



What Do You Value in a Parent-Professional Partnership?

Lillian Henderson, MSP, CCC-SLP, LSLC Cert. AVT®: Partnership, to me, with a parent has different “levels,” or different phases, as you are beginning a relationship. When you’re first coming into a partnership with a parent, you are basically teaching them a lot of new information. Because they don’t generally know anything about having a child with hearing loss, or a child who is deaf, or might need a cochlear implant or hearing aids. And so, at first you’re just giving them information that they’re going to need to make good decisions.

But, you have to remember, as a partner, that although you have all this information to share, the parent is the expert on their child. And so, when you partner together with a parent, it’s important for the parent to be empowered, that they are the expert with their child. And that decisions are made based on what their values and needs are, and what their goals are.

So it’s important for me to remember that, going forward, when I partner with a parent. And...make sure that I’m giving them information and support that’s going to help their values and needs as they try to attain spoken language for their child, or reach their child’s cognitive potential in spoken language.

As the parent becomes more aware of what the world is like with having a child with hearing loss, and going through the process of getting technology that’s going to meet their child’s needs, my eventual goal is to work myself out of a job!

I don’t want to continue to have a parent that needs my support. I want to basically have a parent that can be empowered to become their child’s advocate, and their child’s primary therapist. So that once the child gets to school-age, the parent’s well on their way to getting the needs that may still need to be involved with therapy or educational standards...but they have the skills to do that one their own.