

## Resources

**CONNECT Information Service for Early Intervention**  
800-692-7288

**Hands and Voices Guide By Your Side of Pennsylvania**  
800-360-7282, ext 3908  
[www.handsandvoicespa.org](http://www.handsandvoicespa.org)

**National Center on Deaf-Blindness**  
[www.nationaldb.org](http://www.nationaldb.org)

**Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center**  
[www.pealcenter.org](http://www.pealcenter.org)

**Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania**  
800-986-4550  
[parenttoparent.org](http://parenttoparent.org)

**Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Bureau of Early Intervention Services**  
<http://tinyurl.com/pde-ei>

**Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare**  
<http://tinyurl.com/dpw-eiservices>

**Pennsylvania Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program**  
[www.paeearlyhearing.org](http://www.paeearlyhearing.org)

**Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)**  
<http://tinyurl.com/ocdelhome>

**Pennsylvania Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
800-233-3008  
<http://tinyurl.com/pa-officedhoh>

**Pennsylvania Partnership for the Deaf-Blind**  
[www.papdb.org](http://www.papdb.org)

**Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)**  
King of Prussia: 800-441-3215  
Harrisburg: 800-360-7282  
Pittsburgh: 800-446-5607  
[www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

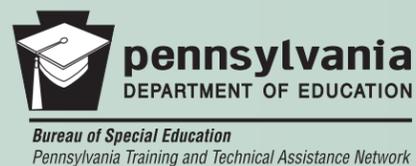
## Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

**Tom Corbett**  
Governor

## Department of Education

**Carolyn C. Dumaresq, Ed.D.**  
Acting Secretary

**Patricia Hozella**  
Director, Bureau of Special Education



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# Communication Considerations for Children Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind



## How important are communication decisions for my child who is deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind?

Communication is the key to your child's success.

- Your child's individual needs will guide your way
- Your child may use any or all of these methods
- Language choices and methods can change as your child changes
- What's right for your child is what's working

## How will my child be able to communicate? What language choice and supports are right for my child?

Your child's communication options are American Sign Language or spoken language. **American Sign Language (ASL)** is a visual and/or tactile language that has its own grammar, structure and organization of signs, vocabulary and rules.

**Methodologies** to support your child's development of spoken language and/or ASL include:

- **Listening and Spoken Language Approaches: Auditory/Oral and Auditory/Verbal Communication**  
This is the development of spoken language through listening. An Auditory/Oral approach allows for visual cues, including speechreading and natural gestures. An Auditory/Verbal approach focuses specifically on listening and does not encourage relying on visual cues.
- **Simultaneous Communication:** This system uses the vocabulary from ASL while speaking and following English grammar to provide both visual (or visual/tactile) and auditory English language to your child.
- **Bilingual Education:** This approach is designed to develop proficiency in both ASL, a visual language, and English, a spoken and written language.
- **Cued Speech:** A system in which a child learns to both "see" and "hear" speech and English language. This focuses on the movements of the mouth when one speaks along with using handshapes around the face to help your child distinguish between sounds that look alike on the lips.

## What if my child needs more support to learn language? Is there something else?

Yes, you can support your child through the use of:

- **Object/Picture Systems:** Using objects or pictures as ways of communicating, rather than speech or sign language. The objects or pictures should clearly look like or feel like what they represent.
- **Touch Cues:** A touch made in a consistent manner directly on your child's body to communicate with your child.

## Can technology help?

Yes, your child may benefit from the use of various amplification options, such as hearing aids, FM systems and/or a cochlear implant, and may also use computer and/or assistive technology to assist in the learning of language.

## How can I decide what's best for my child? Who can help?

You are the most important person in your child's life, but there are many other people who can help guide you. Many parents find that another parent of a child who is deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind; an adult who is deaf; or a representative from a support organization can be a great resource. Other team members may include:

- Audiologist
- Doctor
- Early Intervention Special Instructor
- Educational Interpreter
- Family Member
- School District Representative
- Service/Support Coordinator
- Speech and Language Pathologist
- Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Therapist

For a child who also has a vision loss, additional team members may include:

- Intervener
- Specialist in Deaf-Blindness
- Teacher of the Visually Impaired

## How can my team members help?

The team will complete an evaluation to determine your child's strengths and areas that may need support. You and the other members of your team will discuss how this can impact language development. You will also discuss your language choice and supports for your child.

Your child will be evaluated by professionals who have expertise in the areas of your child's needs. Your perspective on your child's abilities is an important part of the process. This evaluation information should be used to develop a communication plan for your child.

You are a full member of your child's team.

- Your input is critical
- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Share your ideas and concerns
- Know that you can make changes to meet your child's needs
- Your options and your child's learning cannot be determined based on cost and should be considered after your child's needs have been determined by the evaluation

## What are some questions I should ask my team?

- Who can help me learn to communicate with my child?
- Who can help me to help my child learn to communicate?
- Will technology such as hearing aids or a cochlear implant assist my child?
- Who can provide supports and services?
- Is there a specialist on my team who is experienced with my child's specific needs?
- What do I do if I have questions about my child's services?
- How will my team work to support my child?
- Are my team members highly qualified to support my child?
- What additional training might my team need?
- How will I know if my child is making progress?
- What do I do if I want to make changes for my child?
- Where can I meet another parent of a child who is deaf/hard of hearing or deaf-blind?
- Where can I meet an adult who is deaf/hard of hearing or deaf-blind?