



MINNESOTA
HANDS &
VOICES™

Supporting families
with children who are
deaf & hard of hearing



November-December 2018

FOCUS

Minnesota Manners and Holiday Social Cues for Children who are DHH

Parent to Parent POINTERS

Parents of young children need to have a good sense of humor for the times their child says or does surprising things in public. Just when we think they know how to behave in front of other people we realize all too late they do not. Most relatives and family friends are understanding, but there does come an age when children should have gained insight with age and have better manners. This is true for all children, but for children who are deaf and hard of hearing (dhh) they often do not pick up social cues as naturally over time. They often miss social cues and rituals surrounding gift giving and receiving and how to behave at social events. Families can take time before special events and visits from relatives to role-play and fully explain the subtleties of social norms to minimize embarrassment for both you and your child. Below are a few suggestions, but please adapted this list to include your child's age level, abilities, and to incorporate your family's culture and value system.



Dos and Don'ts of Gift Giving

- Gift and present mean the same thing.

- When you are buying presents for other people it is important to buy something the person you are buying for would like, not something you want.
- When you give someone a wrapped gift do not say what the gift is inside. Even if they ask you, do not tell them. You can say, "It's a surprise!"
- The person the present is FOR gets to unwrap the present by themselves.
- Politely watch others when they open their gifts without complaining. When it is your turn they will do the same.
- Unless your comment is positive like "cool!" or "That's awesome!" try not to make comments about gifts other people are opening. Try to be happy for others and do not pout about gifts others receive. Later you can tell mom and dad how much you liked the gift.
- Only the person who RECEIVES the present can play with the present. If the package is open and the person is done playing with it can you ask, "Can I play with it for a little while?" If they say "Yes" that is fine. If they say "No" that is fine too.
- It is not polite to announce how much a present cost or how much money was spent on the gift.
- If someone opens a card with a gift of money enclosed, it is impolite to ask how much he or she received.
- If someone opens a card with a gift

certificate or gift card enclosed, it is impolite to ask how much it is worth.



Dos and Don'ts of Gift Receiving

- When you receive a wrapped gift say thank you before you even open it. It is very nice of others to give gifts so we thank them for their thoughtfulness.
- If the gift comes with a card always open the card first. Read the card or have someone read it to you so you know who gave you the gift. If the gift giver is in the room make eye contact and smile at them.
- Open the gift with care not to break anything inside and to show appreciation for the gift-wrapping.
- Say, "Thank you" for all the gifts you receive, even if you do not like it. Or if you receive a present you already have you should also say, "Thank you." Later in private you can tell mom or dad why you would like to exchange the gift for something different or maybe donate the extra gift. DO NOT SAY, "I don't like this." Or, "I already have this." This might make the gift giver feel badly.
- Remember to smile and use a friendly tone of voice when you say, "Thank you". So the gift giver will feel happy.

*Minnesota Manners and Holiday Social Cues
for Children who are DHH, continued on page 2*

MNH&V EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

MN Southwest Parent Guide

MN Statewide ASL Parent Guide

The MNH&V Southwest Region Parent Guide and MNH&V Statewide ASL Parent Guide positions both offer part-time hours, some evenings and weekends, and a family-friendly work environment.

MNH&V Parent Guides receive specific training and team support. Parent Guides are responsible for the initial and follow-up connections critical to families who have a newly identified child who is dhh. Work closely with the MNH&V team and learn the best way to support our MNH&V families. They organize and lead family events, represent MNH&V in the community, and participate in family support activities. Your personal experience of the challenges and joys of parenting a child who is deaf or hard of hearing (dhh) helps support other parents who are just starting their journey.

To find out more or to apply and send a resume, please visit Lifetrack at <https://recruiting.paylocity.com/Recruiting/Jobs/List/1442>

*Minnesota Manners and Holiday Social Cues
for Children who are DHH, continued from page 1*

- It is not polite to ask how much the gift costs or where they bought the present.
- If you receive a card with a gift of money or a gift card enclosed, it is impolite to announce the dollar amount. Say, "Thank you" to the gift giver and hand the money or gift card to mom or dad to put in a safe spot.
- Typically as you get older you will receive fewer presents for your birthday and holidays than you received as a younger child. This does not mean that people care less about you.



