

Draft #1 (written by clients)

Nov. 18, 2009

ECHO Questions and Answers

15 Minute Conversation

"CHILDHOOD HEARING LOSS AND DEAFNESS"

1. What are some possible signs of hearing loss?

Sample Answer:

- Hearing loss is not something you can **see**; it is invisible. All babies born in a hospital will have their hearing tested before leaving the hospital.
- A baby may not always respond to mom or dad's voice, or may not react to loud sounds
- ear pain/pulling on ear repetitively
- physical differences on outside of ear
- A child may appear stubborn or to misbehave because he or she cannot hear everything mom or dad is saying.
- "selective hearing" may be a sign of real hearing loss "The term "selective hearing" will need to be defined or it may not mean anything to some of the viewers.
- A child may seem frustrated by not being understood or understanding speech
- Children with hearing loss may have babbling that stops or speech development that is delayed
- turning up the volume on the TV or turning a particular ear to the TV
- asking 'What' frequently or ignoring requests or directives.
- Family members are usually the first ones to know that a child isn't hearing well

2. Are there different types of hearing loss?

Sample Answer:

- temporary/fluctuating like what happens when a child has an ear infection; ear infection is very common in young children
- permanent hearing loss
- it is possible to have permanent hearing loss AND an ear infection at the same time
- although having a hearing loss in only one ear does not sound that important, children often have a harder time learning or getting along with others

- Even a little hearing loss in both ears can have a big impact on how a child learns
- even babies who can hear at birth can develop permanent hearing loss during childhood

3. What causes hearing loss – Did I do something wrong?

Sample Answer:

- Hearing loss is the most common condition identified at birth
- We know that hearing loss can run in families.
- Certain types of infection when a child is born can sometimes cause hearing loss
- Some serious childhood illnesses, like spinal meningitis, can result in hearing loss
- Very sick or premature children may develop hearing loss after receiving medication that may be necessary to save their lives
- Sometimes children have hearing loss along with concerns about health or developmental disabilities
- We often don't know the cause

4. If I find out my child has a hearing loss what happens next?

Sample Answer:

- First – get help!
- Many people are available to provide you with information and resources so you can make choices for your child and family
- There is help from different professionals so families can learn what they need to do for their child. Many options for help are at no cost to families.
- Support is also available from family members, spiritual leaders and members of other families who have a child who has hearing loss
- The audiologist, doctor, public health nurse or local public school district will connect you with people and programs that can provide help.
- Families need to educate themselves and then make decisions based on what they've learned
- Brain development starts early – families need to act quickly to support their child's learning
- Young children who are deaf or hard of hearing may need their families to communicate with them in a different way than they do with their other children, like using sign language, hearing aids or focusing on communication during everyday activities
- Families will need to learn about the different choices of communication methods and make their own decision about how to help their child focus on early language learning.

- There is no one ‘right choice’ of ways to communicate with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Because of brain development needs, the only ‘wrong choice’ is to do nothing. Families can try one or more different ways to communicate and change how they communicate based on how quickly their child is learning language.
- Whatever a family chooses, the consistent use of hearing aids, sign language or cued speech every day during all activities will be needed to achieve desired language goals

5. What happens when my child grows up?

Sample Answer:

- For a family who is new to having a child with hearing loss there is much hope for the future!
- There are many successful role models from all cultures.
- Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing can grow up to lead happy normal lives, be gainfully employed, drive, marry, etc.
- A child who is deaf or hard of hearing can live their own life, not viewing themselves as disabled or disadvantaged.

6. What resources are available?

Sample Answer:

- financial
- hearing aid loaner bank
- insurance/medical
- educational
- parent-to-parent support