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## Communicate With Your Child

Read this page for tips about communicating with your child who is deaf or hard of hearing.



Maybe you use sign language. Or maybe you talk with your child.

Either way, there are things you can do to help your child communicate with you and with other people.

Read about how important communication is in our [Growing Up With Hearing Loss](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/>) section.

**Help your child communicate with your family every day.**

- Include your child in all family conversations.
- Use facial expressions and gestures to help get your ideas across.
- Continue to talk to your child even if she can't hear.
- Have "conversations" with your child. Get her to talk to you.  
Try to get her to answer questions with more than a "yes" or "no."
- Help your child learn about taking turns in conversations
- Encourage the rest of your family to be patient if you need to repeat or translate what they said.
- Take the time to listen to your child.
  - Try to understand what she's saying.
  - Ask other family members to do the same.

**Help your child learn to express feelings.**

- Teach your child words or signs for all sorts of feelings.  
Teach her feelings like sad, happy, mad, bored, afraid and confused.

## Help your child use words to tell stories.

- Make picture books with your child about what you do during the day
  - Fill the picture book with pictures you take with your camera.
  - Use pictures you cut out from magazines.
  - Fill the book with your child's drawings.
- Later, use the picture books to talk about what you did.

## Read with your child.

- Read out loud to your child.
- Talk about the stories you read.
- Act out stories.
- Read these suggestions on [how to read to your child](http://www.paec.org/david/reading/deafread.pdf) (<http://www.paec.org/david/reading/deafread.pdf>).  
These ideas came from looking at how deaf parents read to their deaf children.

## Use technology so your child can communicate with others.

These tips are especially important for older children and teenagers. Read more about these on our [Other Assistive Devices](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/tech/others.jsp) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/help/tech/others.jsp>) page.

- **TTYs**
  - Talking on the phone to friends and family is important to children and teenagers. TTYs let people who can't hear talk on the phone.
- **Relay service**
  - If you have a TTY, the relay service lets your child talk to someone who doesn't have a TTY.
- **Amplified telephones**
  - Some children are able to hear and talk on telephones if they are louder. Or, your child might have a "T" switch on her hearing aids that lets her talk on the telephone.
- **Closed captioning**
  - Turn the captions on whenever your child is watching TV.
  - Captions let your child follow TV shows by reading what people say.
  - Seeing the words can help your child learn to read.
  - Talk with your child about what she saw on TV. Ask her to tell you what happened.
- **E-mail**
  - Teach your child how to use e-mail or instant messaging to talk to other people.
- **Pagers**
  - Your child can send messages to friends and family using a two-way pager.

**Work with your child's school to make sure she can communicate with teachers and other students.**

- Talk to your child's teachers about ways to include your child in everything that goes on in the classroom.
- Read these ideas about [how to improve communication in the classroom](http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/SupportServices/series/4009.html) (<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/SupportServices/series/4009.html>).
- Print out or order this brochure for teachers about [teaching a child with a hearing loss](http://www.agbell.org/information/brochures_have_win.cfm) ([http://www.agbell.org/information/brochures\\_have\\_win.cfm](http://www.agbell.org/information/brochures_have_win.cfm)).

*This page was last edited on February 17, 2004.*

*You can find this page online at:*

<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/communicating/tips/child.jsp>