



ADVOCACY

Section 8

Becoming an Effective Advocate for Your Child

At Hands & Voices, our mantra is “*What works for your child is what makes the choice right.*” As a parent, you know your child best and will therefore be your child’s most important advocate until he’s old enough and informed enough to speak up for himself. You know your child’s strengths and challenges, and you can help identify and push for the resources your child needs to succeed. Because every child and situation is different, advocacy can take many different forms and approaches. Here are some tips to help you effectively advocate for your child.

1. Keep a paper trail.

Make sure to keep copies of all report cards, progress reports, evaluations, educational assessments, medical records, homework samples and other documents. They can provide insights into your child’s learning issues and how much progress he’s making. Take notes at important meetings and keep copies in a file. See the *Keeping Track* section of this toolkit to help organize records.

2. Study up.

Read and attend workshops. Get insights from parents whose children have similar issues. This way you’ll be familiar with challenges you may face and what resources are available to you.

3. Build relationships.

Get to know your child’s support team (including medical professionals, teachers, counsellors, etc.). Building relationships with these people will help keep the lines of communication more open. There’s less of a chance of misunderstanding if everyone knows each other. See the article *Relationship Building is the Place to Start* following this article for more information.

4. Ask questions.

It's important to work with the school, but don't be afraid to ask for clarification, request further testing or question the school's decision regarding services. It's a good idea to submit in writing any requests or questions. Keep copies of these requests that include the date you sent them. It might also be helpful to keep a log of whom you spoke to and when. See the article *Questions to Consider Asking Your Support Team* in this toolkit for suggestions.

5. Stay calm.

Remember that the teachers and other school staff members involved are there to help, even if you disagree with them. The process will go more smoothly if you listen and keep an open mind. Make a list of the topics you want to cover in important meetings. Take deep breaths. Consider bringing a friend or relative who can take notes for you and help keep you steady.

6. Remember that you're in control.

Parents should never feel pressured by school staff to make a decision. Ultimately, you're in the driver's seat. So while it's important to be receptive to the school staff's thoughts, don't agree to something you think goes against what's best for your child.

7. Know the law.

Learn about your child's rights. See the *Disability Rights in Alberta* article in this toolkit for more information. Your child might have the right to extra time on tests and other accommodations or modifications. Keep informed about your school's legal obligations to provide your child evaluations and other services. You can also bring a parent advocate with you to important meetings.

8. Talk to your child.

Understanding what your child is experiencing in school is essential to advocating for his needs. For example, the 30 minutes he's supposed to spend each week with a speech therapist might only be 20 minutes because the therapist keeps showing up late. Asking your child detailed questions will also help him understand what he needs. This will help him advocate for himself when he's older.

9. Know the lingo.

Find out whether the speech therapist and other service providers are "pushing in" (working with your child in the classroom) or "pulling out" (taking your child to a separate location). This is important because your child may say he didn't go to speech that day, but it could be that the speech teacher pushed into the classroom.

10. Attend meetings regularly.

Individual program planning (IPP) meetings and parent-teacher conferences are obviously good opportunities to get an update on your child's progress, but there are also other times. When teachers host a publishing party so kids can showcase their work, this is a good time to see what's been going on in the classroom. PTA meetings may provide insight into curriculum changes. The PTA can also help push for weekend test prep and other resources that could help your child.

Also, remember not to be too hard on yourself or your child. A lifelong journey lies ahead and lessons will be learned along the way, contributing to the richness of that journey!

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-Adapted from [Geri C. Tucker, Ten Ways to be an Effective Advocate for Your Child](#)

Relationship Building is the Place to Start

Adapted from Andrea Marwah

"I'm going to get what my child needs no matter what the cost."

Ever feel or say a statement like this? Ever feel so frustrated with your school district that you're ready to scream? I'm sure we all have. Even those of us who appear to have seamless Individual Program Plans (IPPs) and workable teams feel this way from time to time.

What we should consider, however, is the ramifications of this and similar "Let's go to war" statements. What is the actual cost of being a very forceful parent? And going to war assumes an enemy. Usually, members of teams *want to help*. We need to remember this and try our best to work together. Sometimes working together is complicated because the 'systems' we work within limit what we can do. More rarely is a specific challenge or delay due to an individual not wanting to try their best to help.

An IPP team needs to be open minded, flexible, and respectful. They should be knowledgeable, certainly. How do we build these relationships with school personnel and how will it mold our child's journey through school? We all know the saying "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." This is true, right? But we should also consider that after a while, the squeaky wheel just goes unnoticed and becomes more and more "damaged." The same goes with your relationship with a school. Once that relationship is damaged, it takes many years to repair, if it is even salvageable.



See the *Getting Ready for Kindergarten* document in this toolkit for information on IPPs.

So, what can we do to make sure we create and maintain a positive parent/school relationship?

Many things come to mind but first and foremost we need to be respectful and understanding. It's easy to get angry and blow up in the face of adversity. The problem isn't in the act of "blowing up." The problem is that many professionals discount the highly emotional or angry parent. We can go in and throw an "adult" temper tantrum to get what we want but then every time thereafter you will have to fight harder for what you need for your child. And you may be causing emotional harm to those you are fighting against, who may actually be limited by challenges in the system or policy and may not be deserving of your anger.

One main goal of successful advocacy is to teach our children how to stand up for their own needs

We also need to remember that our children are watching us. One main goal of successful advocacy is to teach our children how to stand up for their own needs in a respectful way, and to work toward greater societal inclusion.

We therefore want to model more reasoned, respectful, collaborative actions.

So, here are a few easy steps to maintaining a healthy parent/school relationship.

1. Work with your team.

If you wish to be considered a respected team member, you need to respect the other members. This doesn't mean you have to always agree with what is said, but it does mean one should show respect for expertise.

2. Always be prepared for any school meeting or conversation.

The more prepared you are, the higher the chance your team will accept you as a knowledgeable team participant.



3. Don't lose your cool.

There is nothing more detrimental than the impact of an adult temper tantrum. Screaming, demeaning, and demanding are never a good idea.

Always cool off before speaking with school personnel.

