

Communication Methods for Children with Hearing Loss

Parents who have children with hearing loss face many decisions. Some of these decisions include what communication method(s) to choose based on the outcomes they want for their child. Communication methods may be combined or changed based on the goals of the family.

Communication Methods

- Auditory-Oral – Maximizes a child's residual hearing using hearing aids and/ or cochlear implants in addition to visual cues like gestures and lip reading. Spoken language is used with this method.
- Auditory-Verbal – Maximizes a child's residual hearing using hearing aids and/ or cochlear implants, but the focus is on listening without the use of lip reading or sign language.
- Cued Speech – Information is gained through sight and sound. Hand signs and placements are used near the face to clarify sounds and can be used in combination with any of the other communication methods.
- Sign Language – The two most common types of sign language are Signed Exact English (SEE) which follows English grammatical structure, and American Sign Language (ASL) which is its own language with its own grammatical structure.
- Total Communication – Method that involves using a combination of spoken language, sign language and the use of residual hearing to communicate. Hearing aids and/or cochlear implants are used in conjunction with sign language or cued speech.

Amplification Options

- Hearing Aids – An electronic, battery operated device that amplifies and changes incoming sounds to improve a child's ability to hear sounds. A pediatric audiologist will utilize tests, experience, and knowledge to best determine what is appropriate for each child.
- Cochlear Implants – A surgically implanted electronic device that restores partial hearing to those with severe to profound hearing loss. A cochlear implant bypasses the disabled parts of the inner ear and stimulates the auditory nerve. A child learns to interpret auditory stimulation as speech and sound.
- Assistive Listening Devices – Assists children in difficult listening situations like a school classroom or other noisy environment. The most commonly used type is a frequency modulated (FM) system that can be used along with a child's hearing aids and/or cochlear implant.