Dos and Don'ts of Holiday Visits and Social Gatherings

- Sometimes grandparents, cousins, aunts or uncles or other family friends want to greet you with a hug. This is OK. If it really bothers you tell mom or dad how best to say, "Sorry, but hugs make me feel uncomfortable."
- When you enter someone's home it is generally fine to make a positive comment about a good smell such as pie baking in the oven or a scented candle, but it is impolite to comment about a bad smell such as the cat litter box or garbage. The same is true for strong perfumes or body odors.
- When you are a guest in someone's home and he or she offers you a treat, such as from a candy dish, it is considered rude to ask if they have any other kind of candy or treat. If you do not like what is offered, simply say, "No, thank you." When eating with friends or family, generally it is polite to wait until everyone is finished eating before leaving the table or asking for dessert.

Thanks for your contribution!

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- When everyone is seated at the table and dinner is being formally served it is polite to wait until everyone has their meal before starting to eat.
- When groups of people get together they almost always participate in "small talk." Small talk is informal, friendly conversation about unimportant subjects, like the weather, sports, or pop culture. These environments are acoustically challenging to communicate in. In these situations when you or someone wants to engage in small talk it is important to face the person. This shows people you are interested in communicating.
- When the room has many people in it can get loud or hard to follow who is talking. If you start to feel anxious or exhausted it is OK to take a break or ask mom or dad for a "break."

Every family will have their own ideas of manners and behaviors that are appropriate for them and their extended family and friends. The point is to make a special effort to share these customs and manners with your child who is dhh so they feel confident in social situations and during family gatherings.

Find more tips on how to set the stage for an *Accessible and Inclusive Holiday Season* for your child who is dhh in this newsletter on pages 4 and 5.

Our MNH&V Team Welcomes Mary Stadelman, as the Newest Parent Guide Serving the Metro Area

“I have experienced first-hand how the services that MNH&V provides, as a mother who first called MNH&V nearly 16 years ago, as a volunteer at events, and as the editor of the FOCUS Newsletter,” answered Mary as to why she wanted to become a MNH&V Metro Parent Guide. “As a Metro Parent Guide I hope to help support families with a child who is deaf or hard of hearing (dhh) just as my family has been supported all these years.”

Mary and her husband, Stephen, have five children; two daughters and three sons. Their youngest, Luke, is deaf and the older four have typical hearing. Luke was born in 2001 before the hospital he was born at adopted newborn hearing screening. Luke was later identified as deaf at the age of 15 months old.

“One of the first calls I made was to our local school district and they recommended I contact MNH&V,” Mary added. “The biggest take-away from that initial call to MNH&V was about communication and flexibility, ‘follow

what you think will work best for your family and don’t be afraid to try something different if what you’re doing isn’t working.”

Mary works in the graphic design industry and part-time as a program assistant in a preschool program serving students who are deaf, Deafblind, and hard of hearing. She has trained as a Deafblind Intervener and works with a student who is Deafblind one day a week and for special events.

“Combined, all my jobs together make up a wonderful variety of full-time work.” Mary said adding, “Every day I enjoy what I do so much the word ‘work’ does not seem appropriate.”

In Mary’s spare time she enjoys hiking, camping, and “thrifting”. She is an avid collector of rocks, arts and crafts supplies, and fidget toys.

When asked what she would say to herself if she could as a new parent of a child who is dhh, Mary responded with, “Yes



Mary Stadelman, newest MNH&V Metro Parent Guide

there is a lot to learn, options to consider, and a sense of urgency when your child is first identified as dhh, but breathe and remember you have a whole lifetime.” She concluded with, “Start somewhere, but enjoy your child and the amazing person they are, too. And as they grow, learn, and begin to advocate for themselves follow their lead as much as possible.”



On Thursday, October 11, at Lifetrack in St. Paul, MNH&V Metro Family Event with guest speaker Sheri Cook, Director of Gallaudet University Regional Center for the Midwest, did a presentation on the topic of “The Importance of Family Involvement”. Kids had fun decorating cookies and making glitter slime.

Enjoy the Warmth of an Accessible and Inclusive

Many of us look forward to the holiday season and all the memory-making activities that go along with family gatherings. Whether your tradition is to gather as a big group with extended family and friends combined, or a smaller intimate group; there are ways to create an inclusive and accessible environment for children and guests who are deaf or hard of hearing (dhh).

