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Making a Daycare Center more Deaf Friendly

The following are questions a childcare center might have about making a daycare center more Deaf friendly:

- How can we help make our center be deaf-friendly?
- How can deaf children understand movies that we play at the child care center if deaf children cannot hear?
- Where can we find more resources and information on deafness?
- What does the law say about taking care of children with disabilities?

How can we help make our center be deaf-friendly?

- Have an Internet connection and a TTY. The deaf community often uses the Internet to contact people.
- Hang up posters with sign language phrases on them like 'I love you' or 'Good job!'. You can go to www.dltk-teach.com to print out [sign language alphabet posters](http://www.dltk-teach.com/alphabuddies/asl/) (<http://www.dltk-teach.com/alphabuddies/asl/>). These things let people know that the center is interested in deafness and sign language.
- Use a picture schedule (draw basic pictures, or use a digital camera and print outs) to show what the day's activities look like. This will help the hard of hearing child understand her day, and possibly look forward to certain events. This answers some of their questions (eg: when is lunch, when can I play with blocks again, etc).
- Put up pictures of all the children in the day care. Write their names under the pictures.
- Give training on deafness, and sign language instruction to staff. Early intervention providers often offer this type of training. Sometimes staff who attend these sessions can earn professional credits.
- Make changes to your daycare facility to make it easier for the deaf child to hear and see. For example:
 - Use carpeting or mats to reduce the noise of moving chairs.
 - TV or music can make it harder for deaf and hard-of-hearing children to hear.
 - If the music or TV is too loud, it can hurt a deaf child's ears. This is because hearing aids can amplify the sounds.
 - Use shades or curtains and indirect lighting so it's easier to see what is going on.



- Invite a deaf adult to come to the daycare center. They can talk to the children and parents about deafness and sign language.
- Set up an "exchange program" with a class of similar age/or older children at a school for the deaf. They can do activities and play together.

How can deaf children understand movies that we play at the child care center if deaf children cannot hear?

- There are many children's movies that have closed captioning. Very old movies may not come with [closed captioning](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/glossary/?id=49) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/glossary/?id=49>). Look for a "CC" symbol on the tape to tell you if the movie is captioned or not.
- All televisions larger than 13" manufactured for sale in the U.S. after July 1993 must have a built-in caption decoder. You need to program the TV to play the captions.
- Free videos with closed captions can be borrowed at www.cfv.org. Some public libraries also have a large selection of ASL videos that are from the [ASL Access Video Collection](http://www.aslaccess.org/) (<http://www.aslaccess.org/>).
- Childcare centers might be able to contact their [local deaf school](http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/schools-usa.html) (<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo/schools-usa.html>) and check out videotapes from their collection.
- Show children events and videos that use deaf people and sign language.

Where can we find more resources and information on deafness?

- [Caring for Young Children: Signing for Day Care Providers & Sitters](http://bksschoolhouse.com/shop.php?pid=13845)(Beginning Sign Language) (<http://bksschoolhouse.com/shop.php?pid=13845>) is a helpful short book.
- The [National Deaf Children's Society](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/information/childhood_deafness/understanding_deafness/) has a [great pamphlet that helps to explain deafness](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/information/childhood_deafness/understanding_deafness/) (http://www.ndcs.org.uk/information/childhood_deafness/understanding_deafness/) on their website.
- You can look up words and watch a video of an interpreter signing each word at [the American Sign Language Browser](http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm) (<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm>).
- Read [Tips for Communicating with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing Person](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/toddler/aware/tips.htm) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/toddler/aware/tips.htm>) and [Hiring Sign Language Interpreters](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/toddler/aware/hire.htm) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/toddler/aware/hire.htm>) from the [Pennsylvania School for the Deaf's website](http://www.pennsylvania.deaf.org/).

What does the law say about taking care of children with disabilities?

- To learn more, read what the [U.S. Department of Justice's says about the ADA and childcare centers](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/childq&a.htm) (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/childq&a.htm>).

Last updated: December 10, 2004

You can find this page online at:
<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/growingup/toddler/aware/friendly.jsp>