

From Screening to Support A Collaborative Team Model After NBHS Reframing outcomes through Deaf adults, parent mentors, and early coordination

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The NBHS Moment

"Your baby did not pass the hearing screening."

- Unexpected
- Emotional
- Often confusing
- No roadmap yet

What Parents Often Don't Know

- Most parents have never met a Deaf adult
- Limited knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture
- Little awareness of bimodal bilingual approaches
- Uncertainty about long-term outcomes

Why Early Support Matters

- Early access ≠ amplification alone
- Early access = language, connection, and clarity
- Early framing shapes family decision-making



**Language rich environments
(LRE) prevent language
deprivation**

What Research Tells Us

- Families benefit from early, personalized support
- Patient navigation reduces loss to follow-up
- Parent knowledge improves when guidance is coordinated

ECHO: A Systems-Level Example

- Demonstrates integrated, interdisciplinary messaging
- Centers bimodal bilingual language access
- Embeds language monitoring into early care pathways
- Aligns early intervention with language deprivation prevention
- Models Deaf-informed collaboration

System design determines language outcomes.

A Team-Based Approach

What if families met a team instead of a test result?

- Hearing parent mentor
- Audiologist
- Deaf adult
- Early interventionist
- Medical professional



Hearing Parent Mentor

- Shares lived experience
- Normalizes emotions
- Offers hope grounded in reality
- Reduces isolation



Audiologist

- Schedules follow-up before discharge or even at the hospital if possible
- Explains hearing technology clearly
- Reduces follow-up loss
- Supports informed decision-making



Deaf Adult

- Counters deficit-based narratives
- Models Deaf adulthood
- Provides aspirational capital
- Expands families' understanding of possible futures



Early Interventionist

- Emphasizes early visual engagement
- Introduces bimodal bilingual access
- Supports families immediately
- Reinforces that language access starts now



Medical Professional

- Confirms screening results
- Reinforces urgency without fear
- Supports interdisciplinary collaboration
- Builds trust in the process

How the Script Works

- Coordinated message
- Consistent information
- No contradictory guidance
- Family leaves with clarity, not overload

What Families Walk Away With

Before → After

- Fear → Understanding
- Isolation → Connection
- Deficit framing → Multiple pathways

This Is Not a Parent Problem

“Families can’t choose what they’ve never been shown.”

- Gaps are systemic
- Information is unevenly distributed
- Early moments matter

Who Is Missing From EHDI Systems?

- Deaf adults involved too late
- Parent mentors underused
- EI framed as post-diagnosis only

Why Deaf Professionals Matters

- Representation is not symbolic
- Deaf adults are knowledge holders
- Early exposure reshapes expectations and outcomes



Implications for EHDI Systems

- Who speaks first to families?
- Who is funded to be present early?
- What counts as “early access”?

From Practice to Policy

If we value early language access, we must also value early coordination and Deaf-led participation.

Discussion & Q/A

- What already exists in your system?
- Where could Deaf professionals be added earlier?
- What would it take to pilot this model?

Thank You for Being Here

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