Many parents who have a child who is dhh have watched them struggle to track the conversations at family gatherings. We trust relationships will develop naturally over time, but in that moment it can be heart breaking. Communication modalities such as: listening and spoken language, manual communication (cued speech or sign language), bi-lingual approach using American Sign Language (ASL), or a mix of all of the above, does not lessen the impact of these experiences. Holiday gatherings are a call to action for parents to help bridge the communication gap between our child who is growing up with the unique experience of being dhh and other individuals who are part of our traditional group.

There are many creative ways to make holiday gatherings feel more inclusive and accessible to people who are dhh. Listed here are just a few ideas you can try or adapt for your own family's needs.

Before the Gathering

- Ask your child or guest who is dhh for ideas on how to make the holiday gathering more accessible. Many accommodations can be arranged before the event.
- Share the guest list with your child or guest who is dhh. For young children draw a simple family tree to show which guests are related and which are friends. If possible label photos of the guests with their names and relation.

- If your child uses hearing gear make sure to have back-up batteries with you ready to use for longer holiday gatherings. Even if their gear has a long battery life it is always good to have back-up batteries.
 - Electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and laptops can facilitate communication between guests who are dhh and hearing guests. Set up a charging station in a convenient area or remember to bring your device chargers to the gathering.
- Parents:** BEFORE the event discuss with your child who is dhh your rules of etiquette about using devices at events.
- Captioning please! If a TV is on during a gathering make sure the captioning is on, too. Whether your guest who is dhh is watching or not they will appreciate having access without needing to ask.

Set the Stage

- Nametags and place cards at the table are a great way to make the connection between a person's face and their name.
- Turn down the noise! Background music, televisions, appliances, pets, plus multiple conversations at once, all make it difficult to pick up the sounds of speech even with the latest hearing technology. Minimize as much of the "extra" sounds as possible.
- Keep plenty of note pads and pens handy for anyone who wants to communicate through writing or drawing. Save on paper and make it fun by keeping Magna-Doodles near by!
- Natural light can shadow a speaker's face if their back is facing the window. Position guests, furniture and window treatments to optimize lighting on individual's faces as well as avoid seating guests who are dhh where they would be facing bright windows.

- Turn up the lights! Dim lighting can make it difficult for individuals who is dhh to communicate. Good lighting is essential to read lips, see body language, facial expressions, signs, cues, interpreters, or transliterators. Try to illuminate areas of your home that are too dark to communicate.

Set the Stage for Listening

- For children who are dhh and use an FM system, strategically place the microphone on the table as close to the center as possible. Then at mealtime it will be easy to position the microphone in an optimal spot to pick up speech.
- Have a set of "conversation starters" cards at the table for your guests and your child who is dhh to chat about a topic your child is more familiar with.
- Many children who are dhh can be responsible to ask speakers to wear the FM system for better access. Before the gathering role-play how to make a request to wear the FM system and ways to advocate for themselves.

Set the Stage for ASL

- For children who are dhh and use ASL place a few American Sign Language books out on the coffee table and around the house. Make it easy for your guests who are intrigued and want to learn more about the language.

Set the Stage for Cued English

- For children who are dhh and use Cued English leave a handful of Cued English charts set out around the house for any guests interested in trying the visual system of English phonemes.

During the Gathering

- People who are dhh understand the need to get their attention to communicate. Polite ways to do this is to tap their shoulder or give a quick hand wave to catch their eye. To make an announcement from across the room quickly flick the light switch.

Holiday Season for You and Your Whole Family!

- When someone who is dhh asks, “What?” DO NOT dismiss their question with, “Never mind,” “Oh, nothing,” or “It’s not important.” Even if you think it is extraneous, let them be the judge. Out of respect always take the time to repeat what was missed.
- If there is some doubt in your mind whether your guest who is dhh understood you, rephrase your comment, rather than repeat. Vice versa, if you do not understand ask for clarification until you do. Communication only happens when both parties understand each other.

During the Gathering for Listening

- Make sure guests understand the importance of using the FM system to access conversations for your child who is dhh. If need be give a quick demonstration on how to properly wear or place the FM microphone.
- You and your family might feel self-conscious being the only people passing around the FM system or wearing it. Focus on optimal access to the sounds of speech and the long-term benefits for your child and it will get easier to do.

