

Statewide Family Support Center NEWSLETTER

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OCTOBER 2005



*Serving Kentucky's Families
with Children Who are Deaf
and Hard of Hearing*

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The Statewide Family Support Center NEWSLETTER is published monthly, September through June at the Kentucky School for the Deaf

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The SFSC is part of the Kentucky School for the Deaf's Outreach Services and the Statewide Educational Resource Center on Deafness, components of the Kentucky Department of Education.

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COMMUNICATION MODES

This month's issue of the SFSC Newsletter will give you some basic information about the various modes of communication as well as some resources that support each of the options.

Families have a wide variety of options available when choosing a way to communicate with their child who is deaf or hard of hearing. This variety is good because families can use what works best for them and for their child. For all of the communication modes, there are resources (books, videos, websites, classes, etc) that parents can use to learn the best techniques to support their child's language development.

Some families feel overwhelmed or confused by the choices and decisions they have to make related to raising their child with a hearing loss. We hope the information in this issue of the SFSC Newsletter will help. It is a positive and exciting time for families as more and more of you are learning about all of the different ways of communicating and making informed decisions that you feel are best for your child and your family's situation.

The bulk of the information in this article is taken from the most current edition of the SKI-HI Curriculum. The SFSC Newsletter editor has summarized the section, "Communication Methodologies: Matching Communication Options to Children."

Due to the space limitations of this newsletter, this article does not go into detailed specifics on any of the issues mentioned. This article is only intended to be an overview or introduction to the concept of communication methodologies. However, you can get more information by contacting any of the resources listed, asking your local

professionals who work with deaf/hard of hearing children, or by contacting the Statewide Family Support Center at the address on the front page of the newsletter.

The SKI-HI Curriculum groups the modes of communication into these categories:

- the language of American Sign Language (ASL),
- the spoken language of English (auditory-oral and auditory-verbal),
- systems to manually code English (SEE and Signed English), or
- systems that manually represent spoken language (Cued Speech).

There are variations within most of these categories which will be explained as you read this article. Some families decide to follow one specific approach. Some families on the other hand choose to combine techniques from 2-3 different modes. Read through the information and feel free to contact any of the resources to learn more.

TO PROFESSIONALS: "Assisting families to determine appropriate communication methodologies is one of the most important and most challenging roles of the *professional*. In this process of determining appropriate communication methodology, families are often uncertain about what they want simply because they may not know enough about the options. *Therefore, they lean on the professional's opinion.*

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Parents/families “leaning” on the professional for information and guidance during the process puts the professional in a very challenging position. The position requires that the professional give accurate, unbiased, undistorted information to families about communication methodologies. It requires that the professional not be defensive about her own views. The position requires the giving of support and encouragement to families. ... The position requires that the professional not give false hopes to families. ... The position requires respect for family values and the rights of families to make choices that will enable them to communicate in ways they feel are most effective and appropriate for their child and family.” (SKI-HI Curriculum, pgs 1494-1495)



GETTING STARTED

“Family members need to understand:

a) general factors that are important to consider when making communication methodology matches, b) basic communication methods and philosophies, c) combining methods, d) the historical issue of ‘controversy’ as it relates to communication methodologies and how to positively and productively approach the communication methodology match process, and e) specific factors to consider when making communication methodology matches. (SKI-HI Curriculum, pg 1498)

There are three (3) general factors to consider when making communication methodology matches.

- A communication method should be in the best interest of your child.
- A communication method should enable all of your family to communicate with your child.
- A communication method should also be in the best interest of you and your family.

It is important to remember that this decision making is a PROCESS... you are learning, gaining insights, and forming views. It is not a one-time event. Once you begin using a particular method, remember your decision is certainly reversible. As you learn and gain insights, your ways of communicating with your child might change. In addition, more than one method may certainly be learned and used by your child and family over time. (SKI-HI Curriculum, page 1499)

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

“ASL is the fourth most used language in the United States today. It is a visual language and, like all languages, is used to express emotions, describe events, interact with others, and express ideas. ASL is the native language of the American Deaf community.”

