Personally, I think hearing should have hearing children. They are ill prepared to raise deaf children. They view deaf children as tragic. More often than not, they succeed in raising handicapped hearing, not deaf. But to be fair, there are great success stories: from the parents who learn ASL, to the children who are mainstreamed and overcoming their handicap. (NOTE: I do not view deafness as a handicap, unless you try and use hearing.)

Personally, I think deaf should have deaf children. Deaf are uniquely prepared to raise deaf children. They view deaf children as special gifts. They can succeed in helping that child develop language skills. Not skills in English necessarily, but language skills of the mind.

I believe that many problems of the deaf could be reduced or eliminated if the deaf raised the deaf. They would have families to build upon, rather than the majority of deaf being first generation. Deaf families would allow the deaf to develop more naturally, and each succeeding generation could build on the success of the previous generations.

So I fully support the option of the cochlear implant. However, I fully support the opposite option: from hearing to deaf. Now this is a controversial option: Deaf by choice, not by chance. Ideally, each child could choose whether to be deaf or hearing, but this is impossible, so it is up to the parents to decide. And those parents will discover the validity of their choice by the decisions that their children make. There is no way to know the outcome until after
it is tried.

Now come the methods and the morals of intentional deafening. What do you think?

The greatest argument against intentional deafening is that it will limit the options of the child. However, I don’t see this argument as valid. It gives the child different options, not less valuable options.

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**The argument against intentional deafening**

**Oculog**

Visitor

Joined: Nov 08, 2003

Posts: 20

Location: Pittsburgh

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Moral Rules Against Intentional Deafening

1. Do not mold a child just to suit the desires of the family.
2. Do not limit what Joel Feinberg has termed the child’s “right to an open future.”

Moral Rules For Intentional Deafening

1. Mold a child to aid the child’s development and suit the needs of the family.
2. Help the child love to learn.

I do not agree with the Moral Rules Against Intentional Deafening. I agree with the Moral Rules For Intentional Deafening.

-----------------------------Aside-------------------------------

But do these same rules apply to the Cochlear Implant?

Moral Rules Against Early Cochlear Implant

1. Do not mold a child just to suit the desires of the family.
2. Do not limit what Joel Feinberg has termed the child’s “right to an open future.”

Moral Rules For Early Cochlear Implant

1. Mold a child to aid the child’s development and suit the needs of the family.
2. Help the child love to learn.

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Only 10% of the deaf population comes from a deaf family.

In the future, when the implant is perfected, 90% of the potential deaf will never exist as deaf. Late deaf will still require rehabilitation and drugs, but children implanted at birth will not know the difference between their implants and real ears.

Natural Deaf Reproduction is a genetic deaf family having a genetic deaf child. It does not violate the Moral Rules Against Intentional Deafening.

Selected Deaf Reproduction uses genetic deaf sperm and egg. This does not violate the Moral Rules Against Intentional Deafening, because you can not hurt a child by bringing him into existence.
Medical Reproduction can use drugs or surgery to reduce the child’s hearing ability. This forces the child to rely on their eyes to experience language and the world.

Natural Deaf Reproduction can not sustain the deaf population. Martha’s Vineyard proved this. Selected Deaf Reproduction and Medical Deaf Reproduction are required to sustain a deaf population, and subsequently the Deaf.

Brice Aden's Essay

I am trying to get a copy of the essay written by Brice Alden about the genocide of the Deaf Culture. On line links to this essay are no longer active.

Anyone have a copy of it?

you can send it to patrick_kiser@hotmail.com

Deaf kids raised by Deaf parents

The notion that Deaf child are best raised by Deaf parents was thought up almost 200 years ago by a long overlooked sociologist byt the name of Harriet Martineau. She was primarily overlooked because she was a woman, but some had to do with the emphasis of her research - deaf folks. Moreover, she was the user of an ear trumpeth (The CI of that era) and was overlooked because she was deaf studying and studying deaf.

What did she say - she argued that the reasoning for placing deaf children in deaf homes was not a matter of deaf being better than hearing in raising children. What she argued was that the deaf child can never be fully equal in a family that has hearing parents, especially if there are hearing siblings. It was an equality issue that she raised.

Owen Wrigley in _The Politics of Deafness_ notes that in Thailand people who have deaf children give their children to a deaf tribe. Interesting idea where not only the family is deaf, but the extended family is as well.

