Raising a Deaf Child

Description

Deafness used to be a huge barrier for families. Even going back fifty years, hearing parents who found out that their children are deaf had to make much bigger accommodations to keep their children going to school or ensuring that their children didnâ€™t miss out on everyday experiences. Millions of parents today are raising deaf or hard of hearing children and itâ€™s not so much something to be fearful of like it used to be.

Instead, some hearing parents start managing the impact of hearing loss by ensuring that they expose themselves to the deaf community as much as possible. Some parents who are scared to raise deaf children need to surround themselves with as much information and research as possible. The good news is that there are many different ways that you can raise a deaf child and get support with it, too. From help with speech therapy to the assistance available from audiologists and doctors, families with deaf children have plenty of support and if, as a family, you all learn signing, you will be a much happier family for it! So, what tips will help you when it comes to raising a deaf child? Letâ€™s take a look:

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1. Find the right educational services. Deafness â€“ no matter how mild â€“ is a disability. If your child needs visual support, signing or technology like hearing aids to help them to hear or to mingle in society, then the right special educational services in your school district can help with their learning accommodations.

2. Join a signing class. Usually, doctors can tell if your newborn child is going to have a hearing deficit or be fully deaf. If thatâ€™s the case, you get the advantage of joining sign language classes. By the time they go to school, theyâ€™ll be able to sign with you and youâ€™ll be fluent in your language in your family. Itâ€™ll help you in the wider deaf community, too, because then youâ€™ll be able to communicate with teachers and other families!
3. Learn to communicate beyond signing. There are so many ways that those with hearing issues communicate beyond signing and as a hearing person, you have to educate yourself on this as much as possible. Not only will you be able to communicate more efficiently with your child, you will be able to spend time in the deaf community to adapt better.
4. Educate yourself on deaf culture. A good way to ensure that you are a parent going above and beyond is to adapt into the deaf culture. The best way to do that is to read books and learn about deaf history. Learn how deafness has been handled through the years and understand the reasons behind deafness. Speak to audiologists and other specialists in hearing matters to understand why your child is deaf in the first place. It can occur because of genetics, trauma and a range of other illnesses and issues, and understanding the trigger for your child can help.
5. Talk about it as a couple. You and your partner will be tackling your childâ€™s deafness together. Even if youâ€™re not in a relationship right now, you will need to think about discussing their future and the potential roadblocks that you may come across as a family. Once you have these discussions you can also lean on one another when times are tough. As much as you love your child and will pave the roads with gold for their future, itâ€™s not the easiest news to hear when you are hearing parents and havenâ€™t encountered deafness before.
6. Speak to a therapist. On the back of the point above, it can help to speak through any difficulties with a therapist who can assure you that your childâ€™s future will still be as set as ever. If you speak to a therapist as a family, itâ€™ll help you to accept and appreciate the difference your child has among their peers and they can give you tips and hints of how to adapt.
7. Teach their siblings to sign. As much as it will be helpful for you and your partner to learn sign language, you need to think about getting their siblings to learn how to sign, too. This will ensure that all of your children can and will communicate effectively.

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Having a deaf child is not the end of the world, it just means that you need to make adjustments that suit the family as a whole and you move forward into a new world together.

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