“Hey, What About Us?”
Supporting Families of Young Children who are Hard of Hearing

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Today’s Presentation

- What’s in a Name?
- Not Deaf Enough
- Expectations, Assumptions, and Presumptions ….
  - Over and Underestimating Abilities
- What’s the Same/What’s Different
- Communication Considerations
What’s In a Name?

- Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Hearing Impaired…defined by an Audiogram?
  - Audiologically, socially, culturally…
- Utilization of terms in Resources
- How families react to terms: mild, moderate, severe, profound
Not Deaf Enough…
Parents on the Journey

Grief… do parents have the ‘right’ to react emotionally?
- Parents often hear, “Well, at least your child has some hearing…” or say, “I shouldn’t feel bad, my child doesn’t have a PROFOUND loss…”
- What the Research Says….

Part C and Part B ELIGIBILITY

Support Services
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adult Role Models
- Parent to Parent Support – YOU BELONG with us!!
- Terminology in Resources
Expectations…Assumptions…Presumptions

Do ‘choices in communication’ Still Apply?

- “Why have you forced your child to be ‘oral’?”
- “Why are you teaching your child sign language? – she only has a unilateral hearing loss”
- “Why does your child go to a deaf school, he/she is ‘only’ hard of hearing…speaks so well…etc”
- “Your child should be doing better with his/her speech…look at their audiogram..”
- “your forcing your child into the ‘hearing world’, why don’t you ‘let them’ be Deaf?”

What Works for your child is what makes the choice right…Hands & Voices
Expectations…Assumptions…Presumptions

- Hidden Needs
  - When a child can speak clearly, it’s easy to ‘forget’ they don’t always have access
  - Because they ‘act’ like a hearing person, we put unrealistic expectations on them.

- Must we make parents “Choose” their child’s world?…’hearing’ or ‘Deaf’ and or in between….
What’s the same/What’s Different

**SAME**
- We all love our kids!
- Regardless of degree of hearing loss, parents need information, support, advocacy, and high expectations

**DIFFERENT**
- Some of the ‘challenges’ may be easier
- Society’s view and degree of comfort in communication modes
Communication Considerations

- Parents Think About…
  - Chances of hearing loss progressing…
  - Social Issues…being left out
  - Professionals ‘questioning’ our choices
“Between Three Worlds” by Dawn West

I live in a world dominated by the hearing;
My personal world is hard of hearing. And there is
a cultural world for the Deaf.
I am propped delicately
Somewhere in the midst,
Between these 3 places,
Too far removed from and often ignored
In the hearing world;
I am constantly shifting within the hard of hearing
world,
As the insidious progression of hearing loss takes
place.
I am usually not accepted into or recognized in the
Deaf world.

Truthfully and Thankfully:
Not every hearing person ignores me.
The heard of hearing usually recognize me,
And some Deaf do not disown me.
Yet, I often feel that I am closer to the world with
no hearing in terms of my hearing loss;

As a result, some say I am deaf with a small d.
It seems that I often don’t get to choose.
Or even know where I belong.
There are so many labels: deaf,
Hard of hearing, hearing impaired,
The oral deaf…..
Where do I go? Where do I fit in?
What do I do?
How am I supposed to feel?
How am I supposed to deal?
I am trapped, precariously
Unbalanced
Between 3 worlds that shift
Effortlessly
Without me even feeling the
Changing momentum.
Despite this all, I accept the place th
That I live in.
I demand to be included when I
Am unfairly excluded.
I fend humorous moments
Thoroughly endearing
I, even, embrace the truth – that
I Am Hard of Hearing.