4. Always cool off before speaking with school personnel.

In order to make sure that you won't lose your cool, allow yourself a cooling off period. Don't immediately go in with assumptions that you must fight or argue; it's more effective to have your well thought out rationale ready but only use it if necessary – listen first!

5. Find ways that you can turn a negative situation into a positive one.

Come to meetings or conversations with ideas that work. Sometimes school personnel may just be stumped as to what to do. As a parent, you may be pointing out a need that is not presently being addressed. All the better if you have suggestions for how to address this need.

6. Consider ways to create positive relationships with the team outside the meeting.

Do they see you only once a year? Even if you can't volunteer or support the school, you can thank a teacher or a therapist for an especially good experience or troubleshooting for your child.

7. Last but certainly not least, let go of your assumptions.

Every team meeting is a fresh meeting. Past history may lead you to take an offensive strategy, ready to fight or advocate at every turn. Sometimes, people will surprise you. Maybe a solution has already been worked through. Enter every conversation and meeting with a positive assumption that people are there to help, rather than hinder, your efforts to support your child.

We are equal members of the IPP team. That right doesn't make us the leader of the team; it makes us an equal participant. How we come prepared to problem-solve at the meeting shows us as the experts on our own children. The others around the table are experts in their specialty. They are also constrained by forces beyond them (financial, political). Allow them their expertise, disagree in a respectful way and your child will benefit. Don't be that parent that the school dreads to see coming through the front door. It may work once but you will end up working harder and longer for everything your child needs from that point forward. Be a good model for your child.

Andrea Marwa is the Director of the Illinois chapter of Hands & Voices. Reprinted from the Hands & Voices Communicator.

Advocating for Your Child at School

By Julie Clements-Flatt

What is the most effective way to advocate for your child at school?

Always work with the teacher(s). The classroom teacher is one of (if not the) most important person affecting your child's education. Most teachers welcome the involvement of parents and want to hear your ideas.

Engage in regular communication with the school on an ongoing basis. Here are some tips to make sure you are doing so in a valuable and constructive way:

- Write out a list of what you want to discuss.
- Express appreciation for the good things.
- Be specific about any problems as they relate to your child.
- Approach in a positive, non-threatening way.
- Keep the focus on your child.
- Volunteer your time and talents.
- When making requests or suggestions, be specific.
- Attend all meetings and conferences.
- Ask your child's team members to explain things to you when you don't understand.

From my experience, meetings can be difficult. Sometimes we can feel intimidated in a room full of professionals. The parent can feel like the odd man out. Here are some good tips to follow:

- Always come prepared (bring previous reports, have questions ready, and read any new reports and the IPP prior to the meeting).
- Know your rights.
- Always take your partner with you. Other options: a friend or Hands & Voices parent.
- Leave other children at home (this allows you to focus).
- Keep your emotions in check. It's okay to ask for a break if you need one.
- If required, ask ahead of time for an interpreter.
- Follow-up afterwards.

You may wonder - why would I bring someone with me to the meeting for support? In meetings, it is very easy to become emotional. A support person can keep us on track. They may hear things that we don't hear, or pick up on things such as body language that we may be missing. My husband and I went through a very difficult few years at one of our daughter's schools. If I thought I was going to lose control during the meeting, I gave my husband a non-verbal signal. It worked beautifully. He would take over for me, or suggest we end the meeting and reconvene, or just lighten the mood. The teamwork was a beautiful thing.

When negotiating with the school, as parents, we need to have a realistic plan. Firstly, it is important to know *what your child really needs*. These would be non-negotiable items. For example, a non-negotiable item for our family was that the teacher would use an FM/DM system.

Second would be *what you want* for your child (but may be willing to compromise on as part of the negotiation).

Lastly, *what would be nice, but you would be willing to give up*. Make yourself a list, using these **three headings** to keep yourself on track. Your goal is to come out with all of the "really needs" items.

Having experienced the absolute worst a school system can offer, to now experiencing literally the best - and everything in between - I can't stress enough the importance of good relationships. These relationships will not only be with the classroom staff, but other personnel at the school (such as the administration and office staff) and other professionals (such as educational audiologists, interpreters, and speech-language pathologists).

Take the high road by always being polite and courteous rather than rude or nasty. This will pay off in the end and is an important part of building relationships. You don't want to be "that parent."

Below are some do's and don'ts of relationship building. You may wonder - who is she to tell me about relationship building? I can honestly tell you that my husband and I have both exhibited every behaviour on this list. We know what we know by learning from our mistakes! I can assure you that behaviours on the do list bring much more favourable results than the don't list!

The Do's and the Don'ts when Advocating for your Child

DO	DON'T
Be courteous	Be emotional
Build relationships	Be unreasonable
Focus on your child	Lose your focus
Prioritize	Make it personal
Be positive	Expect the worst
Be prepared	Threaten

Remember, we are all human. We are advocating for our most precious children and therefore, emotions and frustrations will come into play. When you make a mistake, admit it, apologize if necessary, and move on. Get back to the do list. It gets easier with practice.

Documentation is another key piece in advocating for your child. Ask that items you feel strongly about be documented in the meeting notes. Ask for a summary, if possible, before you leave the meeting. Take your own notes. If you have an important verbal communication outside of a meeting, note it somewhere with the date, so that you can refer to it later.

Maintain a binder at home with all your child's reports, correspondences, and your own notes. Often you will be asked for a report from another agency or previous IPPs (Individual Program Plans). The binder will save you a lot of time and stress. It also gives you credibility with professionals when you have everything you need at your fingertips. Recently, I added a list of phone numbers to the binder, including medical numbers. This way, if anything happened to me, all the information is in one place. The entire family knows where the binder is.

In closing: "Children are great imitators. So give them something great to imitate."

Julie Clements-Flatt was the founding president of Alberta Hands & Voices. Her daughter is a teenager who is Deaf, and has a rare genetic disorder called Pfeiffer Syndrome. Sammi was profoundly deafened by meningitis at the age of three. The entire family is dedicated to Sammi and advocating for her and other DHH families.

