

***"IT TAKES TWO: THE VALUE
OF DEAF/HEARING TEAMS IN
EARLY INTERVENTION"***

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TERMINOLOGY

We recognize and value the significance of the terms Deaf, Deaf, Hard of Hearing and honor those, but for simplicity we will be using the term Deaf to represent all individuals who have different hearing levels except for direct quotes

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

- Formal early intervention (birth-three) that was specific to children who are Deaf began in the late 1960's – early 1970's
- Signed English systems came to the forefront in Deaf Education in the 1960's-1980's and ASL was rarely used for instructional or educational purposes, but was the primary language of interaction among Deaf adults involved in the Deaf Community. Around the same time period ASL was recognized as a fully and equivalent language and intense work on the linguistic structure of ASL began
- Cued Speech was created in 1966 with the primary focus of helping children who are Deaf improve their reading skills
- Organized efforts to bring Deaf adults onboard as equal partners in early childhood Deaf Education began in the late 1980's-early 1990's (Bi-Bi era) and ASL began to be seen as a viable language of instruction in academic settings
- Trials for cochlear implant use on young children began in the US in the early 1980's and was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for children in 1990

All of these advances in educational approaches, study of linguistics and linguistic development, and technology were conducted for the benefit of individuals who are Deaf, yet the involvement of Deaf individuals in the field of early childhood Deaf education for children who are Deaf has been limited

BEST PRACTICE:

The 2007 position statement of the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) specifically recommends that 'Deaf and hard of hearing' adults should be involved in all EHDI intervention programs, as they can 'enrich the family's experience by serving as mentors and role models' (JCIH, 2007:903)

BUT...

PHONE SURVEY 22 EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

2005

- **None** of the programs were *administered* by Deaf adults
- **Four** programs had Deaf adults *employed* in part or full time positions
- **Ten** programs felt they make concerted efforts to involve Deaf adults in their programs
- **All** pointed to the lack of funds or the lack of qualified professionals for the absence of involvement of Deaf adults
- A concern about hiring Deaf adults who would negatively influence hearing parents was expressed by **twelve** respondents

2015

- **None** of the programs were *administered* by Deaf adults
- **Seven** programs had Deaf adults *employed* in part or full time positions
- **Twelve** programs felt they make concerted efforts to involve Deaf adults in their programs
- **All** pointed to the lack of funds, lack of qualified professionals or lack of administrative support for the absence of involvement of Deaf adults
- A concern about hiring Deaf adults who would negatively influence hearing parents was expressed by **none** of the respondents

**“THE MEETING OF TWO
PERSONALITIES IS LIKE THE
CONTACT OF TWO CHEMICAL
SUBSTANCES; IF THERE IS
ANY REACTION, BOTH ARE
TRANSFORMED.”**

CARL JUNG

VALUE OF DEAF ADULTS: THE RESEARCH

- Hintermair (2000) interviewed 317 parents and found that those who reported having contact with Deaf adults also reported less depression, less isolation, and increased interactional responsiveness to their child. Unfortunately, only 9.5% of parents had frequent contact with Deaf adults.
- In a study conducted by Watkins et al, (1998), parents who received services from a Deaf Mentor reported less frustration in communicating and interacting with their child, knowing and using six times as many signs with their child than parents in the control group that did not have access to Deaf adults on a regular basis.
- Deaf children could benefit from having access to Deaf adults in order to build their social network, reducing the possibility of isolation, be that adults who are employed as Deaf Mentors or Deaf Role Models or adults who are Deaf who are working in other professional positions (Wilkins and Hehir, 2008; Young et al., 2000).

VALUE OF DEAF ADULTS: THE RESEARCH

In a recent survey of parents in the Utah Parent Infant Program (2014), all of the parents who had the opportunity to interact with adults who are Deaf who were employed by the program reported the experience to be a positive one. The three primary benefits they listed from this experience were that it:

1. Helped to calm their fears about their child's future
2. Helped them feel calmer around Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults
3. Encouraged them to think beyond the first three years of their child's life (unpublished survey results)

