>> PRESENTER: Hello, um, my name is Robin Getz and I'm the Colorado school of the deaf -- I'm going together talking to you today about a way to ensure that your home is Deaf and hard of hearing friendly.

This is stuck.

[Pause]

>> PRESENTER: None of the keys are working.

[Pause]

>> PRESENTER: On the bottom on the screen, that might be the interpreter screen.

There. On the bottom. Thank you, perfect.

Okay, thank you, sorry about that. Technology.

Um, so the goal today are to help you create a home environment that is conducive to all Deaf, hard of hearing children, regardless of their hearing level, communication styles or technology use. These tips are not comprehensive. But will help you become more aware of your home surrounding, and what you can do to best support your child. So we will be exploring a variety of different things like, lightning, accessibility communication, incidental learning opportunities, ways to gain your child's attention and how to foster -- or how to begin to foster independence in your child.

Two out of every thousand babies in the United States are born with a hearing difference and over 90% of these families have no familiarity with hearing differences or how to support that child in the home. As you know, many typical home settings have um, challenging communication situations, to begin with. So we are going to take a look on how we can try to machine myself those challenges in the home. A lot of the typically hearing children learn language naturally by overhearing things and our Deaf hard of hearing kids struggle with that. So because they have inadequate visual and/or auditory access to sound or language, the typical family are not set up for adequate language digital communication access. As a result a lot of the little ones grow up to feel frustrated, isolated or even develop feelings of inadequacy because they don't have access to what's going on in the home.

One of the biggest things that we need to keep in mind is lightning. So think about when you're taking pictures of someone, um... maybe even a picture like this. You're on a beach, there's a beautiful sunset. And um... you're right in front of the sunset. What do you see? Can you see the facial features? So that's exactly what happens when we are standing in front of a light source and your child is trying to look at you, trying to figure out what you're saying, trying to figure out what emotion you're showing, trying to understand your body language, but all they see is a silhouette. So we need to remember those things. Also... another situation is dimly lit rooms. Think about when you're in the home, or if you're a parent, either way, the sun is setting and it's slowly getting darker and darker in the home. A lot of us don't turn on the lights right away, until we really have to. But... when it's starting to get dark, that's when it starts to get challenging for our little ones, for the same reason. They cannot see you well, they cannot see you clearly. So I have a little video that I don't know if it will work. We may not be able to see the videos today, um... if it's not working. I'm sorry.

[Pause]

Yeah, that's not....

>> Video: --.

>> PRESENTER: Look at this video, watch the child, see if um, trying to figure out what mom -- what mom was asking of her.

Now look at the difference with the lighting. She's much more engaged. So see the difference? Between the two videos? Yeah. Okay.

>> Commercial: Your only business, go to Wix.Com and set up....

>> We don't want a website.

>> PRESENTER: Thank you, I'm sorry. It's not supposed to be like this. So some strategies, make sure that you don't -- your child is not facing the window or a bright light source. If you're in the bright light source, move away from it, check to make sure that nothing is right behind you. Close the drapes, blinds, if need be. Turn on the light in the room. If you need to add more lamps, by all means, do so. Your child will greatly appreciate that.

Okay... why do you think this picture is important?

[Pause].

>> AUDIENCE: Very noisy and chaotic.

>> PRESENTER: You're right. It's a very common scene in a lot of homes, a lot of homes that I'm in. There's music blaring, there's often some appliance running there. You know, someone is on the phone, the TV is going. This tank is gurgling, so forth. Dogs barking, kids are playing with noisy toys. And sometimes we wonder why our kids are not responding to when you're calling their name.

They have a lot of interfering noise. They have no idea what to pay attention to. So it's easier for them to tune out everything. So, and um, you know, it's a challenge for all of us, whether we can hear or not. Okay. So different ways you can improve communication in the home is to reduce the background noise. Um... if the child is in the kitchen with you, the dishwasher is going, if you can cause the dishwasher, or stop the dishwasher for that time, do so. Um... or move away from the source of the noise, to where your child is better able to hear you.

Seating arrangements in the home. If you have a -- I'm not -- by no means do I mean that you need to run out and change your furniture, that's not the purpose of this presentation. It's just something to be mindful of, um... but keep in mind, it's a lot easier for those who are deaf/hard-of-hearing, because we rely on so much visual support. Tables are often the easiest to be able to monitor what is going on and follow what is going on around us. Same thing with couching, sofas. So an L shape couch, or even a U shape couch works really nicely, as well. For the sake of time, I'm going to skip the video.

