



## Parent Tip Sheet

# Language Pragmatics

**T**he social aspects of language, called pragmatics, include the ability to state needs, give commands, and express feelings.

For children to develop social relationships and negotiate their social environment, pragmatic language skills are necessary. Using language to interact appropriately with others, to understand and share their knowledge and imagination is vital to a child's language and social development.

Two aspects of language that are often the most difficult for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are 1) pragmatic language development and 2) expressive syntax (sentence structure). Even when your child may understand and can say the same amount of words at the same age as other children; and you can understand what your child says/signs, he or she may have not yet developed these skills.

After children have mastered basic skills to be understandable (phonology), have enough vocabulary (semantics), and sentence structure (syntax), children will use this combined knowledge to reach social goals.



- ✓ Identify daily opportunities for your child to state his or her needs; give commands; and express feelings.
- ✓ Model and foster using language to interact with others; request and provide explanations; and demonstrate shared understanding.
- ✓ Provide your child with the language to express their needs.
- ✓ Ask your child to teach the family how to play a game.
- ✓ Help your child understand the differences regarding appropriate social language for adults and peers, as well as familiar and new communication partners.
- ✓ Dig deeper into your child's understanding of social situations.
- ✓ Ask your child to tell you stories about things you, as the parent already know, to help with missing pieces.
- ✓ Tell jokes, say absurd things, play with humor and sarcasm.
- ✓ Ask questions using the 5 W/H words (What, Where, When, Why, How) instead of just yes or no questions.
- ✓ Follow your child's lead and pace in conversational turn-taking.



\*Share these with your Early Intervention providers/parent to parent support providers who have experience with children who are deaf or hard of hearing and discuss ideas on how to implement these tips with your child. <https://handsandvoices.org/fl3/topics/tipsheets.html>

"This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number UJ1MC30748-01-00 for Family Leadership In Language And Learning for \$1,500,00.00 This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government."