Encouraging Your Child to Self-Advocate

Claire Blatchford, the author of “101 Ways to Encourage Self-Advocacy,” wrote:

I remember often feeling “at sea” when at school. If home was the harbour, school was the ocean. Sometimes the sailing was easy enough; I could watch carefully, read lips, figure out what was expected, and go along with it all. Other times I felt clueless, stressed out, and quite alone. When feeling this way I’d bluff or retreat. In short, I was much less likely to speak up for myself.

Furthermore, every time I bluffed or retreated, these tendencies were reinforced. The more I retreated, the harder it became to advocate. I could begin to imagine this or that teacher didn’t like me or considered me a pain, giving me more reason not to step forward.

As a parent, you can’t be there at school, but there is a fair amount you *can* do to help your child find her sea legs and voice.

Self-advocacy is the ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert one’s own interests, desires, needs, goals, and rights. In other words, self-advocacy occurs when children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing can explain to teachers, classmates, bosses and co-workers the nature of their hearing loss, their language skills and the accommodations they require in order to effectively do their work, participate in conversations, and get involved in other activities.

Children are never too young to start on the path to becoming strong self-advocates. One component of educational instruction often overlooked is **supporting the positive development of a child’s self-advocacy skills** both at home *and* at school. A child who can learn to self-advocate early on is better prepared for future independence at school, at home, and in the community.

Self-advocacy skills develop over time with practice and guidance. Children need opportunities to practice their skills in a range of settings and with various people.

Three educational activities to gain self-advocacy knowledge and skills include **explicit instruction**, setting up **role playing** opportunities and **structuring occasions to practice**.

1. Explicit Instruction.

Archer and Hughes (2011) suggest three processes (*I do; we do; you do*) to show students what they are expected to learn, to give them opportunities to practice the skill under conditions that promote high levels of success and to provide an opportunity to demonstrate that they can perform the skill independently.

The **I do** stage: The teacher models or demonstrates the skills.

The **we do** stage: The teacher and the student practice skills together (provides guided practice).

The **you do** stage: The student demonstrates the skills unaccompanied (provides unprompted practice).

2. Role Play.

Prior to situations that require students to use self-advocacy skills, parents, educators and students talk through scenarios and use role-play to practice the appropriate skills. Examples include acting through situations that involve school (e.g., battery dying in hearing device) or transitions (e.g., choosing classes that support a long term career goal).

3. Structuring Practice Opportunities.

Students can also practice using self-advocacy knowledge and skills during their IPP meetings. A four-level incremental approach for student involvement in IPP meetings, adapted from Mason, McGahee-Kovac and Johnson (2004), allows students to address levels of opportunity as well as progress through levels in accordance to their age, capability and opportunities of practice:

Level 1: Students introduce everyone at the meeting to each other.

Level 2: Students present their goals for the future.

Level 3: Students explain their disability, share individual strengths and challenges and explain beneficial accommodations.

Level 4: Students lead and close the meeting.

If you're unsure about your child's 'self-advocacy' progress, there are several resources available for you to reference. Following this section is a checklist of several areas that can be used in kindergarten to grade 12 educational settings for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. A copy can also be found here:

<http://handsandvoices.org/pdf/SAInventory.pdf>

Another valuable resource with self-advocacy guides, checklists, games, information and materials is on the *Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss* site at:

<http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/self-advocacy>

You may also want to review the article, *Self-Advocacy for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students* from Hands & Voices, which includes more information on age-appropriate skills and expectations at:

<http://www.handsandvoices.org/needs/advocacy.htm>

Texas Hands & Voices also offers of an extensive checklist of advocacy skills for Hard of Hearing students here:

http://www.txhandsandvoices.org/txhv/files/8213/9144/6548/advocacy_skills_for_hard_of_hearing.pdf

101 Ways to Encourage Self-Advocacy

Claire Blatchford, the author of a booklet titled, “101 Ways to Encourage Self-Advocacy,” is an adult with hearing loss. In the book’s introduction, she said:

“My mother often urged me as a deaf child to speak up when I didn’t hear something, but we never talked together about the different ways I could ask for help. Coaching of this sort was not a part of the mindset of those times. Today, however, real thought is being given to what it means to be a successful self-advocate.”

Even as adults, self-advocacy continues to demand self-acceptance, self-awareness, and self-confidence. Blatchford emphasizes how important you are, as a parent. Can your child see you advocate for yourself, when you need to?

Blatchford, who worked as a teacher for many years, has noticed **that if the leap required to self-advocate is too big, we may not jump at all**. Her sequence from simple to more complex ways to advocate is helpful. For example:

“Continue to encourage your child to be up front about her hearing loss with the bus driver, school receptionist, teacher, classmates, cafeteria workers, and other adults she comes into contact with at school. Help her practice the language to use for clarification of her needs and preferences. For example, “Please look at me so I can see your face when you are talking to me.” Practicing the language of hearing loss should also extend to talking about technology, if your child wears hearing aids, cochlear implants, or an FM system. Calling equipment by their right names is part of becoming more knowledgeable. So instead of “ears,” call them hearing aids; instead of “bionic ear,” call it a cochlear implant; instead of “thing,” call it an FM transmitter.

This booklet is written with school-aged children in mind, but can easily be extended into teens, twenties, and beyond. It is available from Clarke

Mainstream Services (www.clarkeschools.org). Alberta Hands & Voices also has two copies in the lending library.

In Conclusion

Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing benefit from developing and mastering self-advocacy skills. Self-advocacy skill development will allow children to become more successful in their daily interactions and in getting their needs met.

Parents and educators can support students in developing self-advocacy knowledge and skills by:

- educating them on their needs, rights, and responsibilities
- assisting them in understanding a problem or a challenge and selecting strategies to try
- providing them with opportunities to practice strategies to problem solve, get needs met, or progress toward goals
- involving them in planning for the future

Many families have found that there is a big difference between self-advocating at home and self-advocating at school. Keep in mind that during transitions, such as to a new school or a new grade, your child may be less likely to advocate for himself. One year, the environment may be sympathetic to him, the next year much less so. This is all part of the growth process.

