

Breaking the Sound Barrier in the Year 2010: Advocate to Educate
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"Family Support" is often the term used to define the practices that ensure the holistic nature of the process for families from the time their baby is screened through identification of hearing loss and early intervention services. What exactly constitutes "family support" is unique for each family, but a 2008/09 international survey by the Global Coalition of Parents of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children (GPOD) identifies clear themes. The amount and type of family support experienced has a direct relationship on variables including cultural considerations, beliefs, values, emotional reactions, coping styles, family dynamics and other issues that play a role in how effectively a family will be able to navigate the system and help to define which sources of support will be most beneficial to that family.

"Families gain knowledge, insight, and experience by accessing resources and through participation in scheduled early intervention appointments including audiologic, medical, habilitative, and educational sessions. This experience can be enhanced when families choose to become involved with parental support groups, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or their children's deaf or hard-of-hearing peers." (*JCIH, Pediatrics, 2007; 120; 902*) A respectful and collaborative approach from all stakeholders in the system and an understanding of the important role that each one plays contributes to the degree a family may feel supported as they begin the long and demanding, yet rewarding, journey of raising their child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

The establishment of the Italian Pediatric Federation Newborn Hearing Screening Network is the result of an international collaboration between Parents and Medical Professionals in order to promote an effective model in developing Early Hearing Detection Intervention Programs that recognize the role of parents as partners in the process

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