

Intermediate School District #917
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Early Childhood Program
English Language Development

The following pertains to children whose parents have established early amplification for their child and desire the development of receptive and expressive spoken English as the first language of their child.

D/HH Early Childhood Program Goal: Speaking and understanding spoken English

Program Philosophy/Program Description: We are an auditory/oral program that simultaneously provides phonemic information through cued English.

We recognize that the debate about whether adding visual information (cueing) to spoken language somehow compromises the auditory development of the learner will never be settled.

Our experience as educators has shown us that...

- by focusing on a child's auditory development on an individual basis with intensity at an early age, we can establish listening as an avenue for learning.
- after auditory access has been established through consistent use of appropriate amplification and after listening skills are developed through systematic, increasingly complex listening activities and experiences, the auditory mode becomes the dominant sensory modality for most children because they live with hearing parents who fill their lives with fluent models of spoken English.
- by supplementing the auditory information of spoken English with the phonemic visual information of cued English so that phonemic level information is made available to both a child's auditory and visual systems, we can help children develop spoken English to their full potential without taking away from their auditory skill development or functioning; in fact, in some cases, we have seen auditory functioning that was plateauing actually increase following implementing cued English into the child's program.
- using cued English simultaneously with spoken English at school (or elsewhere) does not take away from the child's initial and continued reliance on listening.
- as children's language level progresses, the phonemic discrimination complexities increase. Using simultaneous spoken and cued English does not allow that complexity to become a barrier to the rate and efficacy of English language acquisition, and
- as children progress through school into the elementary level, issues of noise, distance, and group size as barriers to communication can be most efficiently addressed through a combination of technology (FMs, sound field systems, CI programs, HA settings) and cued English access.

Therefore, our Deaf/Hard of Hearing Early Childhood program staff

- typically uses spoken English with the students, and
- makes the visual information of cued English consistently available in the 3-4 year old classroom and beyond, and earlier per parent/team determination.