

Management and Service Delivery Considerations

The final Section of this volume addresses several issues in the management and the provision of services to infants and children with hearing loss and their families. Effective early intervention is sensitive to the desires of families to have their children fit with current amplification technology, to interact with professionals who are mindful of the social-emotional issues surrounding the identification of their child's hearing loss, and are willing to provide information to families in the amount and at the time that it is needed. Left unaddressed, these issues can hinder the timely provision of intervention services.

John Bamford and his colleagues provide a report on the "Provision and Fitting of New Technology Hearing Aids: Implications from a Survey of Some 'Good Practice Services' in the UK and USA." Clinical facilities on both sides of the Atlantic were queried regarding the timing of amplification fitting and the multiple issues that affect the decision of audiologists to fit or not fit new hearing instrument technology to infants and young children with hearing loss. The report demonstrates the similarities and differences in clinicians' approaches to this critical aspect of pediatric audiological practice, and gives us a window into those issues that impact on our clinical decision-making.

In her chapter, "The Social-Emotional Ramifications of Universal Newborn Hearing Screening, Early Identification and Intervention of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing," Christie Yoshinaga-Itano presents her data on the personal-social development of early- and later-identified children with hearing loss, the parental stress experienced by parents of the aforementioned groups, maternal bonding and its relationship to language development and the resolution of parental grieving. All these topics increase our sensitivity to the needs and emotions experienced by families who learn that their infant has a hearing loss or is deaf.

Finally, Melody Harrison and Jack Roush report on the results of a survey they completed which clinicians will find useful to their interactions and counseling of families immediately following the diagnosis of hearing loss and in the longer term. In their chapter "Information for Families with Young Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children: Reports for the Parents and Pediatric Audiologists," Drs. Harrison and Roush discuss what information regarding their child's hearing loss parents report they needed, when they desired to receive it, and in which format it was most useful. As clinicians strive to be effective and supportive of families of newly identified infants with hearing loss, the information in this chapter will be of immeasurable value.

The last section of this volume provides the final building blocks of the sound foundation for early amplification desired by clinicians and families of infants and children with hearing loss alike. These final components of the foundation, built throughout this volume, may be considered the most critical. It is through the meaningful, positive interactions of families and clinicians that the most effective intervention for infants and young children with hearing loss is achieved.

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