Indiana DeafBlind Services
INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Seeing and Hearing Support: Practical Tips for Families with Young Children

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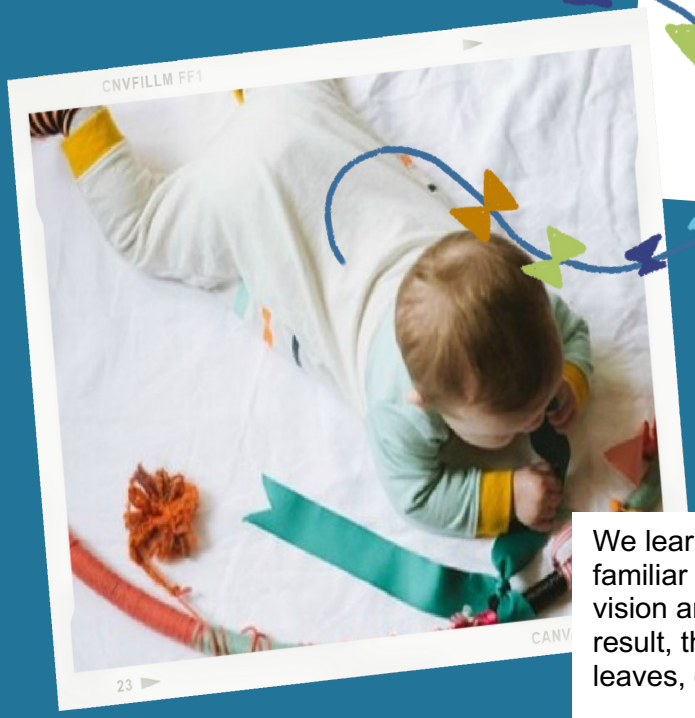

Little Moments, Big Connections:

Helping Your Child Know Who is Nearby

We learn about people through everyday activities. We recognize familiar voices, faces, gestures and routines. But your child with vision and hearing loss may miss many of these natural cues. As a result, they may not even know when someone enters the room, leaves, or wants to interact with them.

By helping your child know who is nearby, you help them feel safe and connected. Over time, your child learns that people are important, predictable, and enjoyable. She/He is more likely to enjoy shared activities, develop trust, and build relationships. As an example of one young child learning about who may be nearby, one mother shares: When Grandma visits, she lets Ava explore the large ring she wears. Over time Ava began to smile when she felt the ring and then reached for Grandma.

Some of the following ideas may help your child know who is nearby. Consider:

- Develop a special greeting for important people in your child's life. For example, Aunt Sarah gently touches your child's shoulder and then offers her hand.
- Some children recognize people through objects they regularly associate with them. For example, Grandpa's watch, Mom's bracelet, or a sibling's scrunchie.
- Let your child explore. Perhaps feel Dad's beard, Grandma's ring, a sibling's braid. These experiences help your child build a mental picture of people.
- Even if your child has limited hearing, continue talking about who is there. For example, "Your brother just came into the room, or "Aunt Sarah is leaving now."

Resources:

National Center on DeafBlindness, OHOA Modules – Social Skills and Peer relationships
www.nationaldb.org

Texas Deafblind Project Video Tutorials
https://txdeafblindproject.org/instructional-strategies/interaction-and-bonding/building-security/