BENEFITS: EI STAFF PERSPECTIVE

- Parents get the benefit of two perspectives, two life experiences
- Deaf adults have input and are valued for what they know, what they have done and who they are in their professional and personal lives
- Hearing professionals love learning about Deaf culture, life with a cochlear implant, the benefits and challenges of hearing aids, and the fun of learning a new language or learning the strategies Deaf adults use everyday to function with such success everyday
- Hearing staff learn new strategies for interaction from their Deaf colleagues
- Deaf staff gain an understanding of hearing perspectives from their hearing colleagues, which often translate into better understanding of hearing parents

“We stretch one another...our views on life and education, children and families. We learn, we laugh, we struggle, and in the end we are better people for having worked together side by side” -Rachael, Deaf adult

COMMENT FROM A HEARING EARLY INTERVENTIONIST WHO PARTNERS WITH A DEAF ADULT

“Adonna is my other half, my partner in this journey as an early intervention provider. There are things that I know as a Deaf educator, walking this journey with a multitude of families in the past, and I bring that experience and information to to families. But Adonna meets families on a totally different level. She is Deaf. She has a life of experience as a person who is Deaf who is so successful. She shares her life experiences and how she adapts and adjusts to environments where most of the people she interacts with are hearing, and how she thrives in environments where there are predominantly people who are Deaf . I can provide families with information, theory, support and in developing new skills, but Adonna can share how their child might feel, and equip them with a perspective that only a person who is Deaf can provide. We make an amazing team, and the benefit to me is that she helps me to see things from a different perspective as well. This has made me better as an early interventionist.”

BENEFITS: PARENTS

- Meeting Deaf adults gives parents the opportunity to ask questions about what it's like to be Deaf (Young, 2000; Pittman, 2003; Sutherland, et al, 2003)
- Interacting with adults who are Deaf allows parents to experience and see for themselves how individuals who have different hearing levels communicate and interact with one another and with hearing people, which helps them know how to communicate more effectively with their child (Mohay et al. 1998; Watkins, et al, 1998; Takala et al., 2000; Pittman, 2003)
- Allows parents the opportunity to connect with and learn about the Deaf Community as well as hard of hearing groups and organizations (Watkins, et al, 1998; Hulsebosch & Myers, 2002)

BENEFITS: PARENTS

- Promotes the value of early literacy skills and the importance of print and reading with the child on a daily basis. This includes positioning techniques for families who are learning ASL as well as the best way to take advantage of the child's auditory skills during reading, making language accessible and making books and reading fun.
- Positive attitudes towards Deaf people and Deaf Culture are developed (Mohay et al. 1998)
- Feeling more able to parent their Deaf child and also reduced their feelings of isolation (Hintermair, 2000)
- Learning more sign language (Watkins et al., 1998; Takala et al., 2000)
- Develop skills to improve their child's communicative competence (Watkins et al., 1998; Takala et al., 2000).

IMPACT OF BEING A DEAF MENTOR/ROLE MODEL

- Developed listening skills...listening more than talking
- Learned the importance of giving a balanced view to all things shared and respecting the views of others
- Improved confidence in responding appropriately to parents and working effectively with families and children
- Promoted own sense of self-worth and helped to create a positive self-image
- Allowed for a personal opportunity to reflect on own lives, their experiences as a person who is Deaf and see both the positive and negative

Slide 14

PP1

Stacy at slide 13-
Paula Pittman, 3/9/2015

IMPACT OF BEING A DEAF MENTOR/ROLE MODEL

- Experienced feelings of personal achievement and satisfaction at helping children and their families
- Reinforced their own feelings of pride at being a person who is Deaf
- Allowed them the opportunity to learn about diverse views, backgrounds and experiences that others who are Deaf may have, which lead to personal growth
- Became more conscientious of personal appearance and of personal actions. The weight of the responsibility of being a mentor or role model impacted what and how they said and did things in their own lives and with families
- Strong sense of responsibility to parents and children for their role as a mentor/role model

COMMENT FROM A HARD OF HEARING ADULT WHO PARTNERS WITH A HEARING ADULT

“I work with hearing parents who are interested in learning about and understanding the world of Deaf and, our adaptations, our challenges, our successes. But they also want to know about issues that are best explained by a hearing professional in Deaf education because they deal with hearing values and Hearing culture. I am an accountant and am also a hard of hearing adult. I am not a professional in the field of Deaf education. But I have something valuable to offer. I can share my life. Mary shares information related to the many complexities of Deaf education and provides information that parents need to make decisions about their child and their child's future. Parents want both of us, and they need both of us! Together, we become a bridge families can cross over or seek shelter under.” Jeffrey-

