>> Andrea Marwah: All right, I just got the thumbs up, so we can get started. Welcome back to Socialization Skills for Children Who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. My goal is that you live with a little bit of information that makes you want to seek out more, okay, so this is usually three hour, by the way. So, I'm going talk really fast. No, not really.

So, let's talk about socialization. Why is it so important? The happiness factor, if we don't know how to appropriately be social, we're not going to be happy. There are social norms, social rules we must follow and if we don't know them, people are not going to want to be our friends. We are not going to meld into any environment well.

Maintaining relationships, it is give and take, and it is not just take and it is not just give. I'm sure you have had friendships where you're like, this person hasn't called me in a year and you call them every day. You start to feel deflated and that person doesn't feel like a friend anymore. That is a stem of socialization. It provides us with a support system outside of that family. As we age and our children age, they are always our children, but the bond that forms is that of their favorite friends if the parents and kids are getting along. It is the same, similar bond.

The economic factor, we need to know how to socialize to be cooperative in the workplace and understand what the work ethics are. This allows us to have longevity in employment. In fact, research shows that individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing loss their job more often, not because of job performance, because of social inadequacies within the workplace. I always, one of my biggest soapboxes is incidental, that happens in every environment, including work.

The learning factor. What happens from second grade on? We partner up with someone in the class or you get together with a group and you learn how to cooperate. Why do they do that in the education system? That is what jobs are like. There are not many jobs where you work by yourself all day long and have no interactions with other people. When they do that in school, that is practice for real world, for life.

What are social skills? Knowing what's appropriate, having that ability to fulfill the expectations of others in any interaction, and being able to interact with others. Inhibiting inappropriate responses, respect. Friendships require respect and building relationships. So, why are social skills such a challenge for our kiddos, for our population? Because they oftentimes have delayed language development. Even your little ones who sign, sign, sign or talk, talk, talk, there is still some form of delay, it might not be notable, even on exams, but once we get them into higher level language learning, we realize, whoa, we missed a little bit. delayed communication, limited experience with books and reading.

I am the head of a family-based organization in Illinois and we preach consistently, read to your child, no matter what, even if you think they can't hear you or you think they don't have the language level, it doesn't matter. It is the human interaction that occurs during the reading time that matters at that age. Not only that, but limited experience with books as they get older, what do we read in books when we read a story about someone's experience? We're reading social interaction. We're reading about how relationships work, and if they don't have those premise, then they are missing that. Limited incidental learning, the point of mind, they are coming to the table with different set of ideas, different level of understanding, they are not always going to agree with everything I say, so that is important as well.

Perhaps, it is a challenge because some of our kids have fewer social experiences, or they lack self-esteem. When we have our kids going to middle school and high school, sometimes they feel by themselves, and that can cause a low self-esteem. A diminished sense of belonging or could be attitudes. One of my favorite quotes, "blindness separates us from things, but deafness separates us from people." So, let's work on making that not happen for our kids. Even the U.S. Department of Education says, hey, listen, the communication nature of having a hearing loss is isolating. It has been acknowledged by the leaders, the heads of our U.S. Department of Education, but if you read the expanded core curriculum, when social and emotional skills are explicitly taught, students can develop that self-awareness, manage their emotions, set and achieve personal goals and develop positive relationships. We just need to work with them and we need to stop with thinking they are just fine. Teach it anyway even if we think this kid is an extravert, they will be just fine. Don't assume it.

We thought that about my daughter, but then in fourth grade, we saw things as parents, and we were just the parents. We saw it. Now, as the 21-year-old that she is, I still see it, because it wasn't worked on from the very get-go. Because we thought she was fine, now, we see the struggles that she has socially, so work on them no matter what. Who in the room is a parent? Work on this with your children. I'm going to teach you some great, easy techniques that you can take with you.

So, here is what is expected and what should occur. The ability to predict or understand another person's behavior or comments, to adapt what and how someone communicates based on the receiver's knowledge, that theory of mind. To understand that other people from their experiences, their cultures, their beliefs come to the table with different opinions and different parts of information. Identify feelings or biases in communication. They should be able to explain information and situations, and also compromise and negotiate in those learning environments. Remember what I said in the beginning? Why do we do the cooperative learning environments? Because the rest of our lives is all about cooperating with other humans.

