

Presentation by
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Preparing teachers to work with deaf and hard of hearing children since 1967

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Today's presentation will provide information about....

- Use of early sign language in children who are deaf or hard of hearing, including cochlear implant candidates
- ASL and English acquisition
- Deaf and hard of hearing children who are bimodal and/or bilingual

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Terminology: Bimodal and/or Bilingual

• An ASL/English Bilingual Approach

- *Bilingual* means the development and use of two or more languages.
- Spoken English is a component of this approach. It is valued, encouraged, and incorporated and is specific to an individual child's characteristics and goals.

• What Does *Bimodal* Mean?

- *Bimodal* refers to the development and use of language in more than one modality. ASL is a signed language and English is a spoken language (*spoken* and *signed* are the "modes" to which "bimodal" refers).
- Bimodal development will be unique to each child. All children who can see have access to ASL; however, access to spoken English will be specific to each child's hearing levels and use of technology.

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Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

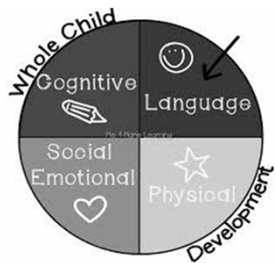


A diverse population of children who vary greatly by...

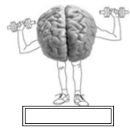
- Cause of hearing loss
- Age of onset
- Level of hearing loss
- Use of hearing technologies
- Parents hearing status
- Socio-economic variables
- Resilience of the family
- Presence of other disabilities
- Adopted
- Access to language

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What's the Big Deal about Language?



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Language

Major theorists have stated that....

- The brain has an innate capacity for language; it is language ready
- Language is not just communication, but communication fuels language
- Language and cognition have a mutually beneficial relationship
- Language is necessary for cognitive development, especially executive function skills
- Language development supports later academic learning

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VISUAL LANGUAGE & VISUAL LEARNING
RESEARCH BRIEF: **M2**

ADVANTAGES OF EARLY VISUAL LANGUAGE
JANUARY 2011




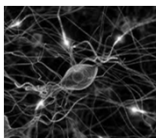
LEARNING FROM RESEARCH #2

Key Findings on the Advantages of Early Visual Language

- The brain is most receptive to language acquisition during "sensitive periods" early in a child's development.
- Deaf and hard of hearing children who receive early intervention services have been found to have better language outcomes up to age five.
- High levels of early involvement have been found to produce greater language development and more basic and higher language abilities.
- Acquiring a complete first language during early childhood is critical for later reading comprehension.
- Learning two languages that is American Sign Language (ASL) and English is advantageous for deaf and hard of hearing children.
- A child's language skills are predictive of later language development in deaf or hard of hearing children.
- A language foundation is an important factor in spoken language development.


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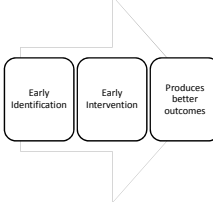
 **The brain is most receptive to language acquisition during "sensitive periods" early in a child's development.**



- Language does not just happen in one swift simultaneous event.
- Aspects of language develop in different stages and different times in children.
- Vocabulary does not seem to have a critical period.
- The syntax (grammar) of a language, however, must be acquired before entering school.
- Having full syntactical command of one language supports the learning of another language.

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 **Deaf and hard of hearing children who receive early intervention services have been found to have better language outcomes up to age five.**



- Early identification and early intervention produce positive outcomes up to age 5.
- Early identification and early intervention have been found to moderate factors that previously had negative effects on language (socio-economic status, presence of an additional disability)

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High levels of family involvement have been found to produce greater language development outcomes in deaf and hard of hearing children.



- High levels of family involvement produce higher language outcomes.
- Highly involved families tend to be dedicated to learning how to communicate with their child.
- High levels of involvement can buffer the negative effects of late enrollment in early intervention services.

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Acquiring a complete first language during early childhood is critical for later reading comprehension.



- Deaf and hard of hearing children must acquire a complete language (L1) before they enter school.
- ASL often functions as the L1 and supports the acquisition of spoken/written English.
- Delay in acquisition of a first language produces poor language performance.
- Delay in acquisition of a first language impacts on reading and academic achievement later.

