

Resources for Families

Focusing on Early Accessible Language

Hands & Voices Family Leadership in Language and Learning

[Hands & Voices](#) (H&V) is a parent-driven, nonprofit organization. Their website provides numerous resources to support families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. H&V is managing a federal grant called **Family Leadership in Language and Learning (FL3)**. The FL3 website has extensive information for families:

- [FL3 National Needs Assessment](#)—Answers the question, “How do you know what families need or want?”
- [FL3: Current Research and Data](#)—A guide to looking at research from a parent’s perspective. Information is provided about why research is important in understanding the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children as well as about how to navigate and use the following information found throughout the FL3 website to inform decision making for families:
 - Links to [Language Development Research](#), [Literacy Research](#), and [Social Development Research](#) that can and should be considered in language and communication planning. This research was put together by the [Language and Literacy Advisory Board of FL3](#).
 - Links to videos, articles, and other information of interest on [Learning from Deaf/Hard of Hearing Adults](#).

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center

The Clerc Center is a federally funded national deaf education center. It is working in partnership with FL3 to develop resources to support families. The Clerc Center website includes links to many resources for families through its information clearinghouse, [Info to Go](#). Families can find links to information specific to [early intervention](#) and [families](#). Of special interest to early language acquisition for families are many free resources developed at the Clerc Center, including the following:

- A web-based resource developed as a collaborative effort between the Clerc Center and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program of Boston Children’s Hospital titled [Setting Language in Motion: Family Supports and Early Intervention for Babies Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#). Seven modules are provided on many topics important to promoting early language acquisition for young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This resource is available in American Sign

Language (ASL), spoken English, and [Spanish](#) with closed captions. Also included is an [activity guide](#) for professionals to support their work with families as they use this resource.

- Two webcasts developed for professionals but which provide important information for families about the rationale for using both ASL and spoken English:
 - [Language Learning Through the Eye and Ear](#) (webcast and reference list)
 - [Maximizing Language Acquisition: ASL and Spoken English](#) (webcast and reference list)
- [Info to Go](#), a Clerc Center clearinghouse of resources on many topics including:
 - [Early Intervention, Early Childhood Education](#)
 - [ASL](#), including [Learning American Sign Language: Books, Media, and Classes](#)
 - [Spoken Language](#)

Gallaudet University

Gallaudet University is a unique liberal arts university for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. It has many initiatives related to early language acquisition. Two of Gallaudet's initiatives that may be of special interest to families include [Visual Language and Visual Learning \(VL2\)](#) and [ASL Connects](#):

- Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2) is a Science of Learning Center funded by the National Science Foundation. Housed at Gallaudet University, VL2 studies the advantages of being bilingual in English and ASL. Included is information targeted for families in their [VL2 Family Information Center](#). Here you will find:
 - [Research briefs](#) published by VL2, plus an overview of the research briefs. Some briefs are available in Spanish and Mandarin.
 - [Storybook apps](#) to support reading and signing with your child in American Sign Language
 - Interviews with parents, researchers, and deaf adults on growing up bilingual, and/or learning sign language including a video, [Growing Together: Creating Language-Rich Environments](#)
 - [Parent Toolkit](#), intended to support families of deaf and hard of hearing children (aged 0-5) in learning about ASL. In the toolkit you will find: [Making Visual Sense! Tutorial Series](#), ["Find-A-Sign" Dictionary](#), and [Parent Resources list](#)

Other VL2 Resources include:

- [Visual Communication and Sign Language \(VCSL\) Checklist](#), an assessment tool developed to address ASL skills development in deaf and hard of hearing children from birth to age 5.

- [Mythbusters](#), a presentation addressing seven myths and the science that debunks them based on the research of Dr. Laura-Ann Petitto. Petitto is known for her work on the biological bases of language, especially involving early language acquisition.
- [Brain and Language Laboratory for Neuroimaging \(BL2\)](#) is a site for neuroimaging and behavioral studies that provide knowledge about the biological mechanisms and environmental factors that, together, make possible the human capacity to learn and convey language, achieve reading mastery, and become a skilled bilingual language learner.
- [Early Education and Literacy Lab \(EL2\)](#) conducts studies of individual differences among deaf children in their literacy development in authentic early education settings.
- [Motion Light Lab \(ML2\)](#) innovates technologies to help improve interaction and learning of visual language.
- [Signwise4kids.com](#) is a website that advises families and professionals about the accuracy and quality of ASL products designed for children.
- [ASL Connect](#), at Gallaudet University, is a resource for learning ASL. It offers ways to learn some basic ASL online to get you started, and then it offers highly engaging and interactive ASL and Deaf Studies courses online. ASL Connect is currently developing online resources (to be released in 2019) for families of deaf children. These resources are designed to support families in their journey to connect with their children through ASL. Also offered will be live, one on one language support opportunities. If you are interested, please e-mail aslconnect.families@gallaudet.edu to sign up for notifications of upcoming information releases.

Other Resources

- [National Center on Hearing Assessment and Management \(NCHAM\)](#) is housed at Utah State University and serves as the National Technical Resource Center for the implementation and improvement of comprehensive and effective Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) systems. Some resources of family interest include:
 - [EHDI E-Book: A Resource Guide for Early Hearing Detection and Intervention \(2018\)](#)— Chapters by numerous authors on many topics related to early intervention.
 - [Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adult Involvement Learning Community](#)—A learning community that includes links to information on research and published literature, the role of technology and social media, examples of deaf and hard of hearing mentor/adult involvement programs, family stories, and other resources and tools on this topic.

- [SKI-HI Deaf Mentor Program](#) provides family-centered, home-based, and curriculum-led early education in the home, focusing on visual communication, ASL, and bridging and navigating deaf and hearing experiences with families of deaf children, birth to age 6 (or beyond).
- [American Society for Deaf Children \(ASDC\)](#) is a family organization that links to numerous family-directed resources related to early language and development, including links to *Endeavor* magazine, the ASDC publication for families. Learn about [SignOn](#), a virtual immersion program that lets families practice ASL live with a Deaf adult from the comfort of their own computer.
- [National Association of the Deaf \(NAD\)](#) offers resources, including [Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers](#), to support advocacy in ensuring families have the resources they need to help their children acquire language, spoken and/or visual, and achieve age-appropriate communicative, cognitive, academic, social, and emotional development.
- [Beginnings: For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#) is a nonprofit organization known throughout the country for their resources for families in making informed decisions for their deaf or hard of hearing children and understanding their children's rights. Their website includes extensive resources for families.
- [My Baby's Hearing](#) is a family-centered, online resource developed by Boys Town National Research Hospital to answer parents' questions about such topics as infant hearing screening and follow-up testing, steps to take after identifying that a child is deaf or hard of hearing, evaluating hearing and fitting listening technologies, language and speech, and parenting issues. It is divided into two sections: "First Steps: Newborn Screening" and "Next Steps: My Baby Has a Hearing Loss." The site is also available in [Spanish](#).

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