



INCLUSION

Ideas for how to include your Deaf or Hard of Hearing family members during family gatherings, holidays, or events.

EXPLAIN IN ADVANCE

- Explain to your Deaf child what will happen *in advance*. This will help them understand new experiences better. If you don't know all the signs, try to learn them or use pictures.
- For example, say, "Tomorrow we will drive to the airport to pick up Grandma and Grandpa." Explain using ASL and/or pictures (depending on the age of the child) to show airport and the grandparents.
- Another example: "Next week is Christmas! We will drive 2 hours to Aunt Jane's house for a big dinner with turkey and pie. You will see your cousins Joe and Jim." Use ASL and/or pictures to show Christmas, drive, 2 hours, and pictures of food and the relatives.



PICTURES

- Use pictures! Show your child pictures of people who will attend your gathering that are labeled with people's names (Grandma, Aunt Sally, Cousin Fred). (Thanks to Jamie Saunders for this idea!)
- Take pictures! During the gathering, take a picture of your child with each person attending. Then, share with pictures with your child (digital or print) with captions identifying the person's name. This will help the child have a stronger connection to review and remember.



INVOLVE IN PREPARATION

- Involve your Deaf or Hard of Hearing child in preparing for the gathering. Have them help make a recipe, set the table, decorate, etc.
- Try giving them specific tasks, like being responsible for filling glasses with ice or greeting people at the door.
- If your child is older and will feel comfortable interacting, have them “take orders” for drinks, using ASL or written on paper/white board.
- Ask them what they would like to do to help—give them a chance to express their preferences.



COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- If there are people who do not know ASL attending your event, encourage them to use writing by providing notepads and pens or a white board with dry erase markers.
- You can also use speech-to-text apps such as Google Live Transcribe, Ava, App MyEar, Subtitles Viewer Live, Dragon Anywhere, and more. Some newer cell phones have this feature built-in as well!
- Brush up on your own ASL skills by taking a class in person, learning online (ASL University, Gallaudet Connect, SignOn, many more), or with an app (ASL App, ASL Dictionary, Marlee Signs, many more!).



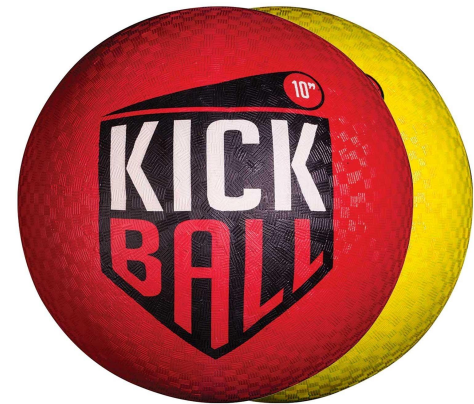
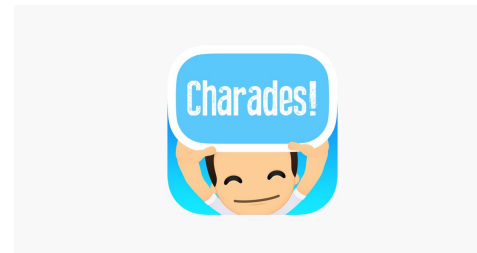
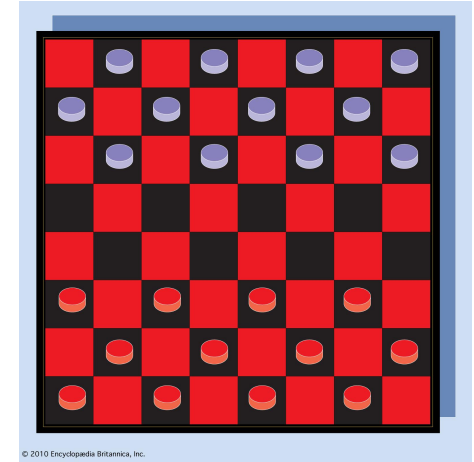
DRAGON



THE ASL APP
AVAILABLE ON ANDROID & IOS

GAMES

- Games that are non-verbal or physical can be great fun for everyone. Try some of these:
 - Charades
 - Monopoly
 - Checkers or chess
 - Scrabble
 - Foosball
 - Stratego
 - Uno
 - Apples to Apples
 - Memory
 - Outdoor games like kickball or tag



CAPTIONS

- Make sure your TV is already set to show captions before your gathering begins.
- Watching a movie together can be fun—pop some popcorn, sit back and enjoy a visually-interesting movie (lots of action). Or choose a movie with Deaf actors and ASL! There are lots of great ones out there!



ENVIRONMENT

- Create a visual-friendly environment. Try not to have huge centerpieces on the table that prevent people from seeing each other. Use good lighting. Make sure bright sunlight is not casting strong shadows on people's faces or shining right into a Deaf person's eyes.





GESTURES

If you don't know how to sign, try using gestures to aid communication.

BACKGROUND NOISE

- Background noise can bother many people, be they Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Hearing! Try to reduce background noise (loud music, TV blaring, traffic sounds through an open window, loud washing machine, etc.). This will help people who use hearing aids or cochlear implants—and older adults who may be experiencing hearing loss as they age.



DON'T GIVE UP!

- Whatever you do, don't give up! Keep trying different ways to make sure Deaf and Hard of Hearing family members are always included. Phrases like, "I'll tell you later" or "never mind" can be hurtful and cause people to feel excluded.



RESOURCES

- Looking for ASL resources? Visit the Georgia School for the Deaf website! Look under the “Families” menu for “ASL and Deaf Resources.”
- <https://www.gsdweb.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2100>

