

My identity as a child, in my family, and my deafness/hearing loss

It is very important that your child understands where they 'belong'. This is in your family but with developing independence to be themselves.

THE PAST

Part of self identity involves knowing your family and its past experiences.

Does your child know the family stories which they would not have been told or heard when they had only a little language?

- Use souvenirs and photographs to base childhood stories around.
- Start collecting items now to be used in the future.

Does your child know who the family members are and their names?

- It can be noisy at family gatherings. Have they heard family names in the background noise?

Do they know about their hearing loss when they were younger?

- The cause of their hearing loss.
- The story behind how you found out they had a hearing loss.
- The decisions you made on their behalf, and why.

THE PRESENT

Between the ages of 9 and 13, children often start to think about themselves and others - similarities and differences. They will start to ask about their hearing loss more specifically. Be prepared - it's an important part of them working out their own identity.

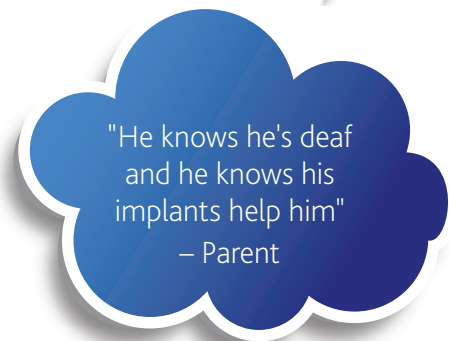
"He's never really asked, why am I deaf? I don't know if it's because we say 'you were born deaf' and his brother says 'you're deaf and I can hear'. He doesn't see it. The amount of time that he's not actually wearing his cochlear implant is so small that he's not really questioned it at all. I do introduce him to the deaf community. We try and get them together so that he can at least see the two worlds and make his own choices in life." Parent of twins, one deaf one hearing.

You and your family are part of many communities. Try and think about what these are for your child as they formulate who they are.

- Family
- Faith
- Country of origin
- Languages used
- Deafness
- Sports played
- Sports watched and teams supported
- Hobbies
- Social events

Encourage your child to join in with these communities in a variety of ways.

Highlight your child's strengths and interests so that they can begin to think about what is good about themselves.



ONLINE VIDEO 

Talk about your child's hearing loss with them, the decisions you made, and why.

➤ REF: 5.1 Talk about your child's deafness, it will often come up



THE FUTURE – BEGINS NOW

Support your child as they step out and decide to join new communities. For example, playing for a local football team, going to a Scouting or Guiding group. Go and watch them, get to know other parents whose children are involved. Have a 'can do' attitude to them joining in as long as they are safe and happy.

PROMOTING SELF IDENTITY

Think through your responses to the following questions which are adapted from the NDCS Parenting a Deaf Child Curriculum.

My power of praise checklist Usually Sometimes Never

Do we retell family stories to our deaf/hearing impaired child?

Our family stories and histories are vital in providing our child with a firm feeling of connection and belonging. Use photos and stories of their early childhood. You will need to talk about these over and over again.

Do we talk about what makes our family special?

Verbalizing what your family likes or believes will help your child feel part of it. It allows them to see their role in the family and its routines and activities. Highlight the ones your child is involved with and verbalize them while they happen.

Examples: Our family cares about animals and feeding the birds. Our family is very musical, I love listening to you practicing the piano. Our family likes doing lots of different sports. Our family is very healthy and likes walking to school.

Do we talk about what characterizes our child?

