

What I Wish I Knew Then: Two Perspectives

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Objectives

1. List strategies and techniques that increase parent involvement
2. Determine how reflective practices improve outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing
3. Explain two practices that improve parent-therapist connections



Reflective Practice

Reflective practice includes:

- Hearing our own stories
Practicing self-empathy
Thinking about our own strengths, vitalities, aspirations, and possibilities
Creating a plan for change

Building the Parent-Therapist Connections: Trust

● Be present

Show empathy (not sympathy)

- Empathy connects with emotion
- Empathy says 'you're not alone'

Be reliable

- Time and time again parents can count on me to do what I say I am going to do

Admit when you don't know something or you are wrong!

Hold confidences

- Trust diminishes when you share information that isn't yours to share



Increasing Parent Involvement

- See the parent as the expert on their child
Model and then GIVE THE PARENT A TURN
Have high expectations for child and parent
Ask open ended questions
Seek parent input (and mean it!)
Stop doing all the talking



Diagnosis-Caroline

First Thoughts:

- How do we give Teddy the same opportunities as his hearing brother?
Where do I find answers to all the questions I have?
Anxiety for Teddy's future
How will I connect with Teddy?

What I wish I knew then:

I wish I had more belief that everything would be okay

I wish I wasn't so wrapped up in *how* the news of Teddy's deafness was give to us

Diagnosis-Sherri

How do we put ourselves in the mindset of the parent?

What is the most important message to send?

Since professionals are often not involved in the diagnosis process, it is important to explore the parents' feelings from this time.

How we offer hope is critical.

What I wish I knew then:

The fabulous resource: zerotothree.org

Early Intervention-Caroline

- Transition from hearing aids to cochlear implant
EI was “work”
Decision to move ahead with second CI (this was a more difficult transition for everyone)

What I wish I knew then:

Should I have sought out a center that was doing simultaneous CIs?

My ‘mom gut’ was okay to follow sometimes



Early Intervention -Sherri

I was worried that the busy lifestyle of the family would impact the outcomes. This, of course, was not the case!

I had to adjust my own views on family centered practice (*me* fitting into their life) and auditory living.

I valued both parents input and commitment to our sessions. Caroline and Brian were honest with me! “Yeah. We didn’t get to that this week....”

What I wish I knew then:

All humans have a need for control!

The true meaning of ‘non-judgement’

Preschool- Caroline

- The 'honeymoon' period!

Learning to be an advocate for Teddy

I wanted to stay in this 'bubble' forever:

surrounded by other parents and professionals who understood.



What I wish I knew then:

Transition is HARD!

The years leading up to transition were all a learning process for me to gain the tools I needed to advocate for Teddy.

Preschool-Sherri

- Separation is hard for big people too!
Parents really are the best teachers. The relationship I had built with Caroline and Brian allowed me to tap into their brains to help build a more comprehensive parent education program at Clarke.

What I wish I knew then:

If we aren't careful we can unknowingly interfere with parents building relationships with other professionals.

Transition to Kindergarten-Caroline

The 'real world' is a scary place. Will kids make fun of him?

Will teachers feel frustrated or overwhelmed with Teddy's technology?

Would Teddy have enough support?

We felt disconnected in some ways.

What I wish I knew then:

I wish I had initiated more conversations with Teddy's TOD and SLP



Looking to the Future-Caroline

What is Teddy up to now?

I've realized that the fears I have for Teddy's future really aren't all that different than the fears I have for my other sons.

Looking to the Future-Sherri

I just can't wait to see what happens next. Teddy is funny, smart, sensitive, loving, and HAPPY! He is a social creature who exhibits self-confidence and is well liked by anyone who meets him. He loves his family. In an 'interview' last year, unsolicited ("Tell me about yourself"), Teddy said "I have an awesome family".

The future for Teddy has limitless possibilities. He is set to do whatever it is that he wants to do with his life.

Meet Teddy

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