Given the rationale that Martineau offers, a CIer could never become fully equal in a family either. Throws a major wrench in the arguments of people like Balakany et al who presume that a child is sacraficed when given exposure to deaf culture.
I can’t believe what I have just read........basically that Deaf children should not be raised by hearing parents! As a mother of a deaf child and I confess have no past dealings with the deaf or hard of hearing......I am doing all I can to help him along. It has NOT been easy and there is a long road ahead and although he is deaf we DO intend to try cochlear implants in the coming months........That does not mean that we think he is inferior or second best if he remains deaf........It just means that we have given him EVERY opportunity to hear that we are able! I have no problem with ppl being deaf, but isnt it better if they could hear? When all possibilities have been exhausted then all well and good, but I find it very condescending when I hear ppl (or in this case read) that Deaf children should be raised by the deaf!

I am a hearing parent of a deaf child. My son got a cochlear implant three years ago at age 4. It was not until after he got his implant that I fully realized that by making this choice for him, I was giving him so many more choices and options in the future. He now has a choice about how to communicate and with whom. Before he had the implant, he could sign but he could not speak for himself and thus communicate with 99% of the public here in the USA who don’t know sign language, including friends, relatives, acquaintances, store clerks, children at the playground, waitresses, camp counselors, classmates, the list is endless.... Now he can hear and he can speak, clearly and in grammatically correct form.

Children’s success with cochlear implants is strongly dependent on how early they get them, and the earlier the better. What I would have considered a tragedy is if my son came to me, at, say, age 15 and said, "Mom, there was a technology available when I was little that could have allowed me to hear and learn to speak well. Why didn’t you at least try it??" Thankfully, that is not going to happen now.

As big a fan I am of cochlear implants and the choices they provide, I felt I should add that (surprise!) I actually can see the argument
for the deaf raising the deaf in some instances. All you hearing parents out there, don’t drop the ball on your child’s education! I have seen some sad stories out there.

One of the saddest stories is of a 4-year-old’s birthday party we attended. The family had modest means, but threw a tremendous party for their child with probably 50 friends and relatives, a moon walk and everything. This child, who almost died as an infant, was clearly LOVED, yet this family did not take his communication needs seriously. He had a moderate-severe hearing loss. He could hear loud noises without hearing aids, but not understand speech. When we arrived at the party, the boy had woken up from a nap. There were already a number of guests at the house. Nobody thought to put on the boy’s hearing aids for the duration of the party. He had NO IDEA what was going on, and why all the people were at his house. When it came time to sing Happy Birthday, his mom and dad were looking up in a book how to sign the words!!! They had known about their son’s hearing loss for nearly 4 years and hadn’t bothered to learn even a few signs OR let him hear!

Was it a surprise that this boy could hardly speak OR sign? No. Would he have been better off at a residential school or living with a deaf family? Probably.

So again, for all you hearing parents out there reading this -- you will need to be your child’s tireless advocate and teacher. It is a tremendous responsibility but tremendously rewarding.

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**Arwen**  
Visitor  
Joined: Dec 22, 2003  
Posts: 8  
Location: Neither here nor there

— Quote —

Mom, there was a technology available when I was little that could have allowed me to hear and learn to speak well. Why didn’t you at least try it??

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Excellent point.....On the other hand, I know far far far too many raised oral deaf kids who’ve had to ask their parents why they never learned ASL. It's great that you've given your child the best of both worlds...but most parents who want their deaf kids to be oral, don’t think of it in those terms.

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**Oculog**  
Visitor  
Joined: Nov 08, 2003  
Posts: 20  
Location: Pittsburgh

Dear jan_jim,

You wrote that you couldn’t believe that someone would write that Deaf children should not be raised by hearing parents. But you also wrote that you have no past dealings with deaf. But the following quote proves my point.
No. Deaf would not be better if they could hear. Deaf do not need to hear.

My point is that hearing want their children to hear. And that’s just fine. I look forward to the day when the implant is perfected so deaf children in hearing families do not need to go through what so many other deaf children have gone through.

When you are a deaf child of a hearing parent, learning to hear and learning to speak can steal your childhood away. It can become the all consuming, ever present monkey on your back.

I applaud your devotion to your child, but you do not understand the Deaf, nor what it is like to be a deaf child of a hearing parent. Not that you asked for advice, but please investigate Cued Speech. It will help your child learn to voice and lip read and it works well with the cochlear implant. If you want to go the extra mile, learn sign and expose your child to deaf people: adults and children. There is nothing wrong with being hearing or deaf, and your child needs to understand that. After you are done raising your child, he will decide how to live his life. You are right, options are good. But sorry for the unasked for advice.

Dear lmgreg,

Yes, the implant will give your child more choices and options in the future. But would you rather have one comfortable pair of shoes, or several hundred pairs that didn't fit right?

Hearing parents do not usually know much about Deaf culture, and so their deaf children have very little association with the Deaf. This does not mean that all deaf should get the cochlear, it means that hearing parents are usually not prepared to raise deaf children.

