

## Everybody Everywhere

New places and activities can sometimes make your child feel anxious or excited. Some children have trouble with transitioning from the house to a destination, or to a new activity. It is important for children to go to new places and to be able to experience new things. Hearing loss causes a smaller listening bubble and reduces the amount of incidental language learning that a child will hear. It is said that about 80% of vocabulary is learned from overhearing – or incidental learning. Often children with hearing loss struggle with transitions and new experiences because they don't know what to expect, or understand why things are happening to them, or around them. There are several ways you can help to prepare your child for a new experience.

Some ideas include but are not limited to:

- Discuss with your child the events and activities planned for the day and week.
- Prepare your child for where you are going by reading a book or look online for visuals to show your child.
- Explaining what you and your child will do, expectations, and time frames.
- Share thoughts about the people, the place, and the sights and sounds. Afterwards, discuss all the new things you saw, heard, and did.

Before you begin, take a moment to consider the environment and what will work best for your child based on their specific hearing needs.

Is hearing assistive technology (hearing aids, cochlear implant, SoftBand hearing aid, Bone Anchored Hearing Aid, Mini-Mic, Roger technology) being worn and working properly?

Does your child need to see your face while communicating?

Try to create an optimal listening environment. Sit or stand where your child has access to your face, sounds, and signs. Where possible, reduce background noise and distractions (dishwasher running, a room fan, the television on, etc.).

**Tips: \*\*Pick one or a few of these tips to focus on each time you play.**

- -Encourage communication by talking or signing (or use both) while you do an activity.
- 
- -Explain the order in which you will do things. It might help to create a visual list or to use a calendar for your child to see.
-

- - Use time markers such as first, then, last, yesterday, today, tomorrow, morning, evening, afternoon, etc.
- 
- - Introduce vocabulary for days of the week, names of months, and holidays/seasons.
- 
- - Narrate what you are doing while you are doing an activity.
- 
- - Practice turn taking, making requests, and eye contact. Watch for anticipation from your child and practice waiting for your child to make requests or to ask questions.
- 
- - Help your child to make associations with past or future experiences. Examples: "We came here last week when we bought your new shoes". "We will play here again tomorrow".
- 
- - Take pictures and/or make an experience book to help your child reference, connect, and remember activities, people, places and experiences. (<https://parentingchaos.com/how-to-make-an-experience-book/>)
- 
- **Repetition is key to building language - so have fun doing this activity many times this month as you plan and go places!**