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Your Child Can Succeed!*

*This Page was first written in Spanish and can be found at www.raisingdeafkids.org/spanish

Raising a child brings a diverse range of experiences to a parent throughout the years: successes, disappointments, surprises, and more successes.

- But the struggles, the efforts and the sacrifices are all performed towards the same universal goal: to raise a child so that he may one day become an independent adult and capable of enjoying a happy life.
- Your deaf child can do everything in the same way that all the hearing children of his same age can do. His only handicap and therefore his only difference is his "deafness."



Deaf children, just like all the boys and girls around the world:

- Think
- Feel
- Eat
- Play
- Run
- Get angry
- Go through difficult times
- Graduate from university
- Drive
- Work
- Get married
- Have children, etc.

It is very important for every child to know what their parents think of them, what their parents expect from them, and above all they like to know that they can rely on their parents' support. They count on that support in order to face the world, to grow and to develop to their full potential.

We know that it is not easy to raise a child with a hearing loss.

Each day is a challenge. Sometimes many parents, for wanting to protect their children, tend to care for them a bit too much. That is, they overprotect them. Parents who overprotect may also

try to isolate their children from things and from other people. We see this when we hear parents talking about their deaf children as if they were talking about a "poor kid", and then they say things such as:

- "Poor little one... because he is deaf he does not play in the same way."
- "poor kid... because she is deaf she cannot learn math."
- "I have to do everything for him ... because he is deaf he cannot dress and I feel bad"

However, this type of phrases only makes other people think that we, as parents, believe that our children cannot succeed without our help.

- Reality is different.
- There are lawyers, pilots, doctors, and nurses who are deaf.
- In this same way your child can succeed if you give him the chance to show it to you.

Neighbors, relatives, and friends, sometimes also talk about your child in the same way: "poor deaf kid", "poor kid... she is handicapped", etc.

- Explain to your relatives and neighbors that your child only has a hearing loss. He or she can do anything as long as others do not close the doors or block his or her way.
- Tell your neighbors and relatives about your child's successes in everything he does.
- Talk to them about your child's accomplishments, and about how this process has shown you the importance of good communication and a parent's participation in a child's development.

It is normal to feel that deaf children are more fragile and helpless than other children. This sensation does not help your child grow, and it contradicts everything a parent wants to cultivate in their children:

- To be able to get through life on their own
- To be able to face the world with their own set of tools
- To be able to get accomplish things and to form a family

It is true that without a parent or caregiver's help, children would have to face many challenges in order to make it through life.

- However, it is also true that they can make it not only because of their parents' support, but thanks to the teachings they received from their parents.
- It is true what the Spanish saying says: "do not give them fish, teach them how to fish"

There are many ways in which you can teach your child and show him that you trust him:

- Do not make him shy, give him wings and encourage him to go out. Start with something small.
- Assurance and trust are not obtained overnight. They develop through the things we do everyday.
- Ask him clearly for one thing at a time. Send him to run only one errand or chore, not many at once.
- Sit down and go over his homework with him. Look for the information together, but do not do the homework for him.
- Instead of reprimanding him or scaring him for crossing the street inappropriately, show him how he should do it by crossing through the pedestrian walk.
- Remind him that his eyes are his ears; and teach him to be alert to every signal or sign.
- At home give him chores and responsibilities in the same way you do with his siblings. For instance, ask him to clean up the table, to do the dishes, to take out the garbage, to clean his room, etc.



Remember that for your son or daughter it is very important how other people see him or her.

- Feelings and expressions such as "poor kid," "what a sin," "it pains me," among others, do not help.
- If this is the message that he hears, it might affect his dignity and self-pride.
- This will then lower his self-esteem (self love).
- Maybe your child will feel afraid and will feel that he will not be successful either now or on the future.

Put in practice many of the recommendations, and you will see positive results over time.

- We value and remember more those experiences of life when we had to work harder and face many more challenges.
- Most parents feel that having a child who is deaf adds a lot of richness to their lives.

You and your child will feel relieved and full of success, as little by little you both overcome challenges. You will stop thinking all the time about what is it going to be of your child's future:

- Do not worry about tomorrow (what is it going to be of him or her?); work on the present. Each day has its own challenges.
- Have patience.
- Consult a specialist about what else you can do. Ask and clear out your doubts without worrying about being labeled as an ignorant. There is not such a thing as a stupid question. Naïve questions tend to make experts reflect the most.
- Always remember that you should only give him one request at a time, in the most clearly and simple way possible. Make sure that he understands. Otherwise give him another explanation.

- Be optimistic. It is easier to see "the glass half full, than half empty." Do not send negative messages to your child. This could disturb him. Stay positive.
- Show him that you trust him or her, and that you know that he or she CAN DO everything.
- Think about your child as having the same needs as those of other children: he or she needs to play, to express himself or herself, to have fun, to learn and to be happy.

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You can find this page online at:

<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/pobrecito.jsp>