Why is it such a challenge for our kids? Because sometimes the tone of our voice or the expression on our face can change what we are saying entirely. So, if they are missing the tone or we're not giving the right expression when we're speaking with them, signing to them, then they are going to get mixed messages. The listener or receiver needs to infer what is meant. They need to fill in the blanks. What if our kids don't have the language to fill in those blanks? What might the listener/receiver misunderstood? Do they -- understand? Do they have the ability? When you start talking to the individual, you can gage based on how they are reacting to what you are saying, whether they are understanding you or whether you might need to back it off a little bit. That is a skill that we really need to teach our kids. They don't really get it. They will keep going and walk away perplexed why this person didn't seem interested in what they had to say, so we have to teach them that is part of the interactions and how that can look.

What is missing from the message that would make it clearer? On the I have the ability to look at you and understand? What I mean is, and go into it in a different way, come at it in a different light, different avenue. What does the message reveal about the speaker? How do we use language socially? We tell. We might hint it, we might make promises. We might ask. Word choice, we have intention with what we are doing. We need to teach that as well.

What about the formality as language? Do you talk to the same to your 2-year-old as your wife or husband or significant other? Do you talk to your best friend the same way you talk to your boss? Or your professor the same way you talk to your children? We understand with each different audience there is a different way we should be talking. Oh, I missed some. Let me see if I can go back.

Perspective, taking into account what the other person knows. The room full of individuals are at this conference, so I'm going to assume you have a general understanding of hearing loss. Just a general understanding. I'm going to think by the raise of hands there is a lot of parents in here, so you know how to be a parent. If I switched this up and it was a room full of 14 year olds, I might not be teaching the same way at all. Why? I'm determining what my audience might understand based on the information that I have. And the structure, that ability to take turns, not talk over one another. I'm sure we all know many people without any form of disability at all that have a problem with this, right. They talk over you and you're like, I will wait and wait and wait until they are done and you start and they start again. You need to teach our kids, you can talk when they are done and then you can give more information.

What can you do to support them? Provide opportunities to develop language. Language, language, language all of the time. I don't care how they get it in, how they get it out. Language, language, language, visual, spoken, it doesn't matter. Get it in there. Develop it. Talk about your environment, what's going on right now. Model reading and read together. Have book clubs. Me and my daughters had book clubs all of the time, because it is fun. We find a book at their level, we all read it and we talk about it. We just took an additional step with our daughter and we would stop and talk about all of the feelings, because that is a big part of socialization as well. Feelings, they need to understand emotion words. Right? They need to use emotion. We need to use emotion, facial expression, body language so they understand. How do most people talk to an infant? That is what they do. We want them to see that we're happy. What are we trying to get from them when we do that? A smile, right? So, we're trying to communicate with them based on what we think they know and what we think they can do. Our children need to know that. They need to understand, one of the things we need to teach our kids is sarcasm, because they will take it literally if we don't.

Express how you feel in any one situation. Professional, it is an amazing thing if you can take an opportunity to say, oh, my gosh, if you could see what my drive to work today was like. And talk about what happened and talk about how it made you feel, and it's going to show them that everyone has feelings and everyone has situations that maybe they're going to react to. They need to know that. The only way they are going to learn is by us giving them examples, by them showing them, by us stopping in the moment and say, let's talk about this.

Think about and say how other people might feel in a situation. Look at all of these feeling word. This doesn't even touch the surface of words that elicit feeling, proud, loving, loved, cranky, nervous, bored, embarrassed, jealous, multiple words that can mean the same thing. Right. So, we need them to know what all of the words mean. If they know what mad means, but they don't know what angry mean, they may give the wrong response to someone when they say a word they don't understand. If you say, I am discouraged about that and they laugh about it, it's not getting the response that sender would like.

