



### **Where can my deaf or hard of hearing child go to school?**

Options may include residential schools for the Deaf, oral or sign language day schools, mainstream or inclusive settings, self-contained classrooms, and early intervention or preschool programs. Availability depends on your location, and sometimes parents must work with local school authorities to find appropriate options.

Public schools are legally required to provide a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, with necessary services for success. Parental involvement is essential—look for teachers with a Master's in deaf education when possible.

Early intervention and preschool programs, often run by public schools, health agencies, or private organizations, focus on language, communication, social skills, signing, and speech. Be aware that some educators working with birth-to-three children may only have general special education training.

Each setting has pros and cons, so it's important to choose the right fit and regularly monitor your child's academic and social development.

### **What is ADA?**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities, including deaf and hard of hearing people. There are four sections in the law: employment, government, public accommodations, and telecommunications. Each section of the ADA lists services that should be provided for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

The ADA adds more protection to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability or have a relationship or association with an individual with a disability. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

### **Are doctors required to provide interpreters for medical visits and other medical-related situations?**

Yes. This is covered under the Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If you feel that you need an interpreter in order to understand what your doctor/health care provider is telling you, then the doctor/health care provider is required to provide you with one. It is best to contact your doctor/health care provider directly and tell them, before your appointment, that you need an interpreter. Do not hire your own interpreter and expect the doctor/health care provider to pay your interpreter for you. You may run into problems that way. The doctor/health care provider must pay for the cost of an interpreter, even if the cost of the interpreter is more than the cost of your visit.

The doctor/health care provider is expected to handle the cost of interpreter as a normal business expense or as part of the overhead costs of operating a business. If your doctor/health care provider tries to encourage you to bring in a signing family member or a friend as a way to "save costs", say no. Family members and friends can not be expected to be neutral and sign everything they hear. They may be emotionally or personally involved with you and this may affect their interpreting. Using them as interpreters can also cause problems in maintaining your confidentiality as a patient.

## **What are Closed Captions?**

Captions are text superimposed over video for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing viewers. Closed captions are hidden (encoded) as data within the video signal and must be decoded to be visible. Captions are designed to convey on and off screen sound effects, speaker identifications and other information helpful to deaf and hard of hearing people. Viewers access captions via built-in decoder chips in television sets purchased since 1993, or in older sets, via a set-top decoding device.

## **What is TTY (or TDD)? It's Terminology?**

TTY (teletype equipment) is also sometimes called TDD (tele device for the Deaf). Don't be confused - they all refer to the same thing.

Some TTYs are designed as specialized voice-carry-over (VCO) phones to make this method of communication more convenient. Two-line VCO enables individuals to communicate naturally through a relay service, without necessitating taking turns. Hard of hearing people can listen to their party and read the text of what they are saying at the same time. One needs to be familiar with TTY terminology (common wordings) in order to communicate with the deaf.

Since the deaf person can not hear, one needs to establish turn in communicating back and forth. When you talk with another person by TTY, you type while the other person reads. When you want the other person to respond, type GA for "Go ahead." To say goodbye, type GA OR SK. This gives the other person a chance to say any last words before ending the conversation. Type SKSK to end the conversation. Some people prefer to type Q instead of a question mark because it saves time and is easier to type. There are similar abbreviated words, such as: CD (could), CUL (see you later), CUZ (because), HD (hold), MTG (meeting), NBR (number), OIC (oh, I see), OPR (operator), PLS (please), R (are), SHD (should), THX (thanks), TMW (tomorrow), U (you) and UR (your).

## **How do I contact a deaf person or hard of hearing if I don't have a TTY?**

If you are hearing and have never used the TTY relay service before, relax: call the Mississippi Relay Service at 1-800-855-1000. Communication assistants at TTY relay service are always happy to answer your questions about how to use their service. Usual long distance phone charges do, however, still apply, whether you are using your local relay service or the relay service in the state of the person you are calling.

## **How does a deaf person know when he is receiving a phone call or visitor?**

There is a device that is hooked up to the phone and to a lamp; when the phone rings, the lamp will blink alerting the deaf person. It is called a Visual Ring Signaler (VRS). When someone rings the doorbell, it will signal a light to flash on and off to alert the deaf person inside the dwelling that someone is at the front door. There are different variations of how the lamps will blink so that it is not confusing to the deaf person... is it the phone or the door? One may blink on and off real fast, the other may flash on and off in a short rhythmic pattern, or they can be hooked up to different lamps in different areas of the dwelling.

