teacher must be specially trained and qualified to work with young children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The Early Start program has 45 calendar days after your baby has been referred to develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP must be based on your family's concerns, priorities, and resources. Your family will be assigned an Early Start teacher, who will meet with you in your home, usually every week.

Your Early Start teacher will explain more about all of the **language opportunities**, **communication tools**, and **educational philosophies** that are available for your family. Your Early Start teacher will help you explore those opportunities, and support you in making the decisions that are right for your child and your family.

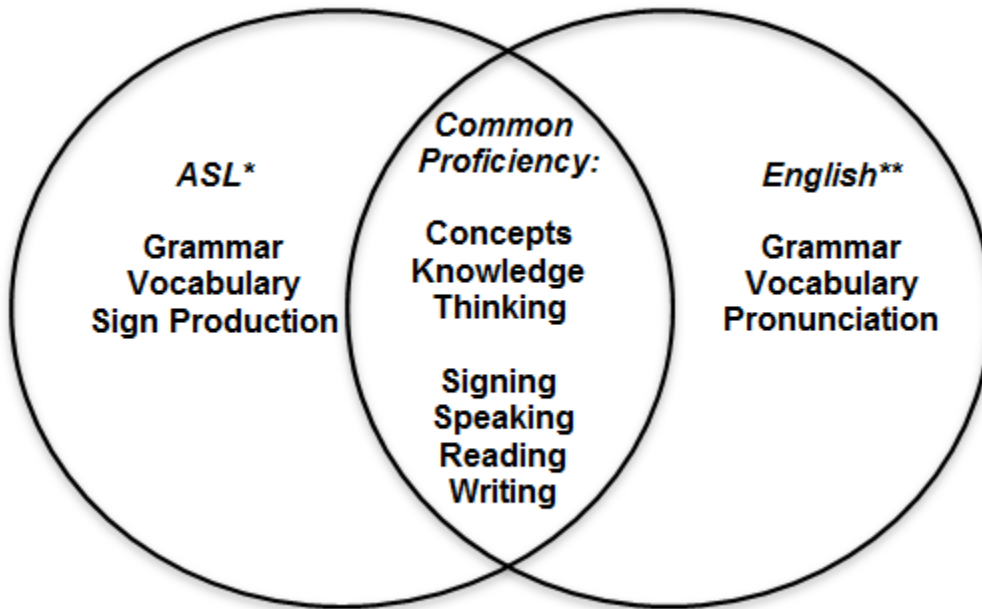
Your Early Start Service Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that your family gets the services you need to support your baby's language growth. You and your family will receive the services you need to help your baby develop listening and speaking skills, or sign language skills, or both.



## LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

All children are born ready to learn language. This is true for hearing children and for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. Families can use American Sign Language (ASL) or spoken language, or both.

This diagram shows how ASL and English interact with each other.



\* ASL or other signed language

\*\* English or other spoken language

A child needs to have full access to language in order to develop a solid foundation in ASL, English, or both. Some families use American Sign Language. Other families use spoken language. Many families use both. Some families use Signing Exact English (SEE) to provide a visual representation of English. Some families talk and sign or cue at the same time. This is called Simultaneous Communication, or Sim-Com. For all families, the goal is for your child to develop age-appropriate language skills in order to be ready for kindergarten. The California Department of Education (CDE) encourages families to learn all they can to support their child's language success.

See Through Your Child's Eyes: American Sign Language

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/dh/>



## COMMUNICATION TOOLS

While you are providing your child with access to language, either in ASL or English, or both, you may want to consider these communication tools to boost your child's access to information.

There are four kinds of Communication Tools: visual representations of spoken English, visual supplements to spoken English, auditory access technology, and visual access technology.

Visual Representations of Spoken English	Visual Supplements to Spoken English	Auditory Access Technology	Visual Access Technology
Signing Exact English (SEE)	Cued Speech  Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE)  Simultaneous Communication (Sim-Com) or Sign Supported Speech	Cochlear Implants  Digital Hearing Aids  FM Systems  Sound Field Systems  Telephone Amplifiers	Alerting Devices -flashing alarm clocks -baby crying signals -doorbell lights -smoke detector lights  Closed Captioning on TV  Videophones  Face Time



Ibrahim is a funny two year old boy full of energy. He loves to color, play with cars, be read to, play t-ball in the back yard, swim with his mommy, and build train tracks. He loves to drink chocolate milk.



