

Building Your Team

As the parent of a deaf/hard of hearing child, having a good team of professionals who can guide and support you is invaluable. You and your family are the most important people on your baby's team. Professionals will come and go but you are there for the long haul. If you have a good relationship with your team members, you will feel more comfortable expressing your concerns and communicating your needs to them.

Primary Care Physician

Finding a good Primary Care Physician (PCP) can be a useful asset for the whole family. Build a relationship with your PCP. Educate your PCP about hearing loss. Your PCP can be a great coordinator when you are seeing different specialists. Your PCP will be able to make appropriate referrals to other professionals who will monitor your baby's development and hearing. It is often useful to ask for recommendations from family and friends with young children about good PCPs in your area.

Dispensing Pediatric Audiologist

Children should be seen by a pediatric audiologist that provides a full range of hearing services to children and young people up to 21 years of age. If your child is not fitted with a hearing aid, your audiologist will work out a management plan with you. This is likely to include a combination of routine hearing monitoring, and reviews at key stages of your child's development. Your audiologist will refer your family to Infant Toddler *tiny-k* for early intervention services.

Family Liaison

The Newborn Hearing Screening Program will refer you to a family liaison. A Deaf and Hard of Hearing Family Liaison is a professional with expertise in working with children who are deaf/hard of hearing, age birth-three, who will provide the initial support and information to families with children who have been recently diagnosed with a hearing loss. This person will help the family coordinate their medical appointments, entry into early intervention, and ensure that they have the proper supports in place to promote early language development. Their role is to guide and support you until you are engaged with the appropriate services. The Family Liaison can help you with information about hearing loss and early intervention services for your baby. They can advise you about any financial or other assistance that may be available to you.

Early Intervention Service

Early Intervention provides Infant Toddler *tiny-k* services to families to assist their child to get the best start in life. The goal of early intervention is to help the baby who is deaf/hard of hearing to learn to communicate, to use any available hearing and to interact socially. The early intervention network can provide access to a professional with special training in working with children who are deaf/hard of hearing. Your audiologist or family liaison should be able to tell you about early intervention services for children with hearing loss in your state. In Kansas, early intervention services are free and children with any degree of hearing loss are automatically eligible.

Parent Support

Parent-to-Parent Support Programs are available in Kansas. Supporting Parents have children who are deaf/hard of hearing and have been trained to guide and support you in the early days. Many parents of newly diagnosed children find that talking to another parent with a child who is deaf/hard of hearing is very helpful. They have the understanding and knowledge that comes from the lived experience.