



## WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN WHEN MY CHILD WAS DIAGNOSED WITH HEARING LOSS: A LIFE SAVER FROM ONE PARENT TO ANOTHER

### Feelings After Your Child's Initial Diagnosis

- Nothing changes your love for your child. Keep loving them as you did before the hearing loss diagnosis.
- It's completely normal to receive and process the hearing loss diagnosis differently than your spouse or other family members.
- You may feel overwhelmed with the number of decisions you are asked to make. Approach these decisions with the attitude that you will make the best decisions you can with the information you have at that time.



When it comes to the communication choices that you make for your child and family, nothing is set in stone. You may choose one method and later, realize it doesn't work for your family. Give yourself permission to try something else until you find what works best for your family.

- People handle grief in their own unique way. Some may feel, guilt, anger, frustration, blame, immediate acceptance, relief or denial etc. This is typical. Take time to recognize and feel your feelings - whatever they may be.
- If you feel that you or a family member are struggling to accept the diagnosis, or avoiding obtaining follow up care, this would be a good time to connect with a Parent Guide from WY Families for Hands & Voices, Guide By Your Side Program.
- Your child will take cues from the adults around them. This means that the better you are able to accept their hearing loss, diagnosis and amplification needs, the more likely they will accept them as well. Sometimes this means you may need to, "Fake it 'til you make it!" Attitudes are contagious.



# Connections

Be open to taking advantage of the many opportunities that come your way. You may find you enjoy meeting new people, friends, and making connections with other parents who have a child who is deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH).

1. Join family support groups such as Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices, the Parent Information Center (PIC), local and national organizations.
2. Connect with a Parent Guide from Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices, Guide by Your Side Program.
3. Enroll in Early Intervention/R.E.A.D. Plus (Reading Early Accelerates Development) Programs.
4. Attend Parent Trainings and Conferences.
5. Go to Family Fun Events sponsored by Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices.
6. Explore online the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) Library Services for Deaf, or if in Casper visit the library at 539 South Payne Avenue, Casper, Wyoming 82609.
7. If you discover helpful connections, share with other families!!!



## The Three "E's"

The three "E's" are critical: Early Identification, Early Amplification, and Early Intervention.

1. **Early Identification:** Early diagnosis leads to increased available time and opportunities for your child to develop age appropriate developmental skills.
2. **Early Amplification/Hearing Technology:** If you choose to have your child fitted with amplification/hearing technology (ideally by 3 months of age), it is likely they will bond better to their hearing technology and more easily adapt to wearing it consistently.
3. **Early Intervention:** Professionals in your family's life are trained to support you and your child. We hope you learn to value and appreciate them.



# Follow-Through

- When your child is diagnosed with hearing loss, you will need to follow up with audiology appointments on a regular basis. This schedule is determined by your audiologist. It may be very often in the beginning.  
  
Follow through with ALL audiology appointments. They are important – just like a doctor’s appointment. If you can’t make the appointment, reschedule as soon as possible.
- Have your child consistently wear their hearing technology (hearing aid, cochlear implant, BAHA). Its use is critical to speech and language development. If chosen, the consistent use of appropriately fitted hearing technology helps to provide a strong foundation for speech and language development.
- While you may not immediately notice the benefits of hearing technology use, using it consistently is critical!
- If there is something wrong with your child’s ear mold or hearing technology (hearing aid, cochlear implant, BAHA) contact your child’s audiologist immediately.
- Hearing technology is critical to your child’s access to sound (i.e. your voice). Your audiologist needs/wants to know if there is a problem with the child’s hearing technology. Children are able to bond with and consistently use their hearing devices that are fitted and working appropriately.
- Maintain the same level of expectations for your child with hearing loss as you would for your children without hearing loss.



Members of the WEII include representatives from the following: Wyoming Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program; Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices, Guide By Your Side (GBYS); Wyoming Department of Education, Outreach Services for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH); Wyoming Department of Health, Early Intervention and Education Program (EIEP); University of Wyoming, Communication Disorders Division; Child Development Services of Wyoming; and The Marion Downs Center.

If you are interested in additional information, support, or training provided at **no cost** regarding this quick start guide, please contact the Wyoming EHDI Program at **(307) 721-6212**, [info@wyomingehdi.org](mailto:info@wyomingehdi.org) for an appropriate referral.