Also getting down to your child's visual level. Like you see in this picture, it's often the best way to make sure that your child can see you, and hopefully follow what you are saying. Again, check the lighting situation to make sure everything is good there.

Make sure that your child has visual access to gestures, facial expressions, and sign at all-time. When you're at the dinner table, or even in the family room, make sure you're talking one at a time. And not talking over each other. Make sure you don't have food in your mouth. If you have long facial hair, the mustache grows over the lips, and I've had fathers with a long mustache. And something my own parents have been guilty of is, talking with their hand over their mouths like this.

Try not to do that, and um, try to be within 3 feet, distant, that's the best hearing bubble for your child.

Play time, meal time, and I cannot stress this enough, if you hear something going on, say you're on the floor playing with your child and um... the oven beeps and the cake that you were baking is ready. You're playing with the child, you hear the beep, you get up and run into the kitchen and the baby is like "What happened? Why did mom jump up and run out? Where did she go? Is she coming back?"

Those are all possible thoughts and emotions that the baby is dealing with. So try to explain to the child, um... you know, the oven beeped, um, you know, the cake is all done, I have to go get it. I'll be back. You know? Um... don't leave the room without telling your child why. I had that many times as a child, myself, and I had no idea that I was supposed to stay and wait or that I was supposed to go follow the parent. I had no clue, because I couldn't hear the sound that everyone else was hearing. I see the video.

[Pause]

[Video].

>> PRESENTER: So the mom buzz telling the dad -- I'm sorry, the mom was telling the child that it was dad on the phone and try -- he was happy.

[Video].

>> PRESENTER: Sorry, this is not the right video. Sorry about that. Um...

[Pause].

>> PRESENTER: Oh, we saw that one.

[Video].

>> PRESENTER: He has to two to the bathroom, but they continued on with the conversation.

Okay. Now story time. Um... positioning is really important when you're trying... um... trying to read with your child.

>> AUDIENCE: [Off mic].

>> PRESENTER: Oh, okay. You have a question?

>> AUDIENCE: [Off mic].

>> PRESENTER: Okay.

>> AUDIENCE: I just wanted to cue on the video too that the daughter was able to overhear what the parents were talking about, and then join in the conversation. Because sometimes deaf or hard of hearing children get left out of that background conversation. The parents were talking about skiing and the dad laughed and then the girl wanted to talk about skiing, so that's important that they have access to the conversation that's happening around them.

>> PRESENTER: Very good point. Thank you.

So, sorry time, when you're reading books with your child, it's important to make sure that your child has a very good position, where the child can see both you and the book at the same time. Okay? Like what you see happening in this picture. Make sure that there's no auditory or visual distractions happening in the background and try to make it a relatable and tangible experience for the child. And this video shows that.

[Pause]

[Video].

>> PRESENTER: Okay. So, the mother was trying -- so the baby in the book know that -- I mean, he doesn't... she was trying to have make that connection about his hair to the feathers. And if you have a TV or a tablet that you use in your home, make sure that you turn on the closed captions, because that is a great preliteracy introduction to print and you would be surprised at how early these kids start picking up the print. My own son who was hearing -- well, he still is hearing... was 3 when he was reading. We found out soon after his third birthday that he was reading. We were watching videos together as a family. It was a movie that was dubbed because it was in Chinese. And so we had English subtitles on the screen. And um... he blurted out, wait, that's not what they said. And both my husband and I looked at each other and then looked at him and said "What do you mean?"

And he said "Rewind the video" and he told us how far to rewind it back. And then when it played again, he stopped and he said "There, they said this but the caption said this."

We were mind blown. I mean... so we had no idea that he was even reading, which was scary. Um... anyway. So um, having the captions helps foster inclusion, literacy and language development, all together. Okay, I'm going to keep going. Also, please don't tell your child "Never mind, it's not important" or "I'll tell you later" if they ask you "What did so-and-so say?" Or "What happened on the TV" when they didn't understand something. That sends a message that you are not important, and that you know... you are more important than what is happening on the screen, or what the person is saying. And it makes them feel excluded. It makes them feel this big, and not important. Incidental learning opportunity. This is very important because um... this is how the majority of the kids hearing kids learn language. Language concepts, vocabulary, and world knowledge. Um... it's also very critical for social interactions, language, and slang development. And this is the big reason why so many of our Deaf hard of hearing children struggle not only in the home, but in the school and even in the community as well, with their hearing counterparts. So there are different ways that we can help increase incidental learning opportunity in the home. And we've talked about a lot of these strategies already. Um... the one thing that I did not mention previously is using -- if you have access to them, using an FM, like a mini mic or Rodger system, if you're tired of using amplification. Also, keeping the closed captions on, that's a big help.

