

Parent to Parent

Successes...Great and Small

Delight In The Little Things

Big successes start with little ones. When we first discover that our child has a hearing loss, we also discover that we have much to learn and do. It is so easy to look at all of the things that still need to be done, and forget to celebrate the small accomplishments that take place every day in the lives of our children and ourselves. Reaching the day when your toddler finally stops yanking his hearing aid out of his ear is a success. Hearing that first word, or seeing that first baby sign from your little one is a success. It is common to feel like you are never doing enough to help your child, and it is good to be reminded of how far you have come when you are going through a rough period.

It is very normal to want to compare our children to other children the same age, regardless of whether they have a hearing loss or not. Every mother who has ever been in a group of mothers and babies has found themselves taking note of which babies are already smiling, which ones are starting to walk, or which are starting to say their first words. Even when our children are very young, we tend to equate success with being “normal,” or being the one who is ahead of the pack when it comes to milestones. For a child with a hearing loss, particularly if it is a profound loss, these milestones may come a little later than for a hearing child. Balance can be affected, which may cause a child to sit up, crawl or walk a little later. Speech may be delayed, which can be very worrisome to a parent. Language development may be slower if the hearing loss is identified later. Success is not measured in how quickly your child smiles, walks, talks, signs, or whatever the particular goal may be. The end result is what is important, not how fast they get there. Learn to appreciate and enjoy the little successes along the way.

Pat Yourself on the Back!

It is often much easier to recognize our child's progress than it is to see how far we as parents have come. It is important for you to stop from time to time and acknowledge your own successes. Most of us were pretty much stopped in our tracks when we first received the diagnosis of our child's hearing loss. Some parents are able to move on from that point with hardly a pause, while others have a harder time. Regardless of which category you fit in to, you have more than likely made more progress than you have given yourself credit for. Take some time and look back at all you have accomplished over the last year, month, or even the last week. It is much easier to continue doing what we have to do when we can see how far we have already come.

While professionals play a major role in the lives of our children, it is we, the parents, who have the most impact on them. When we believe in them and expect that they can succeed, they will. Some of us may have to measure success a little differently than others, but those successes are no less significant. What is important is that we give our children the confidence to believe in themselves and the tools they need to reach their full potential. We must also believe in ourselves. Celebrate your child's successes, but don't forget to acknowledge your own.