



## Exploring Communication Choices: Cued Speech

Families who have just had a child diagnosed with hearing loss often have many questions about how their child will be able to communicate. There are four main ways, or roads, to communicate with children who have limited or no hearing. One of those roads is Cued Speech.

Learning to communicate is a journey. At the end of that journey, most families want their child to be a successful communicator and learner.

**Your task:** Learning about hearing loss and its possible impact on listening and communicating is unexpected for most families. In some ways it's similar to being told you need to make an unexpected trip. Your trip needs to start as soon as possible and it will take time to get there. There are several different roads and all of the roads are available to you and your family on this journey. Some roads may be more difficult or may really slow down; other roads may be much easier for your child and family. You can start down one road and then switch to another road if it helps your child. Your task is to figure out which road you want to take first. There will always be mile markers so you know where you are and people to ask for directions along the way.

**Which road?** Each road is a different way you can share thoughts, ideas and feelings with your child. Each way will take extra effort by you and your family because a child with hearing loss needs help if they are to learn language well.

### **What to think about as you plan your route:**

1. How much can your child hear? Can he hear at all?
2. How important is it to you that your child learns to speak clearly?
3. How important is it to you for your child to sign or communicate visually?
4. Are you willing to learn a new language or a new way of communicating that you would use whenever you are with your child?

### **CUED SPEECH as a route to communication development**

- Uses handshapes that stand for phonemes, or the sounds that are the building blocks of spoken language (la, dee, sho, kay, etc.).
- There are eight different handshapes. Each handshape represents consonant sounds (b, d, s, t, etc.).

- There are eight different positions or locations next to the mouth. Each location is for a different vowel sound (a, e, i, o, u). The handshape and location together represent syllables (ba, ti, sha).
- Gives a way for people to see English (or any other language).
- The handshapes show the sounds that can't be seen on the face or lips.
- Children who use Cued Speech attend many different types of school classes, based on their individual needs. Specially-trained Cued Speech Translitterators may cue a teacher's instruction to a child who is in regular classes or when communicating with others who do not know Cued Speech.

### **What to think about as you plan your route: Cued Speech**

1. **HEARING:** Cued Speech is a way of visually showing each of the speech sound combinations through hand shapes made close to the mouth that help the child to speechread others. Many children who use Cued Speech to help them learn spoken language usually have *some* hearing and use hearing aids and/or cochlear implants. Other children, who may use sign language most of the time, may use Cued Speech to help them learn to read a written language. Cued Speech, by itself, does not *require* any hearing.
2. **SPEECH:** Making the most use of a child's hearing plus being able to see speech can be very helpful to developing understandable speech. The child will *usually* be expected to talk at the same time they are cueing. If the child's speech becomes easy to understand, then he or she may stop cueing. People will still need to cue when they talk to the child.

Children who receive cochlear implant(s) may benefit from Cued Speech because it will help them make sure of what they are hearing as they are learning to listen and understand sound through the implant(s). Sometimes, Cued Speech is used to help children learn to read if they are not able to clearly hear all the sounds of printed words. Even if children are using sign language instead of speech to communicate most of the time, they may still benefit from the addition of Cued Speech to help them visually learn about the sounds of printed words.

3. **VISUAL COMMUNICATION:** Cued Speech is a visual form of communication. It is not a stand-alone way to communicate visually – speech at the same time is required.

4. **FAMILY MEMBERS LEARNING A NEW WAY TO COMMUNICATE:** Everyone around the child will need to cue what they are saying so that the child will be fully exposed to language. Babies will learn any language that is used around them all the time, every day. Babies that live with family members who cue, will learn language visually through cued speech.

