

Social-emotional development of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in relation to their caregiving environment.

Children learn and develop social-emotional skills through their interactions with others. Skills such as emotion understanding, perspective taking, empathy, and behavior regulation are important to become socially competent. Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) children are more challenged in their social interactions because of their language delays and limited opportunity for incidental social learning. The current generation of DHH children, in Western Countries, are identified early and have timely access to family-centered early intervention. Past research showed that early intervention is related to better language outcomes. In our research we examined the social-emotional development of young DHH children who benefitted from early intervention. The strengths and challenges of these children will be discussed in the presentation.

Early parent-child interactions are important for DHH children's development. Caregivers can enhance their children's language and social-emotional development by exposing them to a rich language. For example, by talking about mental states and emotions with DHH children. Further, sensitive and responsive parenting promotes children's development. We examined different aspects of parent-child interactions in young DHH children. Results on emotional availability, communicative engagement and language exposure will be presented and discussed in relation to social-emotional skills. Implications for parents and professionals to promote DHH children's social-emotional development will be discussed by presenting our research on parent-based interventions.