



## Speaking with Your Speech Therapist

Working closely with professionals can create a focused approach toward helping your child with hearing loss develop language skills. A combination of experts supporting each other's efforts on behalf of your child creates an informed team. You, the parent, are an essential member of the team. You can be the link to and a partner in these services

Every professional is different, as are the families they see. Aspects to consider when working with a communication therapist or speech-language pathologist (SLP) or a Listening Spoken Language Specialist/ Auditory Verbal Therapist (LSLS/ AVT) include: Does the service provider have a background in working with children? Is the professional experienced in working with a child with a hearing loss? What are the opportunities for family involvement? What teaching style is used in sessions? How can families share ideas and concerns?

Try these tips to develop a partnership with your child's language therapist:

- Consistently attend scheduled appointments: Explain as you make appointments when you will be able to come. Call ahead if you will be late or need to cancel/reschedule.
- Share information from other professionals: Obtain copies or ask that they be sent to your therapist (e.g. audiograms, cochlear implant MAPs, documents from other service providers and school reports).
- Keep your copies of documents: Ask for copies of notes and reports from appointments, evaluations, meetings and progress summaries from therapies. Create your own file or notebook to document who you saw, what was



- discussed and decisions that were made.
- Collect and share language samples: When you hear your child use a new sound, word, or sentence write it down! Children are comfortable with family and more likely to chat at home. Share these conversations with your therapist. When taking a language sample, write down exactly what your child said; do not add in the missing pieces.
- Follow through on homework assignments: Try suggested carry-over activities at home and give details about the results. Bring in completed vocabulary lists, record changes you have seen and discuss difficulties you notice.
- Ask questions: Ask for explanations, request examples and inquire about more information. Be direct in asking for help or clarifying confusion so you can use strategies easily throughout your day.
- Tell your therapist how you learn best: If you learn by seeing an activity performed before

you attempt to do it yourself, ask “Could you show me first?” If your family benefits from video or written information, ask if there is material you can take home.

- Communicate concerns about your child: Express desires about skills you would like to see your child acquire, and ask questions about how to develop those skills. Discuss times and places in your routine where you would like ideas to help your child.
- Share what you know about your child: You know your child best (e.g. likes and dislikes, behavior, adaptation to daily routines). Provide this information to help structure therapy sessions and plan activities.

Your child’s skill development is a process that occurs over time, and results will come after practice and repetition. Be patient. Have high expectations for your child, and trust that your child can achieve goals, even when tasks seem to be challenging.

Keep your activities focused on fun and language learning through natural routines.

You, your family and your child’s service providers have one common goal: the development of his language skills. Professionals may change over time and only a few may attend meetings or be in touch with each other. Explain what your goals are for your child and for yourself. Enhancing your own understanding of these skills will help to facilitate your child’s learning. Service providers are there to guide you so that you can integrate strategies into your daily life. Be open to suggestions from all the people working with you and your child. Keep the lines of communication open and positive. Working closely with your child’s therapists can result in productive, personalized and positive partnerships.