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Learning two languages [ASL and English] is advantageous for deaf and hard of hearing children.



- Bilingualism has been found to produce cognitive flexibility.
- Bilingual or bimodal approaches ensure that if one pathway is less effective, another pathway can be used.
- Delay of language acquisition has negative consequences on cognition, academic achievement, and social and emotional health.
- It creates life-long repercussions.

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A mother's signing skills are predictive of later language development in deaf or hard of hearing children.



- It is challenging for parents to learn signs, but there are many more resources than in the past.
- Family training is necessary for birth - 3
 - www.dcmp.org
 - Local libraries
 - Deaf community socials in your community
- While learning signs, there are other communication strategies parents can use.
- Encourage parents not to give up.

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A language foundation is an important factor in spoken language development.

- Sign language is sometimes withheld from deaf children because of the belief that it interferes with spoken language development.
- There is no evidence that sign language impedes spoken language.
- In fact, spoken language skills increase as children learn more gestures and signs.
- Proficiency in ASL has been found to positively influence spoken language development and English literacy.

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Share with families

- ➡ Families who are more involved have children that perform better.
- ➡ Early exposure to sign language provides certain cognitive advantages.
- ➡ There is no evidence that signing interferes with spoken language development.
- ➡ Signing early may serve to facilitate spoken language.

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VISUAL LANGUAGE & VISUAL LEARNING
RESEARCH BRIEF:

THE IMPORTANCE OF FINGERSPELLING FOR READING
 JULY 2010

Key Findings on the Importance of Fingerspelling for Reading:

- Deaf families fingerspell to their deaf children when they are very young.
- Early exposure to fingerspelling helps these children become better readers.
- Fingerspelling, reading, and writing are interrelated.
- Fingerspelling facilitates English vocabulary growth, and larger the lexicon, the faster new vocabulary is learned.
- Fingerspelling positively correlates with stronger reading skills. Deaf and hard of hearing children who are good fingerspellers are good readers, and vice versa.

LEARNING FROM RESEARCH
 # 1

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Early exposure to fingerspelling helps children become better readers.

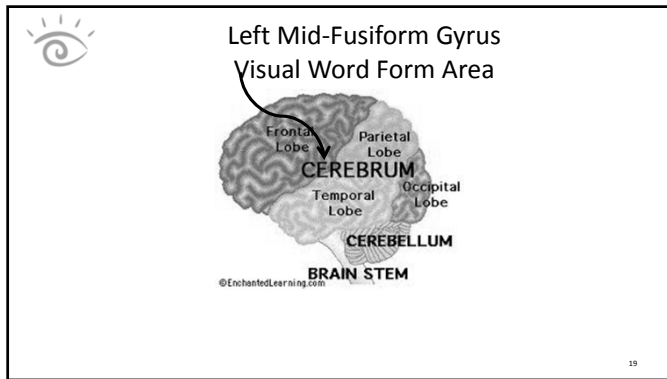
- Encourage parents to fingerspell with their young children.
- Very young deaf children perceive fingerspelled words as a sign until they learn the alphabet.
- Deaf children with early fingerspelling have similar vocabulary as hearing children at 24 months.
- Older children with early fingerspelling tend to read at higher rates than children of hearing parents.
- Fingerspelling ability significantly correlates with reading comprehension.


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Fingerspelling, reading, and writing are interrelated.

- The Visual Form Area of the brain helps us understand why.

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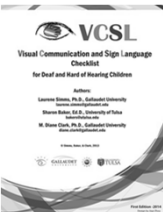




Share with Families

- ➞ Start fingerspelling early with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- ➞ Fingerspell before children understand the concept of the alphabet.
- ➞ Adults need practice to be fluent in fingerspelling.
- ➞ Early fingerspelling is associated with better literacy outcomes.

Assessing Sign Language Development



- A standardized assessment of early visual communication.
- Normed on signing deaf children birth through five years of age.
- vl2@Gallaudet.edu for ordering information
