

Language & Learning

Decisions...Decisions

Levels of Family Involvement

Who should be involved in the early decisions that you make as parents of hard-of-hearing or deaf babies? Remember that everyone in your family will be a part of the community in which your baby grows and develops. Certainly, you as parents must make the choices, but there are others you can include by listening to their ideas.

If you have other family members with hearing loss, they may be able to tell you about their experiences. While their hearing loss and your baby's may not be exactly the same, they have a personal perspective that can be very helpful.

Grandparents, aunts and uncles often become very interested in hearing loss when a baby who is hard-of-hearing or deaf is born into the family. They may get information from many sources such as television, magazines, or the Internet and want to share it with you. Some facts will be more useful than others, but by discussing information with other adult family members, all of you can think more clearly about the things you want to know.

Brothers and sisters, especially those who are older, will be affected by the decisions that you make. By sharing what you learn with them, and talking about the impact (rewarding as well as challenging) that your decisions will have on family life, you make other children a part of the decision making process. Brothers and sisters sometimes feel left out as adult attention moves to meet the challenge of a baby with hearing loss. When you pay attention to their ideas before making decisions you can help to reassure them that their position in the family is secure.