Adapted from:

[-Lucker and Becker, Fostering Skills in Self-Advocacy: A Key to Access in School and Beyond](#)

[-Students with Cochlear Implants: Guidelines for Educational Planning from Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, Gallaudet University](#)

INFORMAL INVENTORY OF INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS
FOR DEAF/HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS (©2005)
 Developed by: George Clark, MS.Ed, CI, NAD-IV & Laura Scheele, MS Ed, NIC-Advanced
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 Inventory reformatted by: Karen Anderson, PhD, 2010. The authors grant permission for use in K-12 educational settings.

This inventory is intended to aid collaboration among students, parents, and educational team members in order to determine educational services and appropriate goals for the student’s Individual Education Plan. It is very important to include the student’s input and to recognize that even very young children should be building skills related to independence and self-advocacy. Discussion should include what would be considered appropriate for the child’s age, cognitive abilities, and mode of communication when determining the items that may or may not be applicable. **Place an X to show (1) having lack of skill/dependence to (5) having mastery of skill/independence.**

STUDENT _____ **GR** _____ **DATE** _____ **COMPLETED BY** _____

Student Independence						
1. Takes responsibility for own amplification needs (uses consistently; indicates when it is not working; charges equipment or changes batteries independently).	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2. Takes responsibility for completing daily assignments and projects.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
3. Keeps track of assignments and materials and completes assignments on time.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
4. Follows schedule and manages time independently.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
5. Attempts to follow directions without assistance.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Services and Accommodations						
1. Understands technology (cochlear implants, hearing aids, FM) and can explain its benefit.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2. Expresses personal opinions concerning current educational program / services.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
3. Notifies the appropriate person to request additional explanation or tutoring.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
4. Assists with training staff in relation to communication access and needed support services.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
5. Advocates for communication accessibility and accommodations. (i.e. captioning, preferential seating, lighting, note-taker, FM use)	NA	1	2	3	4	5
6. Explain his/her needs to a new teacher, interpreter or staff member.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
7. Explain type and degree of hearing loss and implication to the educational setting.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
8. Attends and participates in IEP meetings and transition planning.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Independence: Peer Interaction						
1. Participates in class discussions, making comments relevant to topic.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2. Takes a role in cooperative learning activities and self-advocates for communication needs.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
3. Uses communication strategies to interact with peers (requests interpreter, writes notes, gestures)	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Independence: Community						
1. Makes telephone calls using technology (amplification, CapTel, Videophone), following expected procedures and etiquette.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2. Accesses community services for the deaf and knows how to request specific services (i.e., interpreter, CART).	NA	1	2	3	4	5
3. Aware of community events for the deaf and hard of hearing.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
4. Knows rights related to communication access (IDEA, ADA, etc).	NA	1	2	3	4	5
5. Uses assistive technology in non-school settings (flashing/vibrating alarms, captioned media).	NA	1	2	3	4	5
6. Independently communicates in community. (orders in restaurants, makes purchases).	NA	1	2	3	4	5
7. Aware of deaf culture/community and self-identification options (D/deaf, hard of hearing).	NA	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL POINTS EARNED						
There are a total of 23 items. Subtract the number of NA responses from 23 then average the student’s responses. Compare to the continuum below to monitor growth over time.					Average response	
0-1.5 Lacks independence and self advocacy skills	1.5-3.0 Some independence and self advocacy skills	3.0-4.0 Growing advocacy and independence	4.0-5.0 Substantial advocacy and independence			

INFORMAL INVENTORY OF INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS FOR DEAF/HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS (@2005) Developed by: George Clark, MS.Ed, CI, NAD-IV & Laura Scheele, MS Ed, NIC-Advanced The authors grant permission for use in K-12 educational settings.						
For Students who use an Interpreter						
1. Recognizes the need for interpreting services and respects their role as professionals.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2. Explains the role of the interpreter versus the role of the teacher.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2. Attends to the interpreter according to age expectations and student needs.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
3. Asks interpreter for clarification when interpretation is unclear and notifies interpreter of unclear signs/concepts.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
4. Uses interpreter effectively during testing situations.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
5. Gives appropriate feedback during interpretation to indicate comprehension of interpreted message.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
6. Articulates specific needs regarding interpretation (transliterating versus interpreting).	NA	1	2	3	4	5
7. Requests interpreting services, as needed, for printed English materials.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
8. Works with interpreter to prepare for presentations.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
9. Limits personal conversations with interpreter during instruction times.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
10. Generally understands RID/NAD Code of Professional Conduct in relation to educational and community interpreting.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
11. Knows grievance procedures for solving problems/conflicts with interpreter.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
12. Requests interpreting services for extra-curricular activities.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL POINTS EARNED FOR INTERPRETER USE						
There are a total of 12 items. Subtract the number of NA responses from 12 then average the student's responses. Compare to the continuum below to monitor growth over time.					Average response	
0-1.5 Lacks independence and self advocacy skills	1.5-3.0 Some independence and self advocacy skills	3.0-4.0 Growing advocacy and independence	4.5-5.0 Substantial advocacy and independence			

Based on the findings of the inventory, the identified skill and knowledge deficits need to be addressed collaboratively. List the action steps that the following people will make to ensure progress on goals.

Student: _____

Classroom teacher(s): _____

Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing: _____

Interpreter(s): _____

Other special education or related services providers: _____

Family Member(s): _____

Other comments: _____

Advocating for Sign Language Interpreting Services

As a parent, the more you know about interpreting, the better you will be able to advocate for your child and make sure she has the interpreting services she needs. It is also important that you be knowledgeable about policies regulating interpreting in your area. Below are some hypothetical (and not-so-hypothetical) questions about advocating for interpreting services.

Q: *My daughter's hearing loss is progressive. She knows only a little bit of sign language now and does not use an interpreter, but she is starting to miss things in class. How can we ask the school to hire an interpreter so she can start learning to use one?*

A: Be specific about your goals in providing interpreter services. Simply watching an interpreter is not an optimal way to learn sign language. You may want to explore options such as classes or tutoring, both for her and for the rest of your family. Learning sign language as a family will be very beneficial - particularly if you regularly practice, and use the language at home. Find opportunities for her to socialize with other children or adults who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and communicate in sign language.