“In order to better understand ASL, it is important to discuss the difference between ASL and manual codes of spoken languages such as Signing Exact English or Signed English. ASL is a language much like other languages; it was not invented... Unlike these codes, ASL is not English represented on the hands; it is instead a language in its own right... ASL is a visual, vivid language that uses handshapes and placement, facial expression and body movement.”

Benefits of using ASL:

- It can give children access to a full, rich, and complete language foundation. ASL is ideal for visual communication and unlimited in possibilities.
- It enables understanding through a visual modality and does not depend on hearing for expression or comprehension. The use of visual language is the child’s strength.
- As a component of a bilingual approach to education, ASL is combined with written English to develop the child’s skills in both languages.

PIDGIN SIGN ENGLISH

PSE is more recently been called “contact signing.” It is a communication system that has resulted from ASL and English users connecting over the years. It is not a language in and of itself but is a system that allows users of ASL and English to more easily communicate with each other. PSE is based on the vocabulary and structures of both languages. With PSE, ASL signs are used in English word order with or without voicing. The signs used are conceptually accurate and incorporate facial expression and ASL idioms.

Benefits of using PSE:

- It is easier to learn PSE than ASL for most families who are not familiar with the Deaf community.

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- It is being used more and more in schools throughout the United States.
- Use of PSE enables families to communicate with Deaf adults who can act as mentors and role models for the child and family.

SIMULTANEOUS COMMUNICATION



To understand 'simultaneous communication,' families must first learn about 'TOTAL COMMUNICATION.' TC was developed in the late 1960's as a philosophy of communication. In theory, TC incorporates an array of choices in which persons who are deaf can communicate (signing, speechreading, gesturing, use of residual hearing, etc). In practice, TC usually means signing and speaking at the same time... which is Simultaneous Communication (Sim Com).

Benefits of using Sim Com:

- This is a method that allows the most comfortable and natural sign use of hearing parents and other family members.
- Families can choose the sign system they want to use in Sim Com... PSE signs or an English-based sign system.
- Children who use Sim Com should be encouraged to wear their hearing aid or cochlear implant to support the development of listening and speaking.



MANUALLY CODED ENGLISH

MCE was developed in the 1960's and 1970's and is based on the belief that children who are deaf or hard of hearing can learn English if they see English in sign. In MCE, what is spoken in English is signed. MCE involves the total input (speech, auditory, print, amplification, speech reading, sign language, etc) and emphasizes the use of complete English in signs. The developers of MCE borrowed signs from ASL, put them into English word order and added new signs to match spoken English. They also invented signs to represent the prefixes and suffixes of English to enable children to see all of the parts of spoken English.

Signing Exact English and **Signed English** are the two most common kinds of MCE. Signing Exact English has become a popular method for allowing children to see and hear all of the components of spoken English. Signed English was developed to be a simpler system of showing English on the hands and uses fewer markers.

Benefits of using MCE:

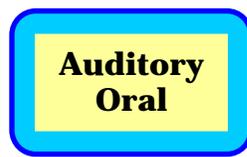
- With MCE, English can be represented clearly to children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- The use of hearing aids or cochlear implants is encouraged.
- MCE is easy to learn and use for families who already speak English.

AUDITORY-VERBAL

This mode of communication is sometimes called the Unisensory Approach. It is based on the belief that children who are deaf or hard of hearing can learn to use auditory and verbal communication, meaning the child learns to listen and speak using appropriate amplification and residual hearing. Speechreading skills are not formally emphasized. Typically, the goal is to mainstream the child into regular education programs at the earliest time possible in order to promote his/her social skills as well as natural speech and language patterns.



It is essential to have the child's hearing aid or cochlear implant fitted as early as possible to help the child develop speech and language. Many programs for children with cochlear implants use these techniques to develop the child's increased hearing abilities. Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT) is one of the most popular ways of helping the child develop spoken language through listening. Families are encouraged to participate and practice these techniques at home.