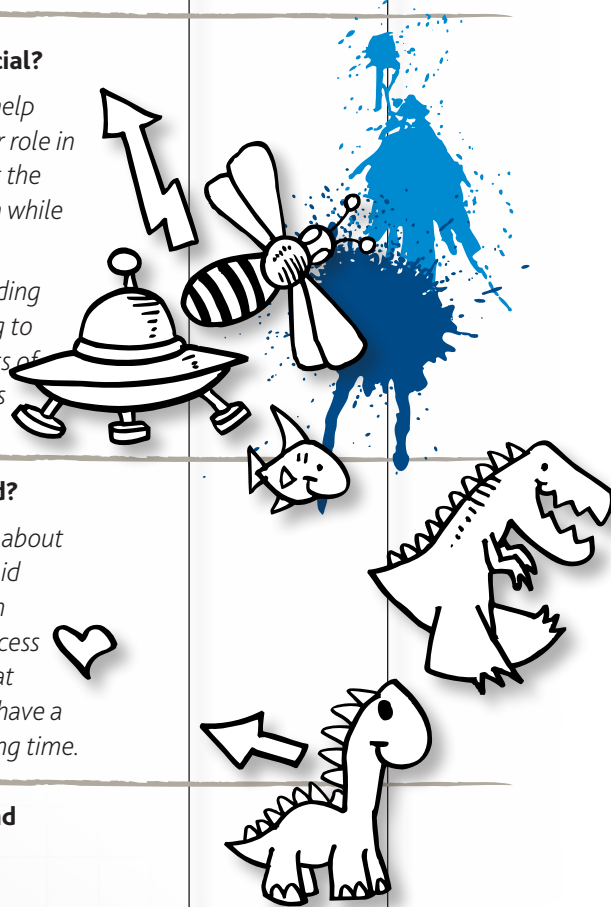
Help your child identify strengths or special things about themselves. Examples: You are Hannah the mermaid because you love baths and swimming – read them mermaid books, have a mermaid doll. You are princess Rebecca because you love dancing. You are good at football because you can run fast; or because you have a lot of stamina and so you can keep playing for a long time.

Do we establish guidelines for family time and encourage the whole family to follow these, including our hearing-impaired child?

This inclusion and consistency will support their self-esteem. Examples: behavior at meal times, helping tidy their rooms with you.

Are we consistent between our hearing and hearing-impaired children?

If you treat your hearing-impaired child as less able, then they will internalize it and believe it – limiting their future potential.



How we are treated and feel we are treated impacts upon the development of our identity.



My power of praise checklist

Usually

Sometimes

Never

Do we allow our deaf/hearing impaired child to do the same things at the same age as their hearing siblings or peers, if it's safe to do so?

The range of opportunities to join in like their hearing peers is crucial in expanding their world and their sense of themselves in it. Support your child to do what their friends are, but if this is not appropriate look for specialist groups for deaf/hearing impaired children which can offer support and a bridge into a variety of social situations.

Do we apply the same rules and the same consequences for our deaf/hearing impaired and hearing children?

Do we always talk about our child's hearing loss when introducing them to others?

Don't label your child by their hearing impairment. Your child will hear how you introduce them to others at clubs and events. If you always talk about their hearing impairment first they will assume you think that this is the most important thing about them. Identify features apart from their hearing impairment which are very positive for them to learn about themselves.

How do we react when people ask us about our child's hearing loss?

Your child will be watching! They will see if you are uncomfortable or embarrassed about talking about deafness/hearing impairment and they might think it is them you are embarrassed about. Be a positive role model so that they can see how to explain it themselves. Be clear and matter of fact. Examples: He wears a cochlear implant/hearing aid so if it's noisy please call his name so that he can turn round before you say any more.

Do we let our child speak for themselves as often as possible, even if their language is limited?

Be patient and listen attentively. You are validating that your child's attempts to communicate are important. Examples: Does your child tell the doctor what is wrong with them and then you add the detail?

Do we encourage our child to learn about people who are deaf/hearing impaired and meet other deaf/hearing impaired children?

This encourages the awareness of positive hearing impaired role models and the idea of deafness/hearing impairment as an adult. Look for others who have similar hearing technology to your child.

ONLINE VIDEO



"Regular conversation time becomes special time together – it supports her emotional development".

➤ REF: 5.0 Make sure I have regular time with my child

NOTE:
Extra Checklist sheets available in the Resources Section item# 4C.



Before I can have an opinion I need to know what I like and dislike.