You write

Quote:

Children's success with cochlear implants is strongly dependent on how early they get them, and the earlier the better.

Very true, but the opposite is also true. The earlier a signed language is learned, the better the child can use and understand that language. This is because the child’s brain is easier to rewire. Unfortunately, many hearing parents neglect sign language for their children, and so later in life, the child must learn sign language on their own. They are able to learn and use this language, but never with the fluency and mastery of someone who learned it as a child.

And in the end, when the implant is perfected, only the deaf will be willing to raise the deaf. All others will be implanted. This is not a crime, or an ethnic cleansing, it is the love of a parent for a child. But what of the love of the deaf? When only the deaf are willing to raise deaf, then the deaf must choose to have deaf children, or the
deaf will disappear.

-Oculog

Arwen
Visitor

Joined: Dec 22, 2003
Posts: 8
Location: Neither here nor there

Quote:

earning to hear and learning to speak can steal your childhood away. It can become the all consuming, ever present monkey on your back.

Well said Oculog! That is why I am against oral-only......A lot of the oral deaf/hoh kids I knew, now say they feel like they didn't have much of a childhood b/c it was all talk, talk, talk and therapy therapy therapy every single waking hour! Remember Laurel from "A Journey to the Deaf-World?" Her mother chose oralism and Laurel felt that her mother was more a therapist then a mother. Oralists believe that life should be an eternal speech therapy session for deaf and hard of hearing people, and that ASL is a "crutch"/ "speshal needs.

I actually think the only reason why oralism is so popular is b/c it appeals to the type of parent who hyperprograms/hyperschedules their kid and who enrolls their kids in a nursery school that guarantees an extra 200 points on the SATS...unfortunatly nowadays too many parents think that hyperprogramming their kids is a good thing.

Deafnicity101
Visitor

Joined: Nov 06, 2003
Posts: 19

The single most important variable of raising any child, deaf or hearing, is parental commitment to the child.

When a deaf child is situated in a hearing family, then the issue of commitment is expanded to the entire family. Not to only the mother and part time for other family members. The fact of the matter is the CI is being offered as a shortcut to family commitment, easier for the parents to rationalize that they have been a loving parent. Far more difficult for both parents and siblings to learn sign and the deaf child have equal access to all family functions, all family communications at the dinner table, all etc etc.

When the CI is rationalized as a means to shortcut the commitment, the seeds for failure are planted. Unfortunately, parents too often rationalize that the problem is the deaf child not making enough effort. That is afterall what the so called hearing loss experts tell them. So easy to escape by throwing a CI at a child and if it works pat yourself on the shoulder and if it doesn't fault the child. YUK!!!!

That a Deaf parent would hope to have a Deaf child is not a big
surprise. Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan wrote, "In other words, when a Deaf infant of Deaf parents is diagnosed as Deaf, the joy of the parents reflects the fact that Deaf parents, like parents generally, look forward to having children who are reflections of themselves" (1996:25).

Even less of a surprise is that Deaf seeking out Deaf partners in the hope of a higher chance of have a deaf child. Conservative think tanks argue that seeking specific traits in a partner is a slippery slope toward ethical breaches. However, people everyday are attracted to someone because of the color of their hair or the color of their eyes. Anyone who continues to fuss exposes their prejudices of seeing deafness as an affliction.

Every argument against a deaf person seeking to have a deaf child or the idea of a deaf child being better off in a deaf home is underpinned by the idea that the deaf child is somehow less than fully human. That by itself is bad enough but the idea of people being less than human raises and arrogant notion that deaf people are a social problem and the social problem can get technological salvation.

Now I must emphasize that my agreement that deaf are better off in a deaf home assumes that the deaf home is fully committed to the child. If the hearing family, and I do mean family, is fully committed to the child then there is no need to raise the child in a deaf home because they would theoretically at least have lots of contact with the Deaf community. CI is not the answer to parents who don’t know how to access the Deaf community. The team approach to CI decisions that is advocated by the NAD in their policy statement leaves open parental choice, but prefers that decisions be informed decisions that include members of the Deaf community.

I recall a few years back a number of deaf students at the University of Michigan went to Olive Garden restaurant to eat. A couple with an infant were staring intensely at us while we waited in line. Finally, the mother came over and told us her baby was deaf. Everyone started fussing over the baby and the parents were able to easily see that their child would not be sacrificed to deaf culture as Berlting and also Balkany et al have alleged. What they did see was Deaf students in law school, dental school, and Graduate programs at what they considered an elite university. The mom told us that the doctors told her if she did not get a CI for her child then the child would not go to college. Obviously our presence persuaded her that the hearing loss experts were not so expert 😃
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