So, talk about those feelings. Talk about your feelings. If you're a provider and you go in and you have five -- take five seconds to say, oh, I'm so tired. I have seen four other students today. Can you imagine? Let them know, because I know we're going from one to the next to the next, but that little bit of information is such a valuable tool for these kids.

Talk about perspectives. Talk about social pictures. I'm going to show you an example after that, but what's happening in a situation, what are they feeling, thinking and wanting? What are they communicating or saying? Role play situations, freeze and ask about feelings. If they are watching a movie, if they are watching a cartoon or a show, we all have the ability to pause the TV, so pause and say oh, my. What do you think just happened there and dive deeper and how do you think they felt? Why do you think they felt that way? How would you feel if that happened? These are perfect ways to do it and it is just remembering in that moment, this would be a great opportunity for me to hit the pause button.

Talk about movies, TV, books, the kids have favorites. Use those. Here is a picture. A picture is worth a 1 ,000 words. I ask many people what is going on in this picture? People say, the girl in the background is sad because the girls in the foreground are talking about her. Then we dive deeper. What do you think she is sad about? Well, they came out and didn't want to play with her. Okay, what makes you think she is sad? The way she is looking. She is looking longingly like she wants to be part of the group. Then you can dive deeper and say, well, what do you think the kids in the front are talking about? And then, whatever their first thought was on it, you can say, what if the kids in the front aren't talking about her at all? And what if she isn't really looking at them, but we made an assumption because of her face? We need them to know that. We need them to know it could be something else completely. Maybe they are planning a surprise party for her, and she feels sad because she feels left out. You can take simple pictures like this. I stole it from Google. There are tons of them out there and it can be their age range and things they like.

Children with hearing loss don't always overhear things. I believe what happened to my daughter, she was the most popular girl in school in first through third grade, when in fourth grade when they started to separate for recess and my daughter missed out on the incidental language. It is to make sure that our Gen Ed teachers understand that child is missing all of the plans being made. When you are working with that child one-on-one, making sure they understand there is conversation going on around you all of the time, and yeah, it is a little harder for you. You have to have eyes in the back of your head or you have to have that trusting person that you go to and say, hey, what are the plans? Did anyone make any plans?

Because what I think happened, she would go out, the kids would run and do what they planned to do and she would stand there and watch them runaway and think, why don't they want to hang with me anymore? They would turn around and say, hey, I guess she doesn't want to hang with us anymore. These things do happen and we need to make sure they understand there is conversation going on everywhere. If we have education interpreters, the education interpreter can tell the child, hey, there is a conversation going on behind you. That is okay. We need to teach our kids that is going on.

What do we mean by incidental learning? It is things we learn from observing, overhearing and experiencing. It is things that no one teaches us directly. It is things we pick up from being in the environment. For hearing children, this is a huge way of learning social skills. For our kids, it is not. Where does incidental learning occur? Everywhere. Absolutely everywhere, even if your family car or in your family living room. It happens everywhere.

Oftentimes, it could be they missed the tone of your voice or the expression on your face did not give away what the message was that you were trying to portray. We can use one word, as simple as okay, and if we look at all of these different ways of saying it, think about how much miscommunication can go with our kids. You can change that okay to no, you can change it to yes. If our tone of voice is different, and they miss that, they are going to miss the meaning of what you're trying to say.

I'm going to skip these social developments, because we don't have time, but this should be available for you, and if it is not, hunt me down and I will send it to you. Mediate experiences, explain the world around them. Think out loud while you problem solve. Include our children in on planning, let them have a voice in what is going on in their lives. Too many times, even in my home, I will tell you, I have been guilty of it. I am walking out of the house with a suitcase and my daughter says, where are you going? I'm like, I have a business trip. You didn't know? She is like, no, and many times have stopped and hugged her and apologized to her for her missing that message. I take it for granted and I think she has heard me. Remember, they don't always hear you and including them in that is such a positive thing for them.

Perspective taking in the discussion, in the moment, tell them truth versus mistaken beliefs and how you know about that. Talk about state of mind, what you thought, what you feared, what you felt. General and feeling words, use abundance, use more feeling words than you truly need to. Encourage and praise them all the time. Fill them in what is known and understood by others. Identify all of the feelings and emotions in any interaction you can. Use mental state words to fully indicate the feelings that you hear, see and infer.

