>> Hello, hello. Good morning! Good morning! I'm gene Jenny Gertz and I'm faculty member from the Gallaudet University.

>> Hello, I'm Tahnee Homslibuck from Gallaudet University. I'm happy to be with you all here in person.

>> Yeah, it is threlg to have you here and we're going to move right through it because we have limited time. Obviously, today's presentation is by the title of joys of raising a Deaf child.

I want to preface it by saying that I am a parent of a Deaf child.

And I have gone through that process of having a Deaf child and I'm a professional in the field. And I always sort of, you know, I knew what the issues were. But now actually as a parent, and seeing my daughter becoming the living lab, I kind of call her the living lab of every system out there and how it applies to her. Has made it actually so much more clear to me. And you know, it's great. There are joys, absolutely. So I want to share that journey and combine that with what we know academically speaking.

>> So you might not have enough information on where to find resources on language acquisition for Deaf children. Genie has seeing her daughter grow and shine a light on her experience and what is learned can apply to all Deaf children. We can talk about resource and support them in their journey. I'm a godmother of beautiful 4 Deaf children between the ages of 19 and 11 and we'll talk about the parallels of these children growing up in terms of language development.

And I can talk about the navigation of systems is difficult, the navigation of systems that families have to do is quite challenging. So we also want to bring that perspective to the table so we can support you, because we know this journey is not easy for you. Systems don't make it easy.

>> So we want to start the conversation with this quote from Nome Chomsky about language acquisition. That is just a foundation, the basics of the whole game here. It's what makes so many people anxious. How are we going to make this work? It says here, this is Nome Chomsky who said, "we are designed to walk that we are taught to walk is impossible." In other words, it's a natural process.

And pretty much the same is true of language. Nobody is taught language. But you have to have the time and space to allow that natural process to happen. Language acquisition can't be forced. So our bodies are designed for locomotion. And our brains are disdained to take in language to be able to acquire the language that the child is around.

So that's about language acquisition. So there is a natural process, but of course, it takes time. There are steps and pile stones along the way. We'll talk little bit about that, little bit later. And then we talk about language learning. And this is a different story. That is where structure comes in. Based on the language that you're learning, that can't happen if you don't already have a strong foundation of the language acquisition. So language acquisition is the foundation that allows for language learning and any other kind of learning, in fact. But if you don't have that foundation, then the House of Cards collapses. It's the same as a building. You have to have a strong foundation in order to build your 4 story house. So learning is the structure, the grammar, et cetera. It's the walls and the roof, and the fencing. I'm not sure how you want to design your house in this metaphor.

I can't see without my glasses. Okay.

So what is language? People often imagine that language is the ability to read. It's sentences. It's word in a particular order. It's that grammatical structure. But language actually encompasses so much more. And that's what acquisition is needed for to support everything that you can see here up on the slide. Our thinking skills, and memory, and planning, prediction. And prediction is like inference, being able to read between the lines and come to different conclusions.

Joking and humor, in order to tease, you have to know language play. You have to understand how language works and how you can use it creatively to is have that kind of flexibility to make jokes. Understanding, comprehension, questioning, challenging, all of these skills is language. Language is not just words in a particular order or signs in particular order.

This is accredited from the language first, because the captions are covering that credit. So I want to let you know that was developed by Language First. So to sort of bring it in focus, we really want to clearly delineate acquisition and language. So acquisition is the natural process. It just happens. You can't actually prevent it and learning is an active conscious process.

So when it's passive, it doesn't mean the child is not involved. It's just incidental. It's around the Universe and the child acquires language. It's subconscious. You don't get exposed to a new word and think, oh, let me think about that new word. It just the happens. As opposed to language learning, it's an active conscious process.

Learning about how words go in order, how sentences are grammatically and properly formed. That's a "learning process." There's implicit knowledge in acquisition as opposed to the explicit language learning. Looking about different subject matters and specific kinds of things. Acquisition happens informal ways. Because it happens usually in the family home. And language learning is in classrooms or tutoring, or other kinds of formal situations. Language acquisition actually happens on the specific kind of order, and learning has a simple to complex order of how things are taught.