## **What is American Sign Language?**

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complex visual-spatial language that is used by the Deaf community in the U.S. It is a linguistically complete and natural language of many Deaf men and women, as well as some hearing children (CODAs) born into Deaf families.

ASL shares no grammatical similarities to English and should not be considered in any way to be a broken, mimed or gestural form of English. In terms of syntax, for example, ASL has a topic-comment syntax, while English uses Subject-Object-Verb. ASL has a very complex grammar; it has its own morphology (rules for the creation of words), phonetics (rules for handshapes), grammar that are very unlike those found in spoken languages. Facial features, hand gestures, eyebrow motion and lip-mouth movement are significant components to form a crucial part of the ASL, along with the use of proper space surrounding the signer to describe places or persons.

## **What is American Sign Language? Cont.**

Approximately one-half million Deaf people in the U.S. and Canada now use ASL. By far, the best way to learn ASL is through a course taught by a Deaf person. If you live in the vicinity of a school for the Deaf, they also usually offer classes for learning ASL. Also, many community colleges do offer ASL courses. Finally, the best way to start is to pick up your yellow pages and call your local community colleges or residential school for the Deaf.

## **Are there any videos that I can purchase to learn how to sign?**

There are a great number of videos for sign language instruction. However, they are designed to be used in the classroom by a teacher. American Sign Language (ASL) is a 3-D language and is best learned in a 3-D environment!

## **Where can I learn basic sign language?**

There are some day/evening classes being offered of this kind; you can acquire more details from the residential deaf school or the Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Some similar classes are offered for employers who have deaf coworkers, or emergency medical technicians; some classes are for personal growth or interest. It is important for you to socialize and interact within the deaf community to improve your signing and receptive skills.

## **What is Deaf Culture?**

Culture results from a group of people coming together to form a community around shared experience, common interests, shared norms of behavior, and shared survival techniques. Such groups as the deaf, seek each other out for social interaction and emotional support. The essential link to Deaf Culture among the Deaf community is American Sign Language (ASL).

This community shares a common sense of pride in their Culture and language. Mastery of ASL and skillful storytelling are highly valued in Deaf Culture. Through ASL literature, one generation passes on to the next its wisdom, values, and its pride and thus reinforces the bonds that unite the younger generation. These residential schools provide a vital link in the transmission of Deaf Culture and ASL. Children are able to communicate in a language readily understood by each other. Deaf children are able to partake in social clubs, sports, and importantly enough, to be around deaf role models.

## **Where is the Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing located?**

From Pearl, Brandon, Meridian (East MS) to ODHH:

I-20 West towards Jackson

Merge onto I-55 North towards Grenada - go about 10 miles

Take Exit #104 (West Jackson/I-220 S)

Take Exit #8 (Watkins Drive)

Turn left onto Watkins Drive, Turn Right onto Beasley Road (2nd red light)

Go straight at 4-way stop, Two-story building on left side across from CINTAS

From Biloxi, Gulfport, Magee, Florence (South MS) to ODHH:

Hwy 49 North towards Jackson

Merge onto I-20 West via the ramp (new bridge)

Merge onto I-55 North towards Grenada - go about 10 miles

Take Exit #104 (West Jackson/I-220 S)

Take Exit #8 (Watkins Drive)

Turn left onto Watkins Drive, Turn Right onto Beasley Road (2nd red light)

Go straight at 4-way stop, Two-story building on left side across from CINTAS

## **Where is the Office on Deaf and Hard of Hearing located? Cont.**

From Edwards, Vicksburg (West MS) to ODHH:

I-20 East towards Jackson

Merge onto I-220 N via Exit #41 (North Jackson/Yazoo City)

Take Exit #8 (Watkins Drive)

Turn RIGHT onto Watkins Drive, Turn RIGHT on Beasley Road

Go straight at 4-way stop, building will be on the LEFT (across from CINTAS)

From Oxford (North MS) to ODHH:

I-55 South towards Jackson

Take Exit #104 (West Jackson/I-220 S)

Take Exit #8 (Watkins Drive)

Turn Left onto Watkins Drive, Turn Right onto Beasley Road (2nd red light)

Go straight at 4-way stop, Two-story building on left side across from CINTAS

From Starkville (North MS) to ODHH:

Hwy 25 West towards Jackson

Turn Right on Frontage Road, Take left ramp to get onto I-55 North>br> Take Exit #104 (West Jackson/I-220 S)

Take Exit #8 (Watkins Drive)

Turn Left onto Watkins Drive, Turn Right onto Beasley Road (2nd red light)

Go straight at 4-way stop, Two-story building on left side across from CINTAS