During the Gathering for Cued English

- Assign family members to take turns transliterating for your child who is dhh so they are included in the conversation. Cueing for your child who is dhh will not only provide access, but also act as a great language model. If your transliterating skills are not proficient what better way to practice!
- You and your family might feel self-conscious cueing in a room full of people who do not use the system. It is important to work through your feelings for the greater good of providing access.
- Consider hiring a transliterator for your holiday gatherings. They could provide continuous access for your child.

During the Gathering for ASL

- Assign family members to take turns interpreting for your child who is dhh so they can be included in conversations. Even if you are not an ASL interpreter do your best. Eventually your child may be able to take the topic and join in conversations.
- You and your family might feel self-conscious if you are the only family using ASL in a room full of hearing people. It’s important to get past how you feel for the greater good of providing language access to your child.
- Consider hiring an ASL interpreter for your holiday gatherings. As your child who is dhh becomes older, there is a need for a higher level of language. An ASL interpreter can facilitate in-depth conversations between your child and guests who do not know ASL.
- If you are just learning ASL and you are addressing a person who is fluent in ASL remember to RELAX. Be courteous, but not overly anxious about making mistakes. Allow yourself to be corrected so the individual understands the full meaning of your comments. Do not debate sign vocabulary with a person who is dhh, just accept the beauty and diversity of ASL and move on.

Inclusive Activities

- Play games that encourage turn taking, which are fun for everyone! In contrast games where you need to shout out the answer first for points puts guests who are dhh at a disadvantage.
- Children of all ages and abilities can appreciate each other by doing activities with little conversation needed. Building toys, marble run, puzzles, logic games, coloring books, craft projects, and many more activities are enjoyable to work on as a group or side-by-side.

Good to Know for Hearing Folks

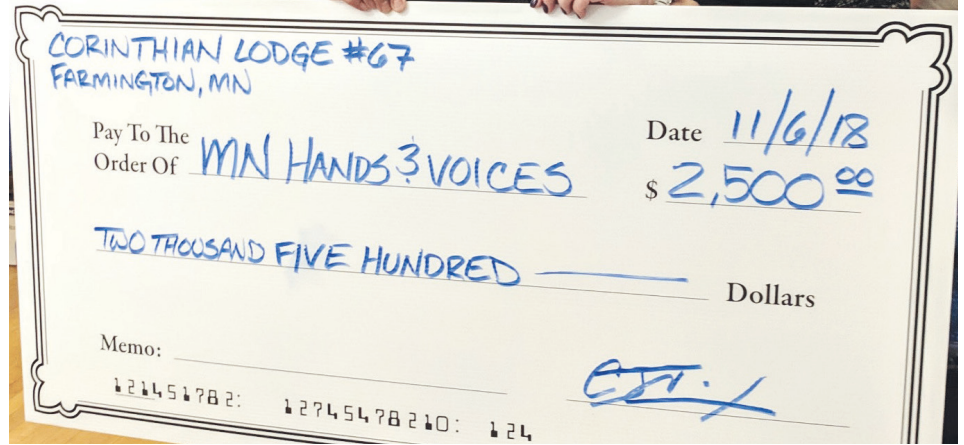
- No need to shout! Hearing gear is calibrated to normal voice levels; shouting will just distort the words.
- Persons who communicate well one-on-one may have a hard time with two or more speakers, especially if there are many interruptions and interjections.
- Gatherings where everyone else is hearing can be very exhausting, and especially unbearable for teens who are dhh. Discuss an appropriate backup plan when they need a break, such as reading a book, watching a movie, or playing games on a mobile phone.
- Speak in a normal manner. In general, people who are dhh or hearing watch others lips for clues as they speak to help them understand. Chewing food, gum, smoking, long facial hair, or obscuring your mouth with your hands makes it difficult to understand speech.
- Not all people who are dhh read-lips. Lip-reading to the level of a reliable communication mode takes years to develop and mastery of English. Children should not be expected to lip-read before they have language. An estimated 30% of speech sounds are not distinguishable by sight.
- Not all people who are dhh use ASL. American Sign language is NOT another form of English; it is an official language and the foundation of Deaf culture with its own grammar, contexts and rules.
- Not all people who are dhh are familiar with Cued English, also known as Cued Speech. Cued English is a visual representation of all the phonemes or sounds of the English language using 7 hand shapes and 4 vowel positions.

All of MNH&V wishes you and your family a fun-filled holiday season! Please email your ideas to add to this list for next year, mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org, subject: Holiday.