Help them to prepare for social situations. If they are going to go to someone's house, provide them with opportunities to have a conversation. I worked on this with my daughter her sophomore year in college, because she called me and said, I don't understand why my roommate won't talk to me. Her roommate is also deaf, by the way. What do you mean she won't talk to you? She comes in and go to her bed or goes to her desk and she doesn't say anything. Oh, do you say anything? She's like, no. I'm like, all right, I'm going to give you a challenge. Next time she comes in the room, say hey, how was your day and report back to me how that went. How do you think it went? Yeah, they now talk to each other. They both missed all of this stuff, right, so luckily, now they do talk to each other. But tell them, what typical questions could there be and what are good responses. What document you -- do you say when someone says, how are you today? Great, how are you. Yeah, you too. What? We're all in a rush, but teach them what those things are. Teach them the conversation starters.

What is the number one thing humans talk about when they see each other for the first time? What? The weather. Totally. Talk about the weather. Can you believe how cold it is out there? Can you believe how hot it is? What a beautiful day. It is a conversation starter. Always require that everyone and anyone who works with your children have high expectations. Our kids are amazing and they will show you that.

Support peer-to-peer interactions by modeling friendships. Tell them what your friendships mean to you. Tell them that you have had disagreements with your friends and how you worked through them. Teach the rules of friendship that if someone texts you, you text them back. I got it, well, they don't know you got it, so you need to send it back. If someone says hello, what do you say back? Hi. It's okay. You can have these communications.

Require direct communication for our children in all environments. As much as we possibly can. Describe how to make and keep friends. Allow them to make mistakes. We all make mistakes, every day. It's okay to make mistakes. The best remedy for making a mistake is fix it and then laugh about it. Laughter is the cure for almost everything. Provide them opportunities for success, discipline only with respect, always praise and criticize the action, not the child. Ensure that when you are doing things outside in the community that your child has access and is not left alone. We traveled here today with a deaf adult with our group of 10 people. And we are all working very hard to be cognizant to remember that she needs access, too. She is good, because she will just smack us, but not all people will do that, and they deserve all of that incidental stuff that is going on, just like the rest of us who have these things that work. That's it.

If she needs us to sign, one person will sign what the other person is saying, so she has access at all times. Do that with our children. If we do that, that is one of the missing lives, think about it. If we give them the information that's going on around them, this problem could be solved.

Role play with them, encourage play groups with other children, other children who are deaf and hard of hearing and hearing. Their world is going to be around all. Get them involved in sports. There is nothing more -- there is nothing more that requires socialization and communication than sports. It's a great and fun way to learn how to cooperate with others. Provide interactions with deaf and hard of hearing peers. Adults, role models, and hearing peers.

Here are all of my things that I researched and I think we have three minutes. Does anybody have any questions? We have two. Anybody have any questions or maybe they want to share a story of a successful interaction? Do we have a microphone? Right here. Janelle will bring you a mic. If not, we will have them come up here. He had me all day yesterday. He is used to it.

>> Audience: Something that my son talks about in school is, how loud the kids are always before and after class. And he is tired of getting in trouble, because they are supposed to be at zeros, but while you were talking, I'm wondering, instead of him worrying about getting in trouble, how much of that stuff is he missing about what they are going to do for lunch, play time. I'm going to bring that up to the school, and see what they have to say about that.

>> Andrea Marwah: Absolutely. Anybody have older children that they have experienced this with? Over here, Janelle.

>> Audience: I was going to say the needs change as the child's peer group changes, so I now have an adult child, and I've had to teach her what flirting looks like. Oh, like that guy who is making your sandwich, the reason he was asking you all of those questions, you know, so don't assume because they had middle school skills or they had elementary school skills that will translate into adult skills, because they are different and things get more subtle. So, you're pretty not subtle when you're 3, but as you age, it gets much more implied.

>> Andrea Marwah: Really good example. We have had those conversations, too. We're all done. Thank you for coming. I hope you learned a little bit and I will see you at the rest of the conference.