AUDITORY-ORAL

This approach to communication is very similar to the Auditory-Verbal approach but also incorporates speechreading and their other senses to support learning to listen and speak. Children in these programs are taught to speechread. They are also encouraged to use their sense of touch to feel how sounds are formed and to feel how air is flowing out of the mouth or whether sounds make vibrations or not. They also learn to use environmental clues to supplement their listening. Parents are critical to this process, helping to carry-over the skills practiced in therapy into natural communicative settings at home and in the community.

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Benefits of using the Auditory-Verbal and Auditory-Oral methods:

- The child is exposed to the spoken language you use at home.
- The child learns to hear others and to monitor his own voice, resulting in better speech production.
- The child's use and understanding of speech may permit him to interact more extensively with people in the community and may broaden his educational, social, and vocational options.

Cued Speech

CUED SPEECH This is a communication system that shows the sounds of spoken language through the placement of handshapes near the mouth. The purpose of Cued Speech is to allow the child who is deaf or hard of hearing to develop spoken English. Cued Speech is not a sign system nor does it represent the letters of the alphabet. Rather, handshapes and placement of the handshapes cue a person to which sounds in the language are being spoken.

Once the deaf or hard of hearing child learns which sounds are represented by which handshapes and placements, she can figure out the pronunciations of the words being said. This technique helps with speechreading because several sounds look the same on the mouth. The cues show the difference.

Benefits of Cued Speech:

- Allows the family to use spoken language with the addition of a few simple cues.
- It can be learned in a short period of time.
- Cued Speech helps the child see sounds of words he may not be able to hear.
- Cued Speech more easily supports the child's ability to use and understand English tongue twisters, nonsense words, riddles, and idiomatic expressions.

As you can see, there is a lot of overlap and similarities between some of the modes of communication. Within the discussion of each of the options, the editor chose not to emphasize the limitations for families. Instead, we wanted to highlight some of the very basic concepts that might be beneficial to you and your child. Families are strongly encouraged to meet many other families who use different modes of communication. Find out from them what rewards, challenges and frustrations they have experienced. What works for one

child/family may not be what works best for your child and your family. Also, talk with Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults to get their perspective on growing up and using different methods to communicate.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU LEARN:

SKI-HI Curriculum

(Sue Watkins, editor); SKI-HI Institute, 2004; order from HOPE, Inc. (435) 245-2888

Resources

Lending Libraries

- ❖ KCDHH – The Kentucky Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing manages a free, statewide lending library program. Families and professionals are welcome to borrow from a wide variety of books and videos. Contact Anita Dowd at 800-372-2907.
- ❖ CMP – this federally funded program lends open captioned videos to families and professionals at no charge. Call 800-237-6213 (voice) or 800-237-6819 (TTY), or call the KY CMP office at KSD (859-239-7017, ext 2222).
- ❖ KSD – The Statewide Family Support Center provides a small variety of books and videos to families and professionals across the state at no charge. Contact Pat Bruce or Cathy Howle at 859-239-7017.
- ❖ Local Public Library – Many libraries have video tapes and books on sign language. They also have access to the state library that has more resources available.

National Organizations

- ❖ Alexander Graham Bell Association – 3417 Volta Place, NW, Washington, DC 20007-2778, 202.337.5220 (voice), 202.337.5221 (TTY), www.agbell.org
- ❖ American Society for Deaf Children – PO Box 3355, Gettysburg, PA 17325, 717.334.7922 or 800.942.ASDC, www..deafchildren.org
- ❖ Auditory-Verbal International – 2121 Eisenhower Ave, Suite 402, Alexandria, VA 22314, 703.739.1049 (Voice), 703.739.0874 (TTY), www.auditory-verbal.org
- ❖ Hands & Voices – PO Box 371926, Denver, CO 80237, 866.422.0422 or 303.300.9763, www.handsandvoices.org
- ❖ Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center – Gallaudet University, 800 Florida Ave, NE, Washington, DC 20002, clerccenter.gallaudet.edu



