

“Hey, What About Us?”

Supporting Families of Young Children who are Hard of Hearing



Melissa Wagner - *Michigan H&V Guide By
Your Side Program*

Janet DesGeorges - *Colorado Families for
Hands & Voices & Guide By Your Side Program*



**HANDS&
VOICES**



Today's Presentation

- What's in a Name?
- Not Deaf Enough
- Expectations, Assumptions, and Presumptions....
 - Over and Underestimating Abilities
- What's the Same/What's Different
- Communication Considerations



What's In a Name?

- Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Hearing Impaired...defined by an Audiogram?
 - Audiologically, socially, culturally...
- Utilization of terms in Resources
- How families react to terms: mild, moderate, severe, profound



Not Deaf Enough...

Parents on the Journey

- **Grief...** do parents have the ‘right’ to react emotionally?
 - Parents often hear, “Well, at least your child has some hearing...” or say, “I shouldn’t feel bad, my child doesn’t have a PROFOUND loss...”
 - What the Research Says....

- **Part C and Part B ELIGIBILITY**

- **Support Services**
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adult Role Models
 - Parent to Parent Support – YOU BELONG with us!!
 - Terminology in Resources



Expectations...Assumptions... Presumptions

■ Do ‘choices in communication’ Still Apply?

- “Why have you forced your child to be ‘oral’?”
- “Why are you teaching your child sign language? – she only has a unilateral hearing loss”
- “Why does your child go to a deaf school, he/she is ‘only’ hard of hearing...speaks so well...etc”
- “Your child should be doing better with his/her speech...look at their audiogram..”
- “your forcing your child into the ‘hearing world’, why don’t you ‘let them’ be Deaf?”

*What Works for your child is what makes the choice
right... Hands & Voices*



Expectations...Assumptions... Presumptions

■ Hidden Needs

- When a child can speak clearly, it's easy to 'forget' they don't always have access
- Because they 'act' like a hearing person, we put unrealistic expectations on them.

- Must we make parents "Choose" their child's world?... 'hearing' or 'Deaf' and or in between....



What's the same/What's Different

■ SAME

- We all love our kids!
- Regardless of degree of hearing loss, parents need information, support, advocacy, and high expectations

■ DIFFERENT

- Some of the 'challenges' may be easier
- Society's view and degree of comfort in communication modes



Communication Considerations

- Parents Think About...
 - Chances of hearing loss progressing...
 - Social Issues...being left out
 - Professionals ‘questioning’ our choices



“Between Three Worlds” by Dawn West

I live in a world dominated by the hearing;
My personal world is hard of hearing. And there is
a cultural world for the Deaf.

I am propped delicately
Somewhere in the midst,
Between these 3 places,
Too far removed from and often ignored
In the hearing world;

I am constantly shifting within the hard of hearing
world,
As the insidious progression of hearing loss takes
place.

I am usually not accepted into or recognized in the
Deaf world.

Truthfully and Thankfully:

Not every hearing person ignores me.
The hard of hearing usually recognize me,
And some Deaf do not disown me.
Yet, I often feel that I am closer to the world with
no hearing in terms of my hearing loss;

As a result, some say I am deaf with a small d.
It seems that I often don't get to choose.

Or even know where I belong.
There are so many labels: deaf,
Hard of hearing, hearing impaired,
The oral deaf.....

Where do I go? Where do I find in?
What do I do?

How am I supposed to feel?
How am I supposed to deal?

I am trapped, precariously
Unbalanced

Between 3 worlds that shift
Effortlessly

Without me even feeling the
Changing momentum.

Despite this all, I accept the place that
That I live in.

I demand to be included when I
Am unfairly excluded.

I find humorous moments
Thoroughly endearing

I, even, embrace the truth – that
I Am Hard of Hearing.

Hands & Voices

Janet DesGeorges

303-492-6283

janet@handsandvoices.org

www.handsandvoices.org

Melissa Wagner

231-843-6169

melissa_wagner73@yahoo.com



**HANDS&
VOICES**