So we expose children to sort of anything, from simple to complex, and they acquire that foundation and can thrive.

It's important to give an example of what families do. Often families do a mix of both. I saw a video on Instagram where a mom might sign "apple" and actually hold up an apple. So teaching what an apple is and sign of apple with the child approximating that sign. Now we're going to have an apple pie. How many slices should we have and should we have 2 or 3? The baby might be only 6 months and the baby doesn't understand what the mom is saying, but language is happening all around them. Instead of saying, ooh, I just learned a sign. I have to teach my child a sign. You can do that, that's language teaching versus just exposing the child to conversations. Having the child in the cart when you go to the grocery store, what kind of cereal do I want and oh, ooh. And some people might feel it might be embarrassing to take their baby out and sign to them in the grocery store. But you do that with your child who hears all the time. You're narrating in the store and asking them questions. That should similarly be done in American Sign Language.

If your child you know can hear through their devices, please speak to them when you're in the grocery store and do all the things you would normally do. If they can't, then using sign to do that. Deaf children are usually taught spoken language, or taught sign language, which is language learning, but we really need to focus on the acquisition piece, where we're just having a bubble of language being given to them at all opportunities.

That is what supports the language acquisition process. Whatever language and in whatever way. So television with captions, as a 2 or 3-year-old, the captions are not going to benefit the child because they haven't learned how to read and write. Many family might sit by the television and sign what's happening. Or you could use signing television shows that expose the child's language in that way.

Any opportunity that you can give in spoken English or sign language to just have them surrounded by language is the important piece of language acquisition.

>> And that's why we want to delineate these two concepts. Language acquisition is really just about exposure. Language learning will happen and grammar stuff will get taught, but they have to have the sponge filled in order for that to make sense to them. In summary, Tahnee explained this slide about language development and how it works. By supporting language acquisition, you're launching the child to be ready to learn language and, therefore, thrive in society. So you're giving the world to your child, not expecting the child to accommodate themselves to the world. But bring the world to your child.

>> And then also include social-emotional learning. The child can express their feelings. Oftentimes, we have to model our feelings. Like, mom, I hit my need today and it really hurts. I'm so sad. I feel like I'm going cry. We give that language social-emotional language to our child through expressing them.

Or something canceled. Processing your feelings, or something came up on the schedule and expressing your excitement about doing that. And that helps the child know how to express their feelings. I'll give you a moment just to look at this infographic.

This is a very well-known theory on language acquisition that I believe was established in 1984.

>> '80 something, yeah.

>> Yeah, '84. This was disseminated through Kafer. And this theory helps us think about what happens when we see a child, we can see what they're expressing, but we also need to understand what's happening underneath. How the child is thinking, how they're processing information, how they're evaluating, or analyzing what's happening in their life. This provides the foundation for them to be able to express themselves. Without this, they can't completely express themselves.

As though they're under the iceberg, they're not able to really fully express what they need. As an example, deaf and hard-of-hearing children who don't have full access to language, in the classroom, the teacher might be asking questions to the 30 kids in the classroom and there might be two Deaf children who are there. They're asking a question. And the kids who can hear will raise their hands immediately. And the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing kids need a few more minutes to be able to process the incoming information before they're able to answer. Because of the fact that they had limited access to language acquisition, there are biases in the classroom in regards to classroom management, and it could be taken care of by having turn-taking and not just calling on the students who raised their hands the quickest. Making sure there's differentiated instruction so all students are able to express themselves and have an opportunity to participate in the classroom learning.

And also not unfairly judging the Deaf student for not answering as quickly as the other students. It's important that there is a question as to why. I remember my middle two goddaughters were struggling with reading and writing for several years. Because they went to another school that used a method that was difficult for them. And they fell extremely behind in their literacy. They transitioned to a different school, but they came in very behind. So they had to pull them out for literacy interventions for 6 weeks, one-on-one, where they would read, there was free reading and conversations about the process of reading. And then they were able to catch up and be on grade level after 6 weeks because of that immersion, that intentional intervention, which was helpful to them in being able to catch up.