› PROMOTE – 4C



ACTIVITY: My power of praise checklist

My power of praise checklist

	Usually	Sometimes	Never
<p>Do we retell family stories to our deaf/hearing impaired child?</p> <p><i>Our family stories and histories are vital in providing our child with a firm feeling of connection and belonging. Use photos and stories of their early childhood. You will need to talk about these over and over again.</i></p>			
<p>Do we talk about what makes our family special?</p> <p><i>Verbalizing what your family likes or believes, will help your child feel part of it. It allows them to see their role in the family and its routines and activities. Highlight the ones your child is involved with and verbalize them while they happen.</i></p> <p><i>Examples: Our family cares about animals and feeding the birds. Our family is very musical, I love listening to you practicing the piano. Our family likes doing lots of different sports. Our family is very healthy and likes walking to school.</i></p>			
<p>Do we talk about what makes characterizes our child?</p> <p><i>Help your child identify strengths or special things about themselves. Examples: You are Hannah the mermaid because you love baths and swimming – read them mermaid books, have a mermaid doll. You are princess Rebecca because you love dancing. You are good at football because you can run fast; or because you have a lot of stamina and so you can keep playing for a long time.</i></p>			
<p>Do we establish guidelines for family time and encourage the whole family to follow these including our deaf/hearing impaired child?</p> <p><i>This inclusion and consistency will support their self-esteem. Examples: behavior at meal times, helping tidy their rooms with you.</i></p>			
<p>Are we consistent between our hearing and deaf/hearing impaired children?</p> <p><i>If you treat your deaf child as less able, then they will internalize it and believe it – limiting their future potential.</i></p>			



› PROMOTE – 4C



ACTIVITY: My power of praise checklist

My power of praise checklist	Usually	Sometimes	Never
<p>Do we allow our deaf/hearing impaired child to do the same things at the same age as their hearing siblings or peers, if it's safe to do so?</p> <p><i>The range of opportunities to join in like their hearing peers is crucial in expanding their world and their sense of themselves in it. Support your child to do what his friends are but if this is not appropriate look for specialist groups for deaf/hearing impaired children which can offer support and a bridge into a variety of social situations.</i></p>			
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<p>Do we let our child speak for themselves as often as possible, even if their language is limited?</p> <p><i>Be patient and listen attentively. You are validating that your child's attempts to communicate are important. Examples: Does your child tell the doctor what is wrong with them and then you add the detail?</i></p>			
<p>Do we encourage our child to learn about people who are deaf or hearing impaired and meet other deaf/hearing impaired children?</p> <p><i>This encourages the awareness of positive deaf/hearing impaired role models and the idea of deafness/hearing impairment as an adult. Look for others who have similar hearing technology to your child.</i></p>			



My identity as a child with opinions and thoughts about my world

Children interpret their world through their parents and significant others.

- Part of self identity means knowing what you think, which leads to having likes and dislikes.
- Likes and dislikes form opinions.
- Having opinions leads you to stand up for things.
- Having an opinion leads you to agree or disagree – politely.
- Having an opinion leads to discussions.
- Discussions lead to presentations.

ONLINE VIDEO



Include opinions in conversations.

► REF: 5.0 Encourage Opinions

Likes and dislikes lead to OPINIONS

Talk about your own likes and dislikes as they arise each day.

- Plan a conversation which will lead them to think about what they like and dislike. Food is an obvious starting point – use the school dinner menu or your shopping list.
- Look through a clothes catalog – point to or cut out outfits you like or dislike, talk about it together.
- Use a television program, film, magazine, newspaper:
 - » Watch a film together, talk about it afterwards
 - » Read a children's weekly newspaper
 - » Subscribe to a junior magazine based upon your child's hobbies. e.g. birds, football, National Geographic

something to do

ACTIVITY: The Likes and Dislikes Game

Play the likes and dislikes game at dinner time or when you are in a pair or small group.

- Choose one card for you each to comment on, or choose one card each.
- Compare responses.

NOTE:
Cards available in the Resources Section item# 4D.



> PROMOTE – 4D



ACTIVITY: The Likes and Dislikes Game

What did you do today that you enjoyed?	What have I learned today and what do I think about it?
What have I liked or disliked on TV recently?	Tell us 5 things you have eaten today. Which was your favorite?
Did something happen today which you were sad about?	What were the two best things that happened today and why?
If I had to change something about today what would it be?	If I could make today better what would I do?
Tell me a nice word you heard or used today. Why did you like it?	