

## The Time is Now.

It is important to provide your child with language as soon as possible. The **Critical Period**, which is the period of time the child between the ages of 0-5 develops a language foundation, is of critical importance.



With little to no language exposure during that time period, the child will have language delays, difficulty with developing a positive self-identity, and face social isolation. **But, by taking action now, your child can flourish!**

## Your child NEEDS you!

It is important to provide your child with language. It is understandable that many parents feel they do not have the energy or resources to learn yet another language and/or are experiencing grief over their child's deafness or hearing loss. Parents have many responsibilities, but the least you can do for your child is to simply do your best. It is important that you give your child a means of expressing thoughts and feelings through language.

**Contact the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center for more information, support, and services.**

DHHSC FRESNO HEADQUARTERS  
5340 N. Fresno Street, Fresno, CA  
93710  
559-225-3323  
Resources@dhhsc.org  
www.dhhsc.org

## So your child is Deaf/Hard of Hearing,

**and you may be feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to start.**

But, having a Deaf/Hard of Hearing child is not the end of the world! View it as a new adventure, learning a new language and culture. There is a lot you can do to give your child all the **advantages available in the world.**



<http://archive.vcstar.com/news/oxnard-deaf-woman-asks-parents-to-sign-with-children-ep-367786010-348251161.html/>

<http://v12parentspackage.org/asl-faq/>



<http://deafchildren.org/about/>

## Learn ASL

One of the best things you can do is to provide your child with **American Sign Language (ASL)**, which is a visual language that is easier to learn for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. ASL provides a strong language foundation during the Critical Period, which makes it easier for the child to acquire other languages later on. It is difficult for a Deaf or Hard of Hearing child to catch everything with an aural language, hence experiencing many language delays. With access to ASL, a visual language, **Deaf and Hard of Hearing kids can become bilingual**, with both ASL and English fluency! There are many ways to learn ASL for both you and your child. You can look on the Internet, go to ASL classes, and/or work with a Deaf mentor.

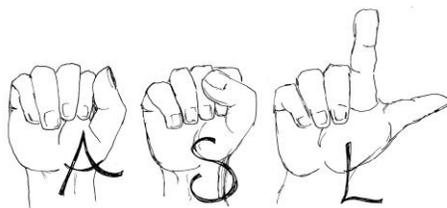
“We have our own culture, our own community. A lot of people don’t realize that. They just assume that deaf people are very unfortunate, very disabled, but no.”

- Nyle DiMarco, Dancing with the Stars, 2016 Winner and founder of The Nyle DiMarco Foundation

## Learn about Deaf Culture

One of the benefits of ASL is that it provides access to the amazing **support of the Deaf Community and its rich culture**. Deaf culture emphasizes the importance of American Sign Language as the foundation of Deaf identity and **the fact that Deaf people can achieve anything hearing people can**.

Inclusion in the Deaf community can **offer your child a vast array of resources, support, and a network of relationships**, which will assist them with developing their language and a positive Deaf identity.



## Brief Information on Other Methods

### Cochlear Implants:

If you believe a cochlear implant is right for your child, there are some things you need to know first:

- **Cochlear implants are not a “cure” for deafness.** There is a chance that without proper support and training, the cochlear implant will not benefit your child.
- **Sounds produced by a cochlear implant will not sound natural.** Hence, it **takes time to learn and distinguish between sounds and requires practice** to be able to use the implant effectively.

### Oralism:

While many parents may wish to start their child right away with the Oral Method to learn how to speak and hear, if there is **little progression by their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year in school**, that delay in language acquisition will prove very difficult for a child to catch up, leading to many years of language gaps.

Similarly, **using voice and lipreading are not skills that all Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals can, or even want to, use.**