Morgan is 10 years old. She loves to downhill ski in the winter, play golf in the summer, and hang out with her friends and her younger brother. She is very passionate about art and writing.

## ***Visual Representations of Spoken English***

**Signing Exact English (SEE):** Signing Exact English is a sign system that represents literal English. To make visible everything that is not heard, SEE supplements what a child can get from hearing and speechreading. Since American Sign Language (ASL) has different vocabulary, idioms and syntax from English, SEE modifies and supplements the vocabulary of ASL so children can see clearly what is said in English. ([www.seecenter.org](http://www.seecenter.org))

## ***Visual Supplements to Spoken English***

**Cued Speech:** Cued Speech is a mode of communication based on the phonemes (sounds) and properties of traditionally spoken languages. Cueing allows users who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or who have language/communication disorders to access the basic, fundamental properties of spoken languages through the use of vision. ([www.cuedspeech.org](http://www.cuedspeech.org))

**Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE):** Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE) uses the grammatical structure of English, but uses the conceptually accurate signs of American Sign Language.

**Simultaneous-Communication (Sim-Com) or Signed Supported Speech (SSS):** Sim-Com or SSS is the use of parts of ASL or SEE signs while speaking English at the same time.



## **EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES IN DEAF EDUCATION**

There are three different approaches to how children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing should be taught. They are 1) American Sign Language (ASL)/English Bilingual, 2) Listening and Spoken Language, and 3) Total Communication. Remember, no matter which educational approach your child's program uses, parental involvement is the key to your child's success! The goal is for your child to be socially confident and capable of being a full participant in contemporary society.

### **1. American Sign Language/English Bilingual Approach**

The ASL/English Bilingual approach uses both English and American Sign Language through the ready use of children's eyes and hands. There are many ways to address bilingual education in a program serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. The Clerc Center (at Gallaudet University) has developed FAQs related to bilingual education in programs for young Deaf children. For more information about the ASL/English Bilingual approach, see the following web site:

<http://www3.gallaudet.edu/documents/clerc/20091216-0002.pdf>

### **2. Listening and Spoken Language Approach (Oral Deaf Education)**

The Listening and Spoken Language approach teaches infants and young children to use hearing and speech to develop spoken language for communication and learning. Children typically attend a pre-school or early elementary program taught by teachers and therapists with experience in Listening and Spoken Language techniques and child development training. Signs are not used in this approach; however, natural gestures that are used in typical conversation are included. The goal is for children to enter the mainstream after they have time to strengthen their language, social, and cognitive development in a Listening and Spoken Language program. For more information about the Listening and Spoken Language approach, see the following web site:

[KWW SVZZZDJEHOORUJOH DUQQHJVVVH SVIRURFKLOGOLVWHQLQJDQGVSRNHQ  
ODQJXJHDVS](http://www3.gallaudet.edu/documents/clerc/20091216-0002.pdf)

### **3. Total Communication Approach**

Total Communication (TC) includes the use of all modes of communication at the same time (i.e., speech, Signing Exact English, auditory training, speech reading, lip reading, and fingerspelling). The child is provided information in both auditory and visual formats. This allows the child to use the information that best suits his or her needs. For more information about Total Communication, see the following web site:

<http://www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/info-to-go.html>

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Your children will carry your family's traditions, and at the same time, be meeting other children like themselves who may be Deaf or Hard of Hearing. From this sense of belonging, your children may develop their own sense of identity and multi-cultural values. With your support and encouragement, your child may also develop multi-language skills.

The United States of America is a very diverse society, where people from different countries have come to make their homes and raise their families. It is important that parents take the time to teach their children about other cultures as well as their own culture.

What is culture? Culture is a full range of learned human behavior patterns, which include knowledge, belief, values, art, actions, attitudes, morals, customs, and any other capability or habit acquired by a person as a member of society. All cultures have many universal traits, but different cultures have developed their own specific ways of carrying out or expressing them. For example, Deaf Culture holds a collective group of visual and bilingual people who have shared beliefs and values, language, art, heritage, attitudes, actions, and morals.

Culture is important because it is what makes a society unique. It is what ties a community together and it also lays a foundation for moral values.

It is important that your child learns about your family's culture and about Deaf Culture. Talk about culture with your child through hands-on experiences. Children need to touch, feel, and see, so they are able to gain a better understanding of their culture. Be creative and have fun as you teach your child about their culture, the world around us, and life.



Again, this summary of the Parent Resource Guide can get you started on your journey. To see the complete version of the guide, go to [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/dh](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/dh) .