Farmington Masons, Corinthian Lodge No. 67

Thank you to the Farmington Masons, Corinthian Lodge No. 67, for their generous donation to MNH&V this November 6, 2018. The Masonic lodge is located in Farmington, MN, and draws members from Farmington, Lakeville, Apple Valley, Rosemount, and the surrounding areas. Charitable giving is one of the primary focuses of Masonic activities. In 2001, the Masonic Temple Building was designated a Heritage Landmark by the City of Farmington.



Clinton J. Christensen, Master of the Farmington Masons, Corinthian Lodge No. 67, and Robin Coninx of MNH&V, accepting their generous donation.



The View from Greater Minnesota

Saturday October 6th, MNH&V Family Event at the Engwall's Corn Maze in Hermantown, MN. The topic was "Daily Technology" and Cheryl Blue from DHHS did a presentation about a variety of daily technology products and brought samples for families to try and compare. Mandy MacDonald, a Deaf Mentor, told families all about the Lifetrack Deaf Mentor Family Program and provided families with flyers and registration information. Each child that preregistered for the event received a furry MNH&V friend. Families networked and enjoyed snacks, worked on crafts, and then had the opportunity to go through the large corn maze.

MNH&V Events

Saturday, December 8

Topic: Advocacy In The Early Years

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Apollo High School

1000 44th Ave. N.

St. Cloud, MN

To register for this event go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/minnesota-hands-amp-voices-at-lifetrack-9882223703>

The 2019 MNH&V Events calendar has not yet been posted at this printing. Please visit our website for event updates at <https://www.mnhandsandvoices.org/news-events> or sign up to receive the MNH&V Weekly **SOURCE** email, offering the latest news and events in the MNH&V community and other community organizations of importance to families who have a child who is dhh, by emailing your email address to us at www.mnhandsandvoices.org.

5 Day Training Workshop Cued Speech Intro

This workshop is for adults who want to learn cued speech. Participants will learn and practice cued speech handshapes and vowel placements and, by the end of this workshop, have the ability to cue single words, short phrases, and sentences.

Sessions will be December 3, 10, 17, 2018, January 7 and 14, 2019, 5:00 to 8:00 pm. Located at the Metro ECSU Training Room, 2 Pine Tree Drive in Arden Hills, MN. Cost is \$75, includes a light supper.

Presenter Sarah Druley is both a certified Cued Language Transliterator and ASL interpreter. She enjoys mentoring and teaching children and adults. Sarah is also the president of the Cued Speech Association of Minnesota.

Program questions contact Dolly at dolly.carr@metroecu.org
Registration questions contact Gail at gail.jankowski@metroecu.org

Register online at: <http://metroecu.quickreg.com/register/event/>

The View from Greater Minnesota



Saturday, October 13, at the "I Wish I Knew Then What I Know Now" MNH&V Family Event in Melrose, MN



Saturday, Oct 13, at the MNH&V Family Event Spooktacular Trunk or Treat! This annual event is held at Paul Bunyan Land near Brainerd, MN. ASL "PAH" Club, Central Lakes College and the ASL Club, Brainerd High School volunteered with cars that were decked out in decorations for Halloween. The Brainerd Police Department had 2 officers give a presentation on safety and handed out stickers with McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog. Parents received packets of information including the new Communication Card that helps Minnesotans who are deaf and hard of hearing and police officers communicate.

The View from Greater Minnesota



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709 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55104

FOCUS
NEWSLETTER

Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS Newsletter

November-December 2018

Family Event

2019 Minnesota Hands & Voices Event

Date: Thursday, February 21

Time: 5:30-8:00 pm

Where: Northern Voices, 1660 County B Rd W, Roseville, MN 55113

Developing Spoken Language in Early Childhood

Presented by Jenny Smith, MSDE, CED - Oral/Aural Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher
Tanya Gahler, MA - Oral/Aural Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher
Elizabeth Nelson, MA-CED - Oral/Aural Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher

Parents with a child who is dhh, ages birth to 5 years old, will learn Northern Voices (NV) teaching strategies to elicit language at home. NV will show what to look for, language skills and techniques, and how to help your child listen and talk.

RSVP (RSVP deadline February 19, 2019) Anne Barlow, 651.265.2400 or AnneB@lifetrack-mn.org

Find more events online at www.mnhandsandvoices.org/news-events/current-news-events.aspx