For a list of American Sign Language classes, see the resources at the end of this article. When it is confirmed that an interpreter is beneficial to your daughter's programming success, you can raise the feasibility of recruiting and hiring an interpreter in the case conference in preparation for the following year. If the school is not familiar with the process of hiring an interpreter, you can request an external consultation through the Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD). <https://education.alberta.ca/regional-collaborative-service-delivery/>

Q: *I visited school the other day, and the teacher had my child and the interpreter working on a lesson together in a corner of the room while she worked with the rest of the class. I thought interpreters weren't supposed to be tutoring?*

A: Depending on your child's school, the role of the interpreter could take on many different forms, from professional interpreter to tutor to signing educational assistant.

Ideally, the interpreter should only be interpreting. However, some school districts also include the role of tutoring - but not teaching - in the interpreter's day.

In practice, there are situations in which the student needs more support or in which direct instruction works better. How much tutoring the interpreter will do should be discussed and agreed upon by the interpreter and the school administration before their placement in the classroom. The interpreter should receive specialized training in tutoring and supervision from the teacher. Other tutoring services, including visits from a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, are alternatives. Another reason you may see the interpreter working one-on-one with your child is that an interpreter and student may need time set aside for reviewing upcoming new vocabulary and agreeing on the signs to be used for specialized terminology.

Q: *When is the cost of interpreting covered, and when does the family have to pay out of pocket?*

A: The United Way provides funding for interpreting services (when services are not covered by the school district, business, or government department). Some examples of services covered are listed below – check with each interpreting agency concerning their available funding and how it may apply specifically to your needs.

Freelance agencies without United Way funding will attempt to secure funding from the service provider. If that is not possible, the family may then be asked to

pay for interpreting costs. If funding cannot be secured, check with the freelance agencies for other options. For a list of Alberta Freelance Interpreting Agencies, see the resources at the end of this article.

Medical/Mental Health

Access to ASL interpreters during health appointments is mandated through the Supreme Court of Canada. If the appointments take place in a hospital or clinic, general medical/specialist/surgery appointments are always covered. Optometry services are covered once a year; visits to the dentist are covered twice a year.

Education

Interpreting services are the responsibility of the school district from kindergarten to grade 12. Interpreting services are also covered for students in college and university. Vocational training and driver education training are also covered, but a pre-application is required. Education provided through government programs (i.e. Alberta Works, Prospect, etc.) is also covered.

Employment

Job interviews and government-arranged job fairs are covered. Once hired, orientation, all subsequent training, staff meetings, employee performance evaluations, and employment social events are the responsibility of the employer.

Legal Needs

Always covered. This could include but may not be limited to: court appearances, legal consultations, police interviews, parole/probation meetings, trials.

Social Services

Programs within Alberta Human Services are covered. This could include but is not limited to: family counselling, visitation appointments, foster care, AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped), PDD (Persons with Developmental Disabilities).

Celebrations/Events

Baptisms, wedding ceremonies, graduation, and funerals are covered; however, these events have limited funding available. An interpreter may be provided through an agency for a limited amount of time (2-3 hours). Sometimes the family may have to cover some or all of the cost, particularly if the event takes place out of town.

Community Events

Many organizations will provide interpreting services during a public event and/or in public venues to ensure accessibility. This can include tours, performances, political events, speeches, ceremonies, etc.

Q: *My daughter was just elected prom queen. The school didn't budget for the extra interpreter hours. A football game at night is going to be a communication nightmare for her. What can we do?*

A: The above scenario is one of social inclusion. Here are some ways to advocate for social inclusion for your daughter:

- Start with the school. Make an argument for coverage by asking if the school considers 'social inclusion' an elective activity. Refer to <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/department/premiers-council-alternative-communications-policy.html>, which outlines the access policy for services provided by government departments. It could be said that public school districts are fundamentally governmental institutions, given that they receive the majority of their funding through Alberta Education.
- Is there a fundraising option within the school for social inclusion events? Perhaps along with fundraising for band or intramural activities, the school can include a portion for social inclusion.
- Are there scholarship funds that can be designated for social inclusion?
- Is there a community-based organization (perhaps one with a focus on Deaf and Hard of Hearing children) that would be willing to donate money towards a 'social inclusion' fund?

- Are there local interpreters who would be willing to donate their time to interpret at socially inclusive events?
- Are there local interpreting agencies that would be willing to provide interpreter services on a pro bono basis?

Q: *My son had a wonderful interpreter this year, and I want her to continue on as his interpreter forever! Can I request this interpreter on his IPP?*

A: An IPP, or Individualized Program Plan, is a school-based document. You can't request a specific individual service provider on an IPP. However, you can, with help from your son and his current interpreter, figure out what made this interpreter such a "good fit." Perhaps it is her overall skill level, or skills with ASL or English or the ability to rapidly switch between the two. To some extent, you can request specific skills in the IPP. On the other hand, if you are too specific about interpreter characteristics, it may be impossible to find the right person. Staying with the same interpreter year after year, no matter how "perfect," can be detrimental in the long run, limiting his exposure to other individuals' styles and possibly creating dependence.

Q: *My son has ADHD in addition to his hearing loss and can be a handful. The teacher wants the interpreter to monitor and control his behaviour in addition to interpreting. Is this appropriate?*

A: The role of the interpreter is to interpret, and if she is also the disciplinarian, this can lead to confusion and resentment on the part of the student and other classmates. After all, no other student in the room has an adult watching him full-time. Ideally, all discipline should be handled by the teacher, with the interpreter facilitating communication to make sure the child understands the rules and consequences.

Q: *My son's community baseball team is hosting an informal awards ceremony. We would really like to have his interpreter from school come to interpret, but it's not a school-sponsored event. Is there a way we can book her for this event?*

A: Before you take any further steps, it would be wise to inquire as to the interpreter's availability! If she is not available on the date and time of the ceremony, you need go no further in seeking to hire her services.

If she is available, it is quite possible that the staff interpreter from the school is also on the roster of one or more community interpreting agencies. If you have direct contact with the interpreter, you could ask her for referral to an agency through which they work outside of the school setting. You could then investigate possible funding options through that agency, as outlined above. If you aren't able to contact the interpreter directly, you can call the agencies directly and inquire as to whether that interpreter is on their roster. You are welcome to request specific interpreters through community agencies – the interpreter coordinator will make every effort to book your preferred interpreter before offering you the services of other interpreters on the roster. Also bear in mind that there may be a coordinator of the community baseball league who could assist in investigating these arrangements and possibly even help secure some community-based funding, if no other funding source is available.