### **Cued Speech:**

The main goal of Cued Speech is to learn all of the building blocks of speech well enough to learn to read easily. Cued Speech:

- Does NOT require any hearing or speech.
- Is NOT a language.
- DOES show the phonemes (consonants and vowels) of spoken languages visually.
- Requires the hand and mouth to move at the same time to send a complete message.
- IS a visual mode of communication.
- Has been adapted to more than sixty languages and dialects.
- Has basic handshapes and positions that can be learned at a weekend workshop
- Takes practice to do quickly so the rate of talking is not slowed down

### **Other Questions to Ask in Your Community**

1. Do other families of children with hearing loss use Cued Speech where you live? Is there someone that works with your local school district Help Me Grow program that can help your family to learn Cued Speech? Are there children currently in your school district who are learning through the use of Cued Speech in their classrooms?
2. Where can you go to learn Cued Speech?
3. What do other parents of children with hearing loss and professionals who specialize in helping children who are deaf or hard of hearing say about these local services?

Your early intervention professional, your child's audiologist, or the deaf and hard of hearing teachers in your school district should be able to give you names of parents who have already gotten answers to these questions.

### **Remember**

- **Each family is different.**  
There isn't a "right" choice for all children or all families. Each child needs different things. Parents are also different, and have their own hopes for their

children. Some families choose one main way of communicating while other families make other choices.

- **Be flexible.**

Follow your child's lead. You may feel stressed out over choosing one of the communication choices. Some parents even combine ways of communicating. It's important to be flexible. Give one method your best effort. If it doesn't work, be open to trying other ways to communicate.

### **Related Information**

To view an example of Cued Speech go to <http://www.cuedspeech.org/> <object width="480" height="385"><param name="movie" value="http://www.youtube.com/v/B9emmTMswkE?fs=1&hl=en\_US"></param><param name="allowFullScreen" value="true"></param><param name="allowscriptaccess" value="always"></param><embed src="http://www.youtube.com/v/B9emmTMswkE?fs=1&hl=en\_US" type="application/x-shockwave-flash" allowscriptaccess="always" allowfullscreen="true" width="480" height="385"></embed></object>

Source: National Cued Speech Association

- National Cued Speech Association  
<http://www.cuedspeech.org/>
- Beginnings for Parents: Cued Speech  
[http://www.ncbegin.org/communication\\_options/cued\\_speech.shtml](http://www.ncbegin.org/communication_options/cued_speech.shtml)
- Parent Pals – Educating Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing using Cued Speech  
<http://parentpals.com/gossamer/pages/Detailed/594.html>
- Family Support Connection: Should I learn sign language, cued English, or any other communication system?  
<http://www.familysupportconnection.org/html/HOHissues.htm>
- Raising Deaf Kids: Cued Speech: Learning to Use Handshapes that Stand for Sound  
<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/communicating/choices/cued.php>

Consonants		Vowels		
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><i>/d, p, ʒ/</i> deep azure</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><i>/m, f, t/</i> miffed</p>	<p>Monophthongs</p>		
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><i>/ð, k, v, z/</i> the caves</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><i>/w, l, ʃ/</i> Welsh</p>	<p><b>Mouth</b></p> <p><i>/i, e, æ/</i> fir tree</p>	<p><b>Side</b></p> <p><i>/ʌ, ə, o, ɑ/</i> Aloha</p>	<p><b>Side-throat</b></p> <p><i>/aɪ, aʊ/</i> time out</p>
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><i>/r, h, s/</i> rehearse</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p><i>/θ, g, dʒ/</i> thug Joe</p>	<p><b>Chin</b></p> <p><i>/u, ʊ, ε/</i> too tall</p>	<p><b>Throat</b></p> <p><i>/ʊ, æ, ɪ/</i> look at it</p>	<p><b>Chin-throat</b></p> <p><i>/ɔɪ, eɪ/</i> Oy vay!</p>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><i>/b, m, n/</i> by when</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><i>/j, ŋ, tʃ/</i> young church</p>			

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Developed by Karen L. Anderson, PhD for the Minnesota Department of Education Parents Know website, 2011 (<http://parentsknow.state.mn.us> ).