RESOURCES *continued from Page 4*

- ❖ Listen-Up – www.Listen-up.org
- ❖ National Cued Speech Association – 23970 Hermitage Road; Cleveland, OH 44122-4008; 800.459.3529; www.cuedspeech.org
- ❖ National Deaf Agenda – emphasizes the importance of educators addressing the communication needs/access of students; www.cease.org/agenda
- ❖ Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) – 7910 Woodmont Ave, Suite 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814, 301.657.2248 (voice), 301.657.2249 (TTY), www.shhh.org

Books and Videos

The following is a BRIEF listing of a few materials you might find helpful. There are MANY others. We welcome families to send us the name and description of books, videos, and other resources that have been helpful to you as you explore the various communication options.

- ❖ *50 FAQ's About AVT* (Estabrooks, editor), A.G. Bell Bookstore.
- ❖ *Auditory-Verbal Therapy for Parents and Professionals* (Warren Estabrooks, editor) A.G. Bell Bookstore
- ❖ *Beginnings: Communication Choices* (videotape) Beginnings for Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- ❖ *Choices in Deafness, A Parents' Guide to Communication Options* (Sue Schwartz, editor) Woodbine House
- ❖ *Families with Deaf Children* (videotape) Boys Town National Research Hospital
- ❖ *Families with Hard of Hearing Children* (videotape) Boys Town National Research Hospital
- ❖ *Raising and Educating a Deaf Child* (Marc Marschark) Oxford Univ. Press
- ❖ *The Young Deaf Child* (David M. Luterman) York Press
- ❖ *You and Your Deaf Child* (John W. Adams) Gallaudet University Press

Sign Language Classes

(from the KCDHH website) "There are many sign language classes being offered throughout the (state). Unfortunately it is not possible to keep up-to-date records of all locations. We recommend that you contact the following resources in your community to learn about the possibilities of classes offered in your area. These are some of the places most likely either to offer classes or to have information about them.

- ❖ Community Colleges/Universities
- ❖ Adult Education/Continuing Education Classes

- ❖ Churches and other religious organizations

You can also contact these programs to ask about information on sign classes

- KSD Outreach (859) 239-7017 ext. 2200
- Ky Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (800) 372-2907
- Heuser Hearing Institute (Louisville) 502.636.2084 (voice); 502.636.3774 (TTY)
- Lexington Hearing and Speech Center (859) 268-4545
- Eastern Kentucky University Interpreter Training Program (859) 622-1000 (ask for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services)
- University of Louisville Interpreter Training Program (502) 852-6938



THE LISTENING CORNER

The **Ling Six-Sound Test** (developed by Dr. Daniel Ling) is a quick and easy way to determine that your child is responding to sound consistently every day. It is also a great way to assess if your child's hearing aid or cochlear implant is functioning properly. This test was designed to provide information about your child's ability to detect speech sounds in low, mid and high frequencies (pitch). If your child can detect (hear) these sounds, he should be able to discriminate (understand) the sounds in spoken language. The **Ling Six-Sounds** are /ah/ (as in father), /oo/ (as in moon), /ee/ (as in bee), /sh/ (as in shoe), /s/ (as in sock), and /m/ (as in mom). It is important that you use the **Ling Six-Sound Test** every time your child puts on his hearing aids or cochlear implant. Sit down next to your child. Cover your mouth with your hand (be careful not to block the sound, just block the visual cue) and present each Ling Sound in a normal tone of voice. If your child is 2 ½ years or older, you can teach him to respond each time he hears the sound by dropping a block (or other object) into a bucket or by raising his hand. As you teach him this response, he may need to see you make the sounds the first few times and watch you as you drop the blocks in. If your child is between 12 months and 2 ½ years old, he can respond to the sounds by turning to you. Even if your baby is under 12 months of age, you can do this test and see his responses. A baby might startle, widen his eyes, suck faster or stop sucking on a pacifier or bottle. Remember to give your child a hug or show your excitement when he responds and be sure to vary the order and rhythm of the presentation of the sounds. As your child's auditory skills and vocal abilities develop, encourage him to also tell you what

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THE LISTENING CORNER *continued from Page 5*

he hears (identification) by repeating each sound. Keep a list of which Ling sounds your child responds to every day so that you are aware of any changes. If there are any changes, please contact your audiologist. Thanks for "listening" and I'll be "hear" next time....

