



A Special List of Specialists: Part II

You Don't have to be a Doctor to be a Specialist:

Whether your child uses assistive technologies, is in the process of being evaluated, or is waiting for follow up testing, it is critical they have access to language, visual or verbal, from birth. Scientific data shows it's not what kind of language a child receives (signed, spoken or a mix), it's about getting language into the child's brain and allowing them to express themselves. A skilled speech/language therapist is one who works with your child's language development, offers guidance, adapts to changing circumstances and is respectful of family choices regarding language and technology.



A Speech / Language Pathologist (SLP):

In developing a speech therapy program for your child, it is important to develop realistic goals with the therapist. These goals must be revisited from time to time as your child progresses. Although speech is often the dream for parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, some kids may not easily learn to speak and other communication systems must be considered. The most important thing you can do for your child is to give them access to language.

What is the goal of going to speech therapy?

- To learn to communicate with speech and language. Every child is different, so every child has different goals. For some, the goal is speech, for others, the goal is to communicate their needs using American Sign Language (ASL) or cued speech.

What can I do to help the Speech Therapist?

- Ask the SLP to show you things you can do at home.
- Practice these techniques everyday in natural settings.

What will a Speech Therapist do with my child?

- Develop Auditory Awareness: Therapy will involve playing with toys that make sound & music to become aware that sound is present.
- Develop Listening Skills: "Listen, I hear something, what is that?" The SLP will pat their ears and rewards the child's attention by showing the source of the sound.
- Develop Auditory Localization: Activities like open the door when someone knocks, marching to a drum or clapping to music shows how to respond to sounds.
- Develop Vocal Play: Making lots of fun & interesting sounds when playing with toys: growl for the teddy bear, meow for the cat, vroom for the car.

- Develop Auditory Processing: The SLP will use names to label objects and people, teaching action words like run & sleep and abstract ideas like happy and sad.

Early Intervention Deaf Mentor Program

What is a Deaf Mentor?

A trained Deaf adult who serves as a support to a family regardless of their choice of communication and to be a mentor to a deaf child.

What does a Mentor do?

- Provides home visits to the family and child.
- Be a language model, using American Sign Language (ASL).
- Teach parents how to interact and communicate with their baby using ASL.
- Storytelling and reading using the Shared Reading Program.
- Join family in a community setting (park, library, store) or at a local deaf community event.

What are some benefits?

- To empower families by enhancing communication with their baby.
- To be a positive role model and provide cultural information.

How do I get a Mentor?

- Contact your local Early Intervention Program or Care Coordinator.

References

- [Outcomes, Benefits and Drawbacks of Speech Therapy](#) – Partners Resource Network
- [Parent Infant Program for Deaf/Hard of Hearing](#) – Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind
- [Hearing, Ear Infections, and Deafness](#) – National Institute on Deafness

Resources

- [United Cerebral Palsy Association of Hawaii](#)
- [John Tracy Clinic](#)
- [Alexander Graham Bell](#)
- [Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center](#)

Comprehensive Service Center for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind, Ohana Program 1953 S. Beretania Street, Ste 5A, Honolulu, HI 96826, (808) 369-0499 phone, (808) 447-2044 videophone, csc@csc-hawaii.org, www.csc-hawaii.org