

Language & Learning

Building Our Support Team

Setting Up Family Support

When thinking about family support, think about those people who are in the closest contact with you and your deaf or hard of hearing baby. Sometimes, friends or others close to you will provide support just as your family members will. It helps to have someone close who will listen and try to understand both your struggles and your triumphs.

Those who are close to you and your baby need support too. For example, if your baby wears hearing aids or cochlear implants, then everyone at home will need to learn how they work, and how to put them back on when they come flying off! If you have chosen sign language as the form of communication between you and your child, then those individuals you have chosen to be part of your support system will need help learning to sign too.

There are other kinds of support as well. Family members will probably have questions about your child and will need to talk about their feelings. Your infant/family advisor is one good source of support for your family. As your baby grows and you learn about his or her hearing loss, you too will be a good source of support for your family.

Remember, that your family members can also support you. As they become accustomed to your baby's hearing loss, they will understand what you need to do and how they can help. Not many people in your community will know much about hearing loss, and your family's understanding will be appreciated. Best of all, when your family is able to provide support to you, they are supporting your baby as well.

Your extended family, including your parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, can also support you and your baby. Whether they live across the street or across the country, whether they see you almost every day or only once a year, they care about you and your baby. By helping them learn what you are learning, you will expand your baby's circle of loving people, and your own circle of support.