In order to ensure full participation, whether it is in school or out in the community, access to interpreters is your child's right. Many professionals are inexperienced working with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children, so you are likely to encounter those who are unaware of what services are available. You will greatly benefit your child – as well as the community at large – if you are prepared with the resources and knowledge to educate and advocate for socially inclusive services. By working with your child's team of professionals, you can establish a positive collaboration for any environment your child interacts in – home, school, and community.

-Adapted from Lorna Irwin's article in the Hands & Voices Communicator (Summer 2013, Volume XVI—Issue 4).

Resources: Freelance Interpreting Agencies

Province-wide

Choice of Interpreters (COI)

www.choiceofinterpreters.com

Choice is “a company with a business model that believes in ‘paying it forward’ and giving back to the Deaf community. The vision of Choice of Interpreters is to work collectively with the Alberta Deaf community in bringing benefits directly to individuals or groups.”

Deaf and Hear Alberta (DHA)

www.deafandhearalberta.ca

Deaf and Hear Alberta offers interpreting services and “exists to enhance the lives of Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing individuals and those with whom they interact by coordinating and advocating for equal communication access via professionally trained Sign Language Interpreters.”

NICA Consolidated

www.nicaconsolidated.com

NICA offers “over 25 years of field experience working with deaf, hard-of-hearing and Deaf/blind persons and those ‘hearing’ (non-deaf) individuals with whom they communicate in a wide variety of settings.”

Northern Alberta

Centralized Interpreter Service (CIS)

<http://www.the-family-centre.com/services/centralized-interpreter-services-cis/>

NOTE: CIS only contracts with organizations to provide interpreters, not individuals. However, you may refer organizations to CIS.

Southern Alberta

Freelance Interpreters Consolidated Inc. (FLIC)

www.flicinterpreting.com

FLIC operates with “the mandate to provide services that are a profile match to the needs of both Deaf and hearing consumers...(Their) roster of professionally trained sign language interpreters (possess) a variety of specialties to meet your interpreting needs.”

Symmetry Solutions

www.symmetrysolutions.ca

Symmetry Solutions “provides Deaf and hard of hearing people with employment and career support.”

Resources: American Sign Language (ASL) Classes

While many of the classes below are geared for adults only, they would be good starting points for you to begin learning the language so that you and your child can have direct access to one another linguistically. Contact with instructors in these courses may also lead to networking opportunities and ideas for ways to improve your language learning.

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (Edmonton)

www.chha-ed.com/classes/asl_classes.html

Chinook Learning Services

<http://www.chinooklearningservices.com/ContEd/AdultCourses/Sign-Language-Get-Started.html>

Deaf and Hear Alberta

www.deafandhearalberta.ca

Offers family-focused ASL classes specifically for you and your children.

Edmonton Public Schools

<http://www.metrocontinuingeducation.ca/coned/> (click on languages)

University of Calgary Continuing Education

<http://conted.ucalgary.ca/index.jsp> (put ASL in the search field)

Signing Exact English (S.E.E.) Classes

S.E.E. Support

<https://www.facebook.com/seesupport/>

CART in Alberta

By Kelly Klapstein



CART stands for Communication Access Realtime Translation.

CART stands for Communication Access Realtime Translation, and has changed the lives of many people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. With CART, you can see a translation that is being created in realtime on a computer screen. The translation is created by a shorthand writer (called a CART provider) who is either present onsite or online via an Internet connection.

A CART provider is similar to a court reporter who works in a courtroom, however, realtime captioning is a faster, more challenging job. CART providers develop computer dictionaries so that their shorthand typing instantly translates even the most complex technical terminology at speeds well over 280 words per minute.

CART service can be corporate or educational. In a corporate setting, captioning is provided for media, public events, meetings, etc. In an educational setting, the CART provider will sit in a classroom or listen from another location (remote captioning) by streaming online. With remote captioning, the teacher wears a microphone. The student has a separate laptop or tablet. The captioning appears on the screen while the CART provider listens and types.

Government funding provides complete access to CART at the post-secondary level.

In Alberta, government funding provides complete access to CART for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing at the post-secondary level (i.e., after high school). Although there have been several students in Alberta high schools with CART access, limited school board budgets can prevent access to the service. The average fee of a CART provider is \$100/hour. Most CART

providers work as freelancers, however, there are several private companies in Alberta as well.

To bring CART into your child's classroom, it will be necessary to advocate strongly to the school board and obtain additional funding if necessary. Because of the speed of reading required to use CART, secondary students in Grades 7 – 12 would benefit the most. The success of CART with younger students would be dependent on their ability to multi-task: listen, read quickly, write notes and attend to classroom discussions.

To obtain a reputable educational CART provider with appropriate credentials for your child's needs in the classroom, contact the Alberta Shorthand Reporters Association (ASRA). The ASRA (www.asraonline.com) will also direct you to the agencies at the various post-secondary educational institutions in Alberta if your child will be attending university or college.

Saved by CART

By Kelly Klapstein

When she was 16 years old, our daughter, who was Hard of Hearing, suddenly lost her remaining hearing and became Deaf. It happened during summer break, in mid-July, and we were shocked and heartbroken. Up until that fateful day, Serena had attended public school, and was mainstreamed with no assistance or intervention. With her hearing aids, she was participating fully in the hearing world.

Learning ASL overnight or attending the School for the Deaf was not an option that we considered. Removing her from her familiar world of school and friends would only cause more stress and anxiety. Our immediate application for a cochlear implant involved about a year of waiting before surgery and activation.

After countless hours searching online for answers and making phone calls, I connected with the Edmonton Chapter of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA). The President, Cindy Gordon, asked me if I knew about CART and told me it could help our daughter if she decided to stay in her current high school. I had never heard of CART before, so Cindy put me in touch with the President of the Alberta Shorthand Reporters Association (ASRA), Linda Halworth. Little did I know that this would turn out to be the answer for which we were looking.