COMMENT FROM A DEAF STUDENT

“I don’t remember a time in my life when I wasn’t supported by Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, kids my age and adults that I look up to, and also by hearing people, my parents and my family, my godmother, some of my teachers. I have cochlear implants, and I use my voice. I have hearing friends. I have mighty hands, and with them I share thoughts and dreams. I love and use ASL everyday. I love being with my Deaf friends. I love that I have an identity as a Deaf person, but also feel comfortable with my hearing friends. My family bends over backwards to meet my communication needs in every situation we are in, and have always tried to do that. I realize now what a gift that is to me. I love my life, and love the freedom I have to communicate in two languages. I’m bilingual and Deaf...that’s totally normal, and also totally radical!” – Allison, age 17 -

**MANY PROGRAMS ARE
MAKING IT WORK....HOW?**

TO SUCCEED, PROGRAMS WILL NEED TO MOVE FROM:

- Paternalism to Partnership
- Pathological Philosophy to Humanistic Philosophy
- Homogenized to Culturally Diverse
- Monolingualism to Bilingualism
- Simple Access to Quality Access

(www.zak.co.il/Deaf-info/old/NAD_ideology.html)

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSITION

How partnerships can prepare for bilingual development and helps children become better prepared for learning

COMMENT FROM A TEACHER OF THE DEAF

“I can tell immediately when a preschooler comes into my classroom if they and his/her family have had the benefit of a Hearing/Deaf Team in Early Intervention because they walk into my preschool with language, positive self esteem, value, and attitude. The combination of a Deaf and Hearing professional working together in partnership with a hearing family creates a tangible result...children who know who they are and who have the language to express it, and families who accept their child where they are and effectively communicate with their child.” -Barbara-

WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM?

STRATEGIES FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE DEAF/HEARING PARTNERSHIPS

- Equality is essential in all respects – responsibility, support, training, salary scale, etc.
- Administrative support and commitment to ongoing funding success of Deaf/hearing teams
- Trainings in cultural sensitivity and communication/language (American Sign Language, English, LSL, Cued Speech, etc)
- Deaf staff at all levels of the program in a variety of roles as their interest, skills and education dictate
- Team roles must be clear, comfortable, valued and respected

STRATEGIES FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE DEAF/HEARING PARTNERSHIPS (CONT...)

- Create a safe environment where communication can be open and honest without fear
- Encourage cultural and linguistic facilitation
- Provide opportunities for professionals to learn about one another's history, lives, values and background
- Listen to one another and be willing to change ideas/approaches
- Brainstorm new ideas and resolutions to challenges
- Encourage regular and ongoing communication

STRATEGIES FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE DEAF/HEARING PARTNERSHIPS (CONT...)

- Provide ASL classes and incentives for improving ASL skills for all staff
- Provide quality inservice training to ensure effective partnering
- Long-term group process (ongoing and open dialogues)
- Shared responsibility, shared teamwork
- Shared vision, shared resources

POSSIBLE ACTIVITY IDEAS TO SUPPORT PROGRAM SUCCESS

- Set up playgroups/toddler groups for all children that support their communication needs and are taught by a Deaf/hearing team
- Create ASL/English and English/ASL clubs for young Deaf/hearing children and their siblings that are led by Deaf/hearing teams
- Encourage and facilitate ongoing social/linguistic “fun games”, chat groups, sport games, and reading groups for Deaf children, regardless of communication approaches used
- Establish educational classes that promote learning interaction between Deaf and hearing children of all ages

COMMENT FROM A HEARING PROFESSIONAL:

“Deaf-Hearing work and personal relationships helped me understand my identity within the Deaf community. It has helped me understand my role in “cultural-bridging” and what it means to be an “ally” with Deaf people. It continues to teach me my boundaries within the community. It has helped me increase my respect for Deaf and hearing people. I have embraced the language and the culture and celebrate its unique beauty. This, I could not have done without Deaf people in my life”.

**“THE REAL VOYAGE OF
DISCOVERY CONSISTS NOT OF
SEEKING NEW LANDS, BUT SEEING
WITH NEW EYES”.**

MARCEL PROUST

**SOMETIMES THE BEST ROAD IS THE ONE
THAT YOU MAKE**



**THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING OUR
PRESENTATION!**