

Cued Speech for American English

Visually providing the building blocks needed for communication, language development, and literacy.



/d, p, zh/



/ee, ur/



/k, TH, v, z/



/aw, e, ue/



/h, r, s/



/a, i, oo/



/b, n, wh/



consonant alone



/f, m, t/
vowel alone



1/2" - 3/4" down
/uh/



/l, sh, w/



1" forward
/ah, oe/



/g, j, th/



/ay, oi/



/ch, ng, y/



/ie, ou/

Cued Speech can provide an avenue for you to convey the language of your home to your child who is deaf or hard-of-hearing as soon as a hearing loss has been identified. How and when should you introduce cued English to your very young child? The short answer is *immediately*.

Once a hearing loss has been identified, you can learn how to cue and begin cueing just as you would speak to a hearing baby. As a baby is cooed over and cuddled, you can begin the process of teaching language to your child simply by cueing all you say.

Parents who are deaf and already know how to cue are at an advantage as they will naturally begin cueing immediately on the birth of their child, whether the baby is hearing or deaf. Any child can acquire the language of the home from the parents using Cued Speech. The sooner and more consistently your child is cued to, the more likely she will begin imitating cues and start cueing and communicating with you and others.

Why should I cue with my baby?

For many parents, the language of the home is spoken. If you are one of these families, cueing is a way for you to visually convey your natural “family” language to your child who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. Cueing enables you to communicate with all members of the family simultaneously, without switching between languages.

Reading and literacy development are also important to all parents. Early cueing allows children to absorb and understand the different phonemes, or sounds, that make up their native language. They will naturally develop one critical factor of “emergent literacy,” or reading readiness: phonemic awareness. With Cued Speech, you can provide your child with a language-rich environment that makes it easier to communicate all the things in their world.

How old does a child need to be in order to cue to her?

You can cue to your child from birth, just as you would speak or sign to her from birth.

Will cueing help my child learn to listen and use spoken language?

Yes! Cued Speech is a perfect partner in the journey toward getting your child to speak and use her hearing. Cueing to your child enables her to see the pronunciation of words and clarifies sounds that are difficult to distinguish

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through vision (for example: /m, b, p/) and through hearing (for example: /b, d, g/). By establishing a strong language base in your child through cueing, speaking with correct grammar and a high level of vocabulary will come naturally and listening will become much easier because your child can anticipate what she is listening for.

Does my child need hearing in order to cue? Can I cue to a child who is profoundly deaf?

Cued Speech was originally intended for use with children who are profoundly deaf or have no usable residual hearing. These children thrive on the visual access to language that cueing can provide. In addition, cueing has proved to be effective for children who are hard-of-hearing, helping to clarify auditory information in noisy situations and providing visual confirmation of difficult to hear words and word endings. Hearing children with speech, language, and/or auditory processing problems can also gain tremendous benefit from cueing.

What/when should I cue to my baby?

Ideally, you would cue *everything* that you say during the normal course of your day. However, as you first learn to cue that may not be possible. Pick some “routine” parts of your day to cue consistently—during mealtimes, diaper-changing or toilet training, running errands, bath time, bedtime, and at the grocery store, as well as during playtime or other special family occasions/outings. The goal is to cue whenever you talk. Don’t worry if your baby is not looking directly at you at first; she will eventually realize that what you’re doing is communicating and start paying attention.

Research in language development shows that babies learn words used in isolation first. This is good news for parents new to cueing. Cueing one word (such as *ball*) and building upon it (*red ball* or *little red ball*) is helpful and a natural process for language development in young children.

How can I become fluent so that I can cue to my baby quickly?

The short answer is—*practice, practice, practice!* One way to increase your speed is to write down a list of some things that you say to your baby each day and practice those until you can cue them easily and quickly.

For example, you can cue the words *mother, father, grandma, grandpa*, as well as the names of other family members, including brothers, sisters and family pets, and close friends and relatives that the child interacts with regularly. You can also cue the names of common foods and household items (*milk, juice, cereals, water, eggs, cheese, chicken, apples, coat/jacket, bottles, cup, spoon*, etc.), favorite toys (*ball, bear, baby*) and so forth.

Words and phrases in your repertoire that are quick and easy to cue will increase your overall speed as you add “unfamiliar” words to your child’s language. Common phrases might include the following:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| “It’s time for...” | (bed, nap, lunch, dinner) |
| “Do you want...” | (juice, blankie) |
| “Where is...” | (Daddy? Mommy? the kitty?) |
| “I see ...” | (your nose, a plane, a tree) |

Will my baby cue back to me? When?

Yes, your baby should be able to approximate some cues back to you after a while. The time frame of when a baby might begin to cue has not yet been definitively established. There is some research in progress now that seems to suggest that a baby might develop some cue approximations or baby cues at the same time that hearing babies begin to speak or deaf babies begin to sign back to their parents, which is typically between 9 and 18 months of age.

Cueing, just like signing, requires some manual dexterity and fine motor skills which may impact your baby's ability to perfectly convey the entire system while they are first cueing. Children who are hearing often have approximations or mispronunciations in their speech for difficult-to-produce sounds through the age of six or seven. Cueing children will experience the same need to offer an approximation for a cue and develop expressive skills over time as you encourage him to cue.

You can encourage expressive cueing in your child by looking for approximations and reinforcing the use of them. For example, a child might tap his throat or chest area with his pointer finger to indicate *daddy* and use an open hand at the throat to indicate *mommy*. All babies offer approximations of speech; observant parents will be able to identify cue babbling and attempts and can encourage their use as the baby's skills develop. Anecdotal evidence shows that babies will likely cue words with the easiest handshapes (5, 1, 6) and/or use one or two primary locations before correctly moving from one location to another.

Will my baby speak when she cues?

If you speak and cue, then your child is likely to speak and cue. If you choose to cue without using your voice, then your child won't use her voice either. It is possible to cue and speak simultaneously. As your child learns to speak, either naturally through exposure or with the assistance of therapy, cueing will help you understand the approximations she makes as she learns to speak. Cueing shows what the target consonant and vowels are for each word and phrase. Cues can provide the "place holder" for your child as she learns to articulate difficult to produce sounds, such as /k, ng, l, y, r/.

Can my child learn to sign and cue at the same time?

Yes! Native speakers of a language provide the best models of that language. Individuals who use a spoken language can share that language via Cued Speech and those who use a signed language can sign. Because cueing uses one hand and the mouth near the face and signing uses two hands in a larger area around the body, children can easily distinguish between the two modes of communication.

Conclusion

You can provide the language of your home visually to your baby who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. Cueing will safeguard your child's language development as you explore options for early intervention and, possibly, assistive listening technology. Cueing provides the best foundation for your child's communication (including listening and spoken language), reading, and literacy development. You should encourage your child to cue as soon as possible. To provide clear and consistent exposure to language, you should cue as often as possible to your child.

Resources

- Cornett, R.O. & Daisey, M.E. (Eds.). (2000). *The Cued Speech resource book for parents of deaf children* (2nd ed.). Cleveland: National Cued Speech Association.
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