This article was written by Shelby Rutledge, a Speech/Language Therapist with the Lexington Hearing & Speech Center. If you have specific "listening" questions, you can contact Shelby at Shelby.Rutledge@lshscky.org.



DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Hello! My name is Becky Bush and I have two hard of hearing daughters. Makayla is eight years old and has a moderate to severe hearing loss. Amanda is six years old and has a severe to profound hearing loss. Both girls have a genetic disorder with a duct in their inner ear that has caused their hearing loss. There is no history of hearing loss in either of our families.

Makayla is mainstreamed at our local county school. We made the decision to send her to the public school because she hears within the normal range with her hearing aids and has very good speech. So far, she has done well in her grades and we have a minimal amount of problems. Her school has a very receptive staff and doesn't resist getting her needs met.

Amanda attends Kentucky School for the Deaf. She started KSD when she was three years old and is now in the 1st grade. Our county transports her everyday from Somerset to Danville on a bus with two other students. This was a very difficult decision to make for us since it is such a long trip and she has such a long day. Her day begins at 5:45 every morning and the bus picks her up at 6:30. We made the decision to send her to KSD because her hearing loss was so much more severe and she had very little speech.

She has done extremely well at KSD. She has learned how to use her hearing aids, her speech has vastly improved, she can lip read, and of course, she is learning to sign (she helps teach us!) She is a very different child than when she started school there. She is so self-confident and very independent.

I said all of that to say this. As parents, we have to make many decisions regarding our children everyday. As parents of special needs children, we have many more decisions to make. There is so much information from many different sources as well as many different opinions as to what is best for our child. Sometimes, as I have experienced, it all gets very overwhelming and you don't know which way to go. If you are like me, I worry continually "Am I doing the right thing?, What if....."

I want to encourage you that you are not alone in

those feelings. Someone once told me "All you can do is make the best decision you can and go from there." If you make an informed decision regarding your child based upon information you have, advice from others, your beliefs, your financial situation, and most importantly, your child's specific needs, then I am here to say "You are doing the best that you can!"

We are currently facing a decision of whether or not to get Amanda a Cochlear Implant. Right now, we have made the decision not to get the implant based upon our research, advice, finances, and what is best for Amanda. Do I still wonder if I am doing the right thing? YES. But I feel that when all of our children have grown up and look back at the decisions we have made for them, I believe they will say "You did the best you could and I still love you!"

Becky, her husband Michael along with Makayla and Amanda live in Somerset. If you would like to write a letter to other parents to be published in future SFSC Newsletters,, please send it to the SFSC at KSD. We appreciate families sharing their thoughts, feelings, and funny or touching stories!



THE LITERACY CORNER

Last year, each article that I wrote touched on areas where parents can aide their children's literacy development regardless of communication mode. These were tips that could be used whether a child preferred to speak, to sign, or a combination of the both. We talked about reading tips that can be used with any child, such as talking about what is in the pictures of a book. You can refer back to the May 2005 issue of the SFSC newsletter for more tips.

This month's SFSC newsletter theme focuses on communication modes. I thought it only be proper to discuss how this can impact literacy practices at home.

How you support your child's literacy development will greatly depend on the communication preference of your child and they way you communicate with him/her. If you and your child communicate orally, then you use strategies that you would use with a hearing child. The tips from the May issue will greatly help you. Here are a few other tips.

- Talk about the pictures in a book before you even read the story.
- Help your child pronounce specific words while reading. Focusing too much on correction will hinder a child's enjoyment of reading.
- Have your child sound out words when trying to spell them. You can sound it out for them and cover your mouth so they focus on the sound, then let them see your mouth to see if what

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- they thought it was matches the mouth movement they see.