I quickly learned all about CART. CART stands for Communication Access Realtime Translation. With CART, you can see a translation that is being created in realtime on a computer screen. The translation is created by a shorthand writer. But I still could not really understand how it worked, and if it would help our daughter in the classroom. With Linda's assistance, I organized a meeting with all the teachers, administration and support staff for a demonstration of CART in the school board room.

It was now the beginning of September, and I was feeling desperate because the Voice to Text software program (DragonSpeak) the school was using in the classroom was failing miserably. Our daughter was trying to read the translations on her laptop while the teacher spoke into a microphone. The accuracy was only 30% correct, if that. I could see her weariness and exhaustion at the end of the day. She would fall into silence at the dinner table, looking and feeling more and more isolated.

The CART demonstration changed our lives. We were astonished with how quickly the typing and captioning worked, and for once, Serena could follow the entire discussion. Everyone who spoke was recorded fluidly and in real time. I almost cried with relief at that moment, knowing that our daughter would be able to continue her education in her high school with her friends and favourite teachers. The trauma of losing her hearing lessened that day.

The only remaining hurdle, of course, was funding. The fee was to be \$100/hour. However, we were very fortunate when the school board decided to fund her entire Grade 11 year for CART services. We also were very lucky to have an excellent CART provider who worked well with our daughter. Within a couple of weeks, there was a marked difference in our daughter's energy level and attitude, and she was starting to participate in discussions in class again.

Although Serena's marks were lower than usual at the end of the school year, she successfully completed all of her classes, played on sports teams and was active in student council. Even without CART outside the classroom, her confidence was bolstered when her lip reading became extremely proficient, and a new set of high-powered hearing aids gave her some sound so she could interpret speech better with the lip reading. Her school life was enjoyable and rewarding, thanks to CART.

However, before the year ended, we were called into a meeting to discuss the future of the CART service for her Grade 12 year and were told that the board would not fully fund CART the following year. Our Learning Coach in the high school was assigned to request additional funding for our daughter as a

Complex Case through Alberta Education and the Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD).

The RCSD is intended to provide a regional model for support to schools and community partners to meet the needs of children and youth (ECS to Grade 12), as well as to families who have children and youth with complex needs (birth to 20). It is also intended to strengthen the capacity of service providers to collaboratively respond to those needs.

After many hours of filling out forms and making phone calls, the high school Learning Coach and I met with a panel from the RCSD and had a 'roundtable' meeting where we presented our Complex Case. Our audiologist from the Glenrose Hospital also joined the meeting via a telephone conference call, which was very helpful. It was very important that we had the support from the health care field, who supplied valuable information to the panel. It was a stressful meeting with a lot of serious questions, and about a month later, we learned that we were approved for partial funding. Happily, our daughter would finish her final high school year with full CART services.

As I write this, our daughter is writing Diplomas exams and is halfway through Grade 12. She had cochlear implant surgery, and her CI was activated in early September of her grade 12 year. Through the miracle of technology, she can now hear and is improving as time goes on. She still uses CART in all of her classes to fully support her hearing and learning experience. She plans on continuing on to university, hopefully at the University of Alberta, where she will receive full support as a Deaf student in terms of CART services from the Alberta Government.

When I learned that CART services are fully funded for all students in post-secondary university and college programs, I felt dismayed that the students in high school did not have this funding. I believe CART should be provided for students in Grades 7–12, not only high school. They should not have to struggle with limited support of FM/DM systems and Education Assistants alone, when technology like CART exists and can benefit students in the classroom in a

significant way. Perhaps advocacy for CART services in secondary schools should be pressed upon the government and Alberta Education to ensure that all of our children can be successful students.

Without a parent's efforts in advocating for the child's rights to attain special services in school, nothing will change, and our Deaf and Hard of Hearing children will be overlooked and fall behind. Throughout this experience, I learned that I have to speak up and be assertive about getting the assistance and funding my daughter requires. Even my daughter's teachers in high school have wondered what would have happened if I hadn't insisted on CART in her classrooms. Being informed, joining advocacy groups and searching for answers is an integral part of our journey with our children.

Disability Rights for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Disability Rights in Alberta

1. Alberta Human Rights Act

http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=A25P5.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779744060

In Alberta, human rights are protected under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. The Act protects from discrimination in **five areas**: employment, tenancy, goods and services, publications and notices, and membership in trade unions. The Act also protects on **thirteen grounds**. People cannot discriminate based on: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, **physical disability**, mental disability, age, marital status, family status, source of income or sexual orientation.

A physical disability includes, but is not limited to, epilepsy; paralysis; amputation; lack of physical coordination; visual, hearing and speech impediments; and physical reliance on a guide dog, service dog, or wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.

In Alberta, employers, landlords, tenants and service providers are expected to make reasonable efforts to accommodate individuals with disabilities unless it would cause undue hardship.

For example, it may be possible to make adjustments to a building (e.g., assistive technology) to accommodate people with disabilities. On the job, workloads may be rearranged so that duties that cannot be performed by an employee with a disability are handled by another worker.

For more information or to investigate a concern (through their confidential inquiry voice or TTY line), see the *Alberta Human Rights Commission* at <http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/>.

2. Children First Act

<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/16594.html>

The *Children First Act* enhances legislation, tools, processes and policies to improve the security, education, health, safety and well-being of children and youth in Alberta.

The Act assists government, community partners and families in **breaking down barriers and encouraging collaboration to identify and meet the needs of children and youth**.

Highlights of the legislation include:

- The Government of Alberta is committed to supporting and creating opportunities for children.
- Appropriate **sharing of information** between individuals and organizations planning or providing programs and services for children is critical to ensuring successful outcomes for children and families.
- The well-being, safety, security, education and health of children are priorities for Albertans.
- Albertans recognize that children are the future of the province, and when every child has the opportunity to become a successful adult, society as a whole benefits.
- Programs and services for children are most effective when they are provided through a **collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach**.

