

# **Communication Options**

## **Aural-Oral Communication**

Aural-Oral Communication places the emphasis on the use of speech, residual hearing and in some cases, speechreading (lipreading.) Early identification of hearing loss, consistent use of optimal amplification during all waking hours, assistive listening devices or use of cochlear implants is critical to following this philosophy since the child needs to understand the spoken word.

Auditory-Oral approach combines speech, use of residual hearing and speechreading. The child will be trained to use his or her hearing and develop expressive speech. The goal of this approach is to have the child mainstreamed into the child's regular school *after* having completed an oral deaf/hard of hearing special education program.

Auditory-Verbal is a method that has many of the same traits as the Auditory-Oral approach; however, it does *not* emphasize speechreading. The child is taught to listen first and is not required to look at the speaker's mouth for information. Often, the child is mainstreamed from the start in a typical preschool rather than a special self-contained oral program.

## **Manual Communication**

Manual Communication is conducted through use of a visual/gestural communication, which can be accompanied by speech or used alone. There are huge differences between the various languages and systems that are sometimes grouped together as "sign language." The following should help clarify these differences:

American Sign Language (ASL) is the visual/gestural language used by many people in the Deaf community in the United States and Canada. It is a language itself and not a visual representation of English. It has its own grammar and syntax and incorporates the use of facial expressions and body movements. Speaking while using ASL is virtually impossible because it does not follow English word order.

In order to properly acquire ASL skills, it is necessary to take classes and gain exposure to native signers. Supporters of a bilingual/bicultural approach to learning believe that ASL is a deaf child's natural language and English should be introduced as a second language.

Pidgin Signed English (PSE) is the use of ASL signs, but in English word order. Not all the English words are represented. It is used typically so that speech can accompany the use of sign. This is considered a form of simultaneous communication (sim-com) or sometimes referred to as Total Communication (TC).

Signed English, Seeing Essential English (SEE I), and Signing Exact English (SEE II) are all systems referred to as Manually Coded English. They were developed to visually represent each English word in its correct tense through signs and invented gestures. The theory is that by showing each English word, children will have an easier time learning to read and write in English.

## **Cued Speech**

Cued Speech is a visual communication system that breaks down English syllable by syllable to visually represent what is being spoken. Since not all speech can be easily understood by speechreading alone, Cued Speech makes visual distinctions between easily confused mouth movements. This method can be used to cue any spoken language. Cued Speech was designed to enhance literacy in deaf children by exposing them to the phonetics of language.