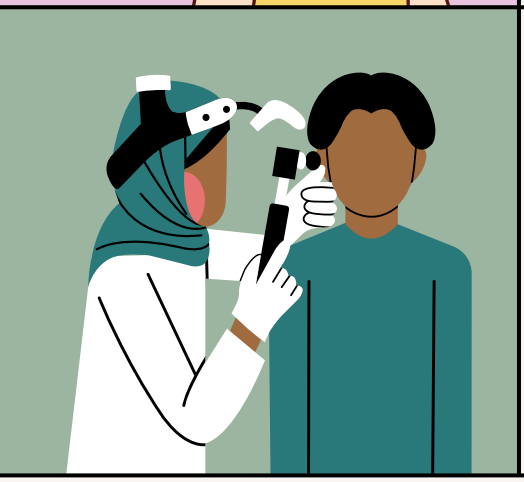
People to know early in your family's D/deaf and hard-of-hearing journey

There are lots of ways to give your child who is D/deaf or hard-of-hearing (D/HH) a boost when it comes to developing language. For example, you might work with providers who can help support your child and family. Here are some examples:



Audiologist (AuD)

- Checks your child's hearing and ears to find out how well they hear; identifies hearing or balance concerns
- Helps you child build communication and listening skills
  - E.g., recognizing and identifying sounds, exploring ways to communicate, supporting listening strategies
- Helps your family choose and use hearing tech: hearing aids (HAs), cochlear implants (CIs), bone-anchored devices
  - Helps with counseling , device use, and device care



Otolaryngologist (ENT Doctor)

- Diagnoses and treats conditions of the ears, nose, and throat that can affect your child's speech or hearing
- Can prescribe medicine or treatments and do surgeries
  - E.g., cochlear implant placement, vocal fold surgery, ear drum repair, ear tube placement
- Counsels your family on medical decision-making



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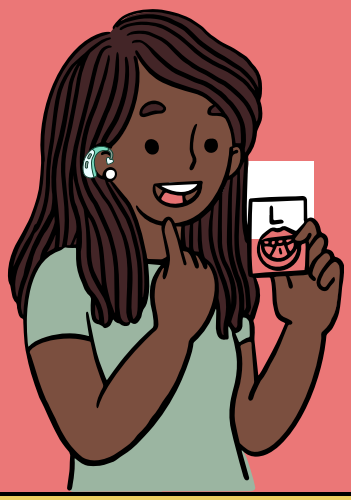

Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

- Identifies your child's communication needs, including challenges with understanding and using language
- Works with your child to build skills like language, voice, expression, speech, fluency, and/or swallowing
- Gives your family tools to support your child's language and communication development at home
- Focuses on your family's language goals
    - Works with the languages and modes used at home



Auditory-Verbal Therapist (AVT)

- Specially-trained to help kids learn how to more easily (naturally) listen to and use spoken language
    - Can be a teacher of the Deaf (TOD), audiologist (AuD), or speech-language pathologist (SLP)
- Works with kids aged birth to 5yrs who use hearing technology like hearing aids or cochlear implants
- Teaches your child through play while coaching you on how to support their learning at home



Teacher of the Deaf (TOD)

- Supports your child's education in lots of ways
    - Can work at their school, at home, or with doctors
    - Will use sign language, speech, AAC, or any other communication type your child uses
    - Can work one-on-one with your child or their whole class, depending on where they're learning
- Supports development of Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP)



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Interpreters/Translators

- Interpreters listen to what someone is saying in one language (like ASL or English), then turn it into another language so everyone can be part of the conversation
  - Can also turn speech into live captions (CART)
- Translators may be involved if your family speaks or signs other languages aside from ASL and English
- Interested in learning more? Check out our interpreting infographic here!



Sign Language Instructor

- Certified to teach your family and others about ASL and Deaf culture
- Can give lessons: at your child's school, privately, in adult education programs, or online
- Has a background in education and ASL or Deaf culture



Deaf Mentor

- An adult who is D/deaf or hard-of-hearing and gives your family guidance, support, and encouragement
- Shares their own experiences with school, doctor's appointments, hearing technology, and growing up D/deaf or hard-of-hearing
- Helps your child explore challenging thoughts and feelings about their identity and experiences
  - Acts as a positive role model for building confidence, self-advocating, and navigating everyday life



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Want to learn more? Check out these resources for parents, educators, and loved ones:

AMERICAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

HANDS & VOICES™

USU Ski-Hi Institute

These resources will help you find verified Deaf Mentors. You may find a mentor in your community or support groups. However, they may not offer the same help or be verified. Always use your judgement.



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Just learned your child is D/HH?

IEP/504 plan basics

Supporting your child's well-being

Working with interpreters

Guide to special education in CT

Early intervention from any of these providers will support your child's development in the long run. They will work to help your child's language and social communication skills grow. These skills can allow your child to be more confident in their language and independent in life!