This is an example of an L-shaped couch in the home. And where everyone can see one another.

Okay, this is ways to get your child's attention. They can't always see when you are trying to call them. Or get their attention. So some appropriate ways would be um... you know, tapping them on the shoulder, waving your arm like this. If you have um, wood floors, you can stomp on the floor, flashing the lights on and off is another way. Okay?

Fostering independence in the home. I know we are talking about groups of 3, but it's never too early to start thinking about the future and the way you can start helping your child development that independence.

They have flashing devices for doorbells and doorknobs. This one is a doorbell one. It's more of an industrial one, but um... and they have different door knock ones that you can move if you live in an apartment. You can move it from apartment to apartment so that's really helpful. And then fires, smoke detectors. Um... they both are -- they both have strobe light, and very loud siren. The one with the green in the middle, you can get on Amazon and both of these devices do need to be hardwired into your existing smoke alarm system, in the home. But it's a very critical thing to have in your home.

There's a plethora of devices and technology that we could use for independence. Our cell phones now days have so many different apps that are beneficial for Deaf hard of hearing individuals. There's apps, if the person is [off mic] and they run to order something at a restaurant, there's an app that they can pull up that they can text on and show the person, what they want. There's apps for people who can speak, who want to make a phone call, like InnoCaption that you can listen and read along on the phone what the person is saying. It's really cool. There are different alarm clocks out there that helps you wake up in the morning. You can put it under your pillow. If you are a very deep sleeper, I recommend the vibrating kind, that goes under the pillow. It's really hard to sleep through that. Um... baby cry alert. This watch that you see... it's for the Deaf adults. They can watch the baby and it can vibrate to let the adult know the baby is crying. Or there are typical baby monitors that is out on the market. And they do have a vibrating as well.

Video phone, so there's various video phone companies that if you're a primary ASL user, you can make calls to doctors or schools or whoever you need to call. And so the picture on the lower left is an example of a video phone user. They access, like a relay interpreter, who will interpret what they are saying and that interpreter voices what they will say to the other person. Does that make sense?

And then of course, closed captions on TVs. Again, this is not comprehensive, but definitely beneficial to have. So finally, Deafness is not about hearing, it is about communication and access.

Um... and these tips are by no means comprehensive, but it's a good starting point, for you, in the home. Regardless of what other communication modes or technology devices you're using, if any. And it helps promote open and accessible communication, at all times. Allows for more opportunities for a more inclusive language experience for all. And of course, a happy family equals a happy child. So... questions? Comments?

[Pause].

>> PRESENTER: I don't know if the interpreter can see.

[Pause]

>> She's saying that she can't [off mic] so [off mic] capture the [off mic] question in ASL.

>> This is the interpreter speaking to the captioner, can you hear me?

>> PRESENTER: I can voice for you, I'm not the interpreter. That may -- the local fire department will provide free smoke alarms. And they will install for you. Make sure -- and to make sure it is working. So it's a good idea to try to contact your local fire department. Thank you. Thank you.

>> AUDIENCE: I just had a couple of quick comments. I appreciate so much pointing out the importance on getting down on a child's level when you're communicating with them, especially with adults standing over them, shadows and lighting can change what you're saying if they can't see your expression. But also, we had a Deaf mentor when our daughter was a baby, that suggested a lot of the changes you suggested when she was a baby. So, when she was 5 and reading, we weren't trying to change everything. And my kids are adults and they still use the captioning even though they don't live at home. Even making those changes when they are little, it's less of a -- it makes them feel like less of a burden. When they are ten and everybody is like, I hate it. But if it's always on it's not like it's a big change and it's more inviting for the child who needs it, although everybody benefits from it. So just a couple of comments, thank you for your time.

>> PRESENTER: Thank you for sharing that. Yeah, my kids are in their 20s, they are both hearing. They both have to have the captions on. It's a nonnegotiable thing, and I love that. Okay. Any other questions?

>> AUDIENCE: [Off mic].

>> PRESENTER: The fire alarm? Oh, that one? Um... that one was... on Amazon.

>> AUDIENCE: I'm a heavy sleeper, so... I need something to wake me up.

[Laughter].

>> AUDIENCE: Thank you.

>> PRESENTER: Yeah.

>> PRESENTER: My husband jumped out of bed, he begs me not to use that.

[Laughter].

>> AUDIENCE: Early in the morning like at 3:00 or whatever, but otherwise, I use my watch.

>> PRESENTER: [Laughter].

[Pause].

>> PRESENTER: Okay. Thank you.