

Communication Methods Used by Individuals Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Individuals with hearing loss generally have a preference for communicating and could use one or more of the methods listed. The method preferred is usually influenced by, but not limited to, the age of onset and type of hearing loss. When a Deaf or Hard of Hearing child enters an educational setting, the child's communication choice may change. As education progresses, an individual might choose other methods of communicating, depending on who he/she is communicating with. Some individuals move within the continuum of methods to enhance communication.

American Sign Language (ASL) – A fully developed, autonomous, natural language with a unique grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and cultural heritage; the gestures, visual components, and structures of which are neither derived from English, nor a simplified version of English. It is not used simultaneously with voiced English. Used by Deaf adults, hearing children of Deaf adults, and Deaf children. For ASL users, English is considered a second language.

Contact Language, formerly known as Pidgin Sign English (PSE) – A combination of ASL and Manual English. Usually signed in English word order and can be used simultaneously with voiced English. It borrows a great many signs from ASL. PSE is used by Deaf people and hearing people to communicate with each other in social and formal situations. Often said to bridge the gap between Deaf and hearing people.

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State of North Carolina • Pat McCrory, Governor
Department of Health and Human Services • Aldona Z. Wos, M.D., Secretary
Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing
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Signing Exact English (SEE) – Follows English exactly, using word order and grammatical markers such as endings, suffixes and prefixes, and can be used simultaneously with voiced English. SEE is a visual system that exposes Deaf children to English on the hands in formal situations and is rarely used by Deaf adults.

Auditory Verbal Unisensory – Teaches an individual to develop listening and verbal skills through one-on-one therapy. Attention is focused on the use of residual hearing with or without the aid of amplification. This method strives to make the most of the individual's auditory and verbal skills.

Cued Speech – Makes spoken English or language visible, provides cued phonemes and is sound-based, uses eight hand shapes (cues) in four locations in combination with the natural mouth movements of speech to make all sounds of spoken language look different. This system allows the individual to distinguish sounds that look the same on the lips.

Oral Auditory – An approach that teaches and encourages an individual to make maximum use of their residual hearing through amplification: hearing aid, cochlear implant, assistive listening devices (ALDs). This program stresses the use of speech reading and communication through the use of voice.

Website sources: nad.org, deafness.about.com/cs/signfeats2/a/pidginisign, beginningssvcs.com

How to contact us:

We have seven Regional Centers throughout the state to assist you with your needs. Please contact the center nearest you for assistance.

DSDHH's phone listing uses the following abbreviations:

V – voice (for people who do not use telephone assistive equipment)

TTY – phone equipment

(for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind people)

VP – video phone

(for people who use sign language to communicate)

Asheville:

12 Barbetta Drive • Asheville, NC 28806
828-665-8733 V • 828-333-5830 VP
828-665-8737 TTY • 800-681-8035 TTY
800-681-7998 V • 828-670-5054 Fax

Charlotte:

5501 Executive Center Dr., Suite 200 • Charlotte, NC 28212
704-568-8558 V • 704-918-1554 VP
704-568-8505 TTY • 800-835-5302 V
800-835-5306 TTY • 704-568-9615 Fax

Greensboro:

122 North Elm Street, Suite 900 • Greensboro, NC 27401
336-273-9692 V/TTY • 336-429-5644 VP
888-467-3413 V/TTY • 336-256-0689 Fax

Morganton:

107 Foothills Drive • Morganton, NC 28655
828-430-7185 V • 828-475-6606 VP
828-430-7192 TTY • 800-999-8915 V
800-205-9920 TTY • 828-430-7193 Fax

Raleigh:

4900 Waters Edge Drive • Raleigh, NC 27606
919-859-8526 V (Main) • 800-999-5737 V (Main)
919-233-7082 TTY • 919-890-0858 VP
919-233-7083 Fax

Wilmington:

3340 Jaeckle Drive, The Randall Bldg., Suite 104
Wilmington, NC 28403
910-251-5702 V • 910-777-5770 VP
910-251-5767 TTY • 800-205-9915 V
800-205-9916 TTY • 910-251-2677 Fax

Wilson:

2705 Wooten Blvd. • Wilson, NC 27893
252-243-3104 V • 252-674-1141 VP
252-243-1951 TTY • 800-999-6828 V
800-205-9925 TTY • 252-243-7634 Fax

Home Office:

919-874-2212 V/TTY • 919-890-0859 VP
800-851-6099 V/TTY • 919-855-6872 Fax

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