- **Sound, evidence-based research** is critical in the design and development of effective actions to allow, encourage and support successful outcomes for children and families.
- A *Children's Charter* to ensure government policy puts children first:
 - That all children are to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their circumstances;
 - That a child's familial, cultural, social, and religious heritage is to be recognized and respected;
 - That the **needs of children are a central focus** in the design and delivery of programs and services;
 - That prevention and **early intervention** are fundamental in addressing social challenges affecting children;
 - While reinforcing and without minimizing the primary responsibility of parents, guardians and families for their children; that individuals, families, communities and governments have a shared responsibility for the well-being, safety, security, education, and health of children.

3. Education Act

<http://www.education.alberta.ca/departement/policy/standards/sestandards.aspx>

Requirements contained in this document apply to grades 1-12 special education in public and separate school boards, including Francophone regional education authorities, but excluding charter schools.

In Alberta's Education Act, "Standards for Special Education" supports Alberta Learning's goal to have high quality learning opportunities that ensure the learning system meets the needs of all learners and society.

Special education refers to the education of students with mild, moderate, or severe disabilities and those who are gifted and talented. It is founded on the belief that all children can learn and reach their full potential given the

opportunity, effective teaching, and appropriate resources. Instruction, rather than setting, is the key to success. Decisions related to the placement of students are best made on an individual basis in a manner that maximizes their opportunity to participate fully in the schooling experience.

In Alberta, educating students with special education needs in inclusive settings is the **first placement option** to be considered by school boards in consultation with parents and, when appropriate, students. Inclusion, by definition, refers not merely to setting but to specially designed instruction and support for students with special education needs in regular classrooms and neighbourhood schools.

Rights and responsibilities related to special education are included in the School Act. **School boards are required to provide each resident and enrolled student with identified special education needs with access to a special education program. Parents have a right and responsibility to work with boards to ensure their children's special education needs are met, subject to limitations based on reasonableness in each circumstance. In every case, the best educational interest of the student is the paramount consideration for decision-making and programming.**

Standards for Special Education requires school boards to identify and deliver effective programming for students with special education needs in grades 1-12. It promotes consistent and enhanced quality of educational practice within our province, so that irrespective of location, students with special education needs can access appropriate programming and services. Alberta Learning acknowledges the importance of local autonomy, flexibility and choice in meeting the diverse learning needs of students.

The Act outlines the requirements for school boards regarding the delivery of education programming and services to students with special education needs in grades 1-12. These requirements are organized into the following four areas:

- **Access:** Students with special education needs are entitled to have access to an education program in accordance with the School Act. Students

with special education needs should receive adapted or modified programming that enables and improves learning.

- **Appropriateness:** Educational programming and services should be designed around the assessed needs of the student and are provided by qualified staff who are knowledgeable and skilled.
- **Accountability:** The obligation to answer for the execution of one's assigned responsibilities.
- **Appeals:** Timely, fair and open processes protect the rights of students and parents and address differences of opinion about the education of students with special education needs.

Standards for Special Education

Essential Components of Educational Programming for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing is intended for classroom teachers, resource personnel, administrators and parents (accessed at the link below). It is one of a series of documents developed to facilitate programming for students in grades 1 to 12 who have special education needs.

https://education.alberta.ca/media/1477210/ecep_deaf_or_hard_of_hearing.pdf

The essential components of programming for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are guided by the following principles:

- Programming is an active process that is based on the student's assessed abilities and needs and is continuously monitored and adjusted.
- Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing have a right to participate in Alberta Education's programs of study to the fullest extent possible.
- The essential components of educational programming overlap; they are processes that work together.
- Meaningful parent and family involvement is intrinsic to all of the essential components.

- Staff and students should have access to specialists and resources that support the educational program.

There are six components considered essential to the provision of a comprehensive program (listed below). However, the manner in which the components are implemented **may be affected by such practical considerations as availability of resources and needs of the particular student.**

1. Meaningful parent and family involvement.
2. Learning team.
3. Knowledgeable staff.
4. Individualized program plan (IPP).
5. Educational programming and services.
6. Planning for transition.

The services and supports identified under the umbrella of this essential component should be considered for each student, but not all are appropriate for every student. The learning team reviews and defines the supports and services appropriate for the student. Students may benefit from school-based, provincially-based and/or community-based supports, such as trained teachers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, educational audiologists, sign language interpreters, speech-language pathologists, adult role models who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and others who can provide expertise in the areas identified.

Disability Rights in Canada

1. Canadian Human Rights Act

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/page-1.html#h-2>

The *Canadian Human Rights Act* prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities.

The purpose of this Act is to extend the laws in Canada to the principle that all individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to **have their needs accommodated**, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, **disability** or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.

2. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html#h-39>

The *Equality Rights* section of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees people with disabilities equal benefit and protection before and under the law. "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

Organizations Involved in Disability Rights

Alberta Association of the Deaf (AAD)

<http://www.aadnews.ca>

The primary purpose of the Alberta Association of the Deaf (AAD) is to promote equal rights for Deaf Albertans while endeavoring to improve the quality of life for Deaf people in general.

Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD)

<http://www.cad.ca>

The Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) promotes and protects the rights, needs and concerns of Deaf people in Canada.

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA)

<http://www.chha.ca/chha/>

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) is respectful and fully accessible to people with hearing loss. CHHA provides information that helps and empowers people with hearing loss to take responsibility for their own communication success, and to identify and overcome communication barriers in all areas of their lives. There are local chapters located in cities across Canada, including Calgary and Edmonton.

Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD)

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/>

Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) is a national organization of people with disabilities working for an accessible and inclusive Canada. As a cross-disability organization, CCD addresses issues facing people with all types of disabilities. CCD's members include both national and provincial organizations of people with disabilities.

Deaf and Hear Alberta

<http://deafandhearalberta.ca/>

Deaf and Hear Alberta (DHA) provides support and resources for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing while working towards a world free of communication barriers. DHA envisions a society where the hearing population understands, accepts and embraces the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and believe that communication is a basic human right.

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

<http://www.voicefordeafkids.com/>

VOICE is a parent-driven organization whose goal is to ensure that all children with hearing loss have their rights upheld. This includes access to services for developing their abilities to learn to hear, listen and speak. Their principal

objective is to provide hope and support to parents and inform that children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing can learn to listen and speak.