If you and your child are using a form of Signed English, you can also use the tips from above if you are also focusing on your child's spoken English development. Signing to your child gives them more access to the world than they might get by only speaking to them. It is important to sign as much as possible so that they understand everything that is happening in the world around them as well as any reading or writing you are doing with them. Here are some tips for reading in Signed English.

- Signed English is a signed word for word match of English. Do not worry that you are not a "perfect" signer and can't sign every word. Sign what you know and have your child help you out.
- Make sure that what you sign makes sense in what you are reading. For example, if in the story it talks about a girl putting on makeup, you would not sign "make" as in making something then "up". It won't make sense to the child because the girl is not making something up in the air. ☺

Developing literacy in children who use American Sign Language (ASL) takes different strategies. Remember that ASL is not a visual form of English. It has its own grammar rules that do not follow English. When using ASL to read, you do not need to worry about signing every word that is on the page. ASL is not a word for word match as Signed English is. When reading, one must translate from one language to the next in order to understand what is being read. Signing the information accurately is much more important than signing every word. Here are some helpful tips:

- When reading a sentence, don't read one word at a time. Read a sentence silently, draw a picture in your mind about what that means, and then sign it so that it makes sense to your child. For example, if the sentence says, "The cup is on the table," to draw this you would draw the table first then the cup. So sign "table" then sign "cup" on the table. Don't worry about "is" "on" and "the". Making the signs for these is not crucial to the meaning of the sentence.
- English is full of idioms. Sign the meaning of the idiom instead of the words to the idiom. For examples, when reading "leave room for dessert" if you read each word it means you must leave the room to have dessert. That's not the true meaning. You should sign that you should eat eat eat then stop halfway to your

mouth and save the rest of the space for dessert.

- If you come across a word that has many meanings and signs, think about which sign would make sense. If the water is running, don't sign run as if the water sprouted legs and started to run. Use the sign for "leaking".

I hope this information has been helpful to you. Many of the tips are interchangeable so use what you can, regardless of communication.

This year I plan to give more ideas for improving your child's reading and writing at home. Because of the new feature to the newsletter, The Listening Corner, I will focus on literacy for signing students. If you have any questions or comments that you would like addressed in future articles, please email me at heidigas@yahoo.com or write to SFSC.



AROUND THE STATE

- Owensboro ASL classes for parents and family members. Wednesdays from 5:30-7:00 pm at Country Heights Elementary School. Contact Heidi Givens at 852-7250 or hgivens@davies.k12.ky.us for more information.
- Kentucky Autism Regional Workshops – Topics will focus on family, educational and adult vocational issues related to autism spectrum disorders. Register at the KATC website: www.kyautism.com or call 1-800-334-8635 ext. 852-4631. Marshall/Calloway; Kenlake State Park; Oct. 27-28 Jefferson Co.; Ky Autism Training Center; Nov. 7-8
- "Silent Dinner" Sign Language Group - Great food and great company! Families...bring your children...let them meet others in the Deaf community and learn more about Sign Language and Deaf Culture! Come, bring a friend and meet some new ones...all ages of signers are welcome!!! As always... "The Fourth Tuesdays" @ 6:00 October 25th -Paducah – BB Whisker's- 2701 Irvin Cobb Dr.; just let Paula Humphreys know if you are coming by at least the day before at (270) 443-3055 (V/TTY) or Humphreys@ksd.k12.ky.us.

HEADS UP:

- Signing Exact English Skillshop – Perry County Central High School in Hazard, Nov. 4-6.
- Preparing for the ACT – A Short Course for D/HH High School Students The Outreach Department at KSD will be offering this short course in November.
- DeaFestival '06 – Saturday, July 1st in Louisville.



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STATEWIDE FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER NEWSLETTER October 2005



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Children who are Deaf and Hard of
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The Statewide Family Support Center is located in Lee Hall on the campus of the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville. Families from across the state are welcome to call, visit, or email us with questions.

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