

Oral Deaf Education

Every parent has dreams for their child. These dreams may appear shattered when they learn that their child is deaf or hard of hearing. However, many children who are deaf can learn to successfully listen and speak through a program of oral deaf education! Incredible advances have been made in technology and therapies resulting in opportunities that can enable many children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and speak. Oral deaf education does not engage in the use of sign language, speech reading or Total Communication, rather it focuses on receptive (listening) and expressive (spoken) language. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing are trained in auditory oral techniques, and use their residual hearing together with hearing aids and/or cochlear implants to support their language and hearing development.

Oral Deaf Education and Auditory-Verbal Therapy working together

As early as possible, Auditory-Verbal therapy engages the child with the world of sound through their parents, teachers, friends and family. This engagement establishes communication patterns and focuses a child's learning abilities. Children learn to listen and gradually produce sounds which lead them to use spoken language. In time, the child makes the connection between sound and meaning. With continued positive reinforcement, teachers and parents build on initial sounds until children naturally learn to say whole words, and then sentences. The key is to provide consistent input and at the same time enjoy with the child new discoveries made.

Is Oral Deaf Education the right choice for my child?

The most common reason parents choose oral deaf education is the desire that their children speak for themselves when communication with others in the family, and in the hearing world. These are reasonable dreams. Young adults who are deaf who have learned to use spoken language as children overwhelmingly say that oral deaf education was the right choice. It has allowed them to integrate into regular schools, develop fulfilling careers and to be socially active within the hearing community.

Why Choose an Auditory-Oral Education?

- The goal of auditory-oral education is to provide children with the ability to listen and speak like people with normal hearing. Primary emphasis is placed on developing listening and speech skills; however, auditory-oral education also helps children build self-esteem, independence, creativity, and problem solving skills.
- Advances in auditory technology have made it easier for children who are hard-of-hearing or deaf to learn to listen and speak well at very young ages.
- Children who can speak orally may communicate more easily in a hearing world as they will not require the services of an interpreter.

- Most children who are deaf are born to hearing parents. An Auditory-oral education will facilitate easier communication and interactions with family and friends.
- Children taught with the auditory-oral option may have more personal options throughout their lives: schools, careers, friends, hobbies, and activities.

Studies have shown that children who are deaf and hard of hearing have increased literacy rates when educated through auditory-oral techniques. Increased literacy may lead to better career opportunities and a better standard of living.