



# A QUICK START GUIDE - PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES OF INFANTS WHO ARE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING (D/HH)

CREATED BY THE WYOMING EARLY INTERVENTION INITIATIVE (WEII)\*

## Support Daily Full-Time Use of Hearing Devices

- If your child's eyes are open then hearing devices (hearing aids, cochlear implants, BAHAs etc.) need on your child's ears and turned on.
- Retention devices may help keep hearing devices on your child's ears and reduce frustration: headbands, caps, critter clips, toupee tape, pilot caps etc.

## Draw Attention to Environmental Sounds Throughout the Day

- When a sound occurs, point to your ear, draw attention to the sound source, name the sound and imitate the sound.

## Be Aware of and Reduce Background Noise

- TV/radio, electronic noise, fans, noise sources from outside and inside the room, etc. should be reduced or eliminated as much as possible.

## Complete Daily Hearing Device Check

- Use items in the child's hearing device check kit (provided by your audiologist) such as hearing aid stethoscope to complete the hearing device check.
- Family members should be trained by their child's audiologist to learn how to check the child's hearing device to be certain the device is on, working properly, and the child has access to sound.
- Ask your audiologist or child's early interventionists about the Six Ling Sounds that are used during the device check (Ling Sounds: ah, oo, ee, sh, s, m).
- Change or charge device batteries as needed.
- Be certain the earmold/tubing is not clogged with wax, cracked, is free from moisture and has not become brittle.
- If your child's hearing aids are squealing, check to be certain the ear molds are properly inserted. If they are properly inserted and the squealing continues, your child may need new ear molds.
- For soft band BAHAs, make sure the device is fit properly and worn at the recommended position on your child's head.

## Make/Gain Eye Contact When Speaking to Your Child

- Prior to speaking, get your child's visual attention.
- Don't look away while talking.
- Keep your lips visible while talking.
- Beards and mustaches can interfere with lip reading.
- To the extent possible, please do not block the view of your face with hands and objects.
- When masks are used, be aware that visual cues will be reduced.

## Be Aware of the Impact of Distance Between the Person Who is Talking and the Child Who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

- The greater the distance between the person speaking and your child, the harder it is for your child to understand what is being said.

## Keep High Expectations for Your Child who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing

- Expect your child who is D/HH to follow the same rules as a hearing child. Be prepared to clarify rules.
- Be certain your child understands your expectations. Prior to new experiences, it may help to talk about or role play social rules.
- Offer your child who is D/HH the same experiences as other children of the same age.

## Remember you are not alone....

- Explore supports and resources available to your family and child.
- Reach out to other parents, Parent Guides™, D/HH Role Models, Facebook/Parent Groups.

## Provide a Language Rich Environment for Your Child

- Use a "Radio Commentator" strategy: narrate your child's day. Tell your child what you are doing, why, and how.
- Talk about your and your child's emotions using a variety of words throughout the day (ex. I feel excited).
- Encourage all family members to sing songs, recite nursery rhymes and read books with your child daily.
- Use your voice to make the story exciting and interesting.

## Support the Use of Sign Language

- Sign language may help support language development and decrease communication frustration.
- If you are using sign language with your child, encourage all family members, your child's friends and key people in your family's life to learn and use sign language.
- Seek training for family sign language development.
- Provide opportunities for your child and family to interact with other people who use sign language.
- Consistently use sign language in your daily routines.
- Remember, you don't need to be fluent in sign language to communicate with your child. Start where you're at and grow together.

\*Members of the WEI include representatives from the following: Wyoming Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program; Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices, Guide By Your Side (GBYS); Wyoming Department of Education, Outreach Services for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH); Wyoming Department of Health, Early Intervention and Education Program (EIEP); University of Wyoming, Communication Disorders Division; Wyoming Child Development Centers; and The Marion Downs Center.

If you are interested in additional information, support, or training, please contact the Wyoming EHDI Program at (307) 721-6212, [info@wyomingehdi.org](mailto:info@wyomingehdi.org) or Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices at [kim.reimann@wyhv.org](mailto:kim.reimann@wyhv.org).