Integrating Deaf Culture into Family Life and Professional Awareness

Patrick Michael Kelly, Ed.S.
Nancy Kelly-Jones, M.A.
EHDI Conference March 2010
Rosemont, IL
An “A+” Way to Communicate

Access

Attending

Attaining

Achievement

Awareness

Attempting

Attitude
• Rich and varied experiences supply children with opportunities to practice roles

• Experiences benefit all children – but are critical for those with early hearing loss (Bodner-Johnson, 2003)
At tempting

Watching TV in the “dark ages”

• Technology and visual aids are wonderful but do not replace daily family “chats”

• All family members have potential for enriching the language environment (Meadow-Orlans, Mertens, & Sass-Lehrer (2002))
“Deaf” takes on a new meaning for all

- Deaf children grow up to become... Deaf adults!

- A healthy self-identify is associated with a shared social group (Erikson, 1986, 1980; Sheridan, 2008)
Families have unique “cultures” too

- Communication of family norms and values takes many forms

- Academic and life success rely on many variables including communication flexibility (Convertino, Marschark, Sapere, Sarchet, & Zupan, 2009)
Family events become opportunities for all to learn

- Taking risks and learning new skills can be scary and exciting
- Healthy families build upon optimism, hope, and collective wisdom (Seligman, 2000)
Parents Lead the Way

- Parental decision-making is influenced by multiple factors
- Children absorb and acquire values over a lifetime
- It’s never too late to learn
- Family life is affected by interactions, resources, parenting factors, and support (Jackson & Turnbull, 2004)
Cultural Strengths

How Deaf culture supports families:

• Vitally interested in early childhood
• Values social experiences
• Highlights achievements of its members
• Welcomes the opportunity to explain “Deaf”
• Encourages ASL and communication clarity
• Embraces electronic access
• Honors older members of community
• Views Deafness as a difference not a disability
Nancy Kelly-Jones & Patrick Michael Kelly

NANCY.KELLY-JONES@illinois.gov
pmkelly@mailbox.sc.edu