>> And that's really the whole point. So it's all involved, the social-emotional learning and the whole entire holistic approach. So you say language, obviously, is important, but culture, education, community, and education refers to school particularly, and identity which is about the social-emotional sense of one's self. I mean, you know that, you know, it's a peer language. Sign language is a peer language and all of that comes into one's identity and development of self.

>> And I like to quickly mention, it also helps with self-advocacy. Being able to say "I don't understand." That they feel comfortable as a Deaf person saying "I don't understand." and asking for clarification when they need it so they have full access.

>> So we're not going to go over this slide in-depth, I just wanted to bring it to your attention to introduce or refresh you on milestones from the visual communication and sign language checklist to make sure these children are meeting the milestones. From 0 to 1-year-old, this is a selection and there's couple of more each, but we wanted to at least touch on some. We have videos of my daughter, like I said, my daughter is a living lab. And I look at these kinds of milestones and see what's happening with her.

So here's one from my daughter 0 to 5. It's the hand babbling thing that happens in the beginning. She's 5 or 6 months in this video. We sign to her from birth. Like Tahnee said, I narrated everything we were doing. Oh, look although this. There's this, there's that. And I talked to her constantly. And she started babbling. Now, jump ahead to the next video. Oh, wait, can you stop?

So my daughter's name is Clio. And her name sign looks like this.

(Signing name).

And we picked that name sign when she was about one and a half. So like 18 months old. So this is at school. She sees a picture of herself. Let's watch the video.

[Video Clip]

See? She said, that's me. She knows her name sign. So recognizing her name sign, now she actually obviously spells Clio, but she knows both versions. But at 18 months, she knew her name sign that had already been incorporated into her knowledge. There are two signed sentences. I want to say she is, uh, I think she's 14 months in this video.

She's saying there's bear sleeping. So putting those utterances together. So we've got the two word utterances coming together. This is captioned, because she's turned away from the camera. But she was engaged in some self-talk. And I was tickled by that. That's a really important part. That's really important part of language play and that milestone. So it's kind of a mess. I wasn't making a video like officially, but she is talking about. (Chuckles softly)

[Laughter]

The captions are covering this slide, but this part, it says "another part of language play."

Language acquisition is like the building block.

So we have all of these milestones. And we have handouts and other ways you can get more information at the key Chloe center milestone. But this is called visual communication and sign language checklist. The VCSLC. It's a mouthful.

Yeah. VCSL, that's right. And I just did that game. What is Clio doing? And what are the milestones? And what would be expected that she's doing and seeing her reach those milestones. I just want to emphasize that don't worry about it if you, as a parent, are not a skilled signer. It's just important to have some kind of interaction with your child, even if it's wrong. The more you expose them, the more they will will be able and ready to acquire language.

>> I agree. In separating language acquisition and language learning, it's important that we have a lot of play. Play doesn't actually have to involve toys. It could be playing with language. In spoken language, there's a lot of rhythm and rhyming play. We have that in American Sign Language as well.

You're going to see phonological errors in both spoken and language and that's okay. Because that's part of the language development process. Many people see errors and they stop, because they don't think they're doing things correctly. But that's part of the process. There are also role reversal. The child plays like they're the parent and I play like I'm the child.

If you go to a children's museum, you could play with the, "I'm a story owner" or do those types of things. Also collecting language or connecting language in literacy by having experiences and then reading a book about those experiences. I highly recommend you watch the video resources that we have provided for you.

This is from hands land. You can find the video on YouTube. All 6 sessions are available on Amazon.

And the videos do talk about phonological errors in children. Dr. Adam Stone created this video. He's currently in The United Kingdom. And that's a great video to watch. So we recommend you watch the videos that we have provided. So, again, Jeannie and I are here to share with you that parents, no matter your signing ability, can help to build that language acquisition foundation. You can do it! We want to make sure you have all the resources you need and we're here for you. You can go to the Clerc Center booth. And there's a lot of information and resources for you there that you can grab and take with you.

>> We want to say thank you. And again, don't be afraid. Just follow the Nike slogan, "just do it." Thank you for attending our presentation today.

And we will be available. So sorry that this is such a short presentation. It's a great topic. But our presenters will be in the hallway to answer some personal questions if you have them and our next presenters are coming in and getting set up. Thanks so much.