

How to Help Your Child's Coach or Instructor Communicate Effectively in Extracurricular Activities for Your Child with Hearing Loss

Alaine: [00:00:00] Hey, everyone. Welcome back to Raising Deaf Kids. So, how many times have you wanted to put your child into an extracurricular activity, or a sport, or even, like, vacation Bible school, which is going on right now in the summer, but you stopped short and decided not to do it because you didn't think that your child would understand or be able to hear what was going on in that activity?

Alaine: Probably a lot of could. Say that we have worried about extracurricular activities and what our child is going to do about hearing in these activities. So language access in school is one thing, and we often even fight hard for the language access there, but language access in extracurricular activities is almost non-existent in a lot of cases for our deaf and hard of hearing kids.

Alaine: So today, we're going to talk about how to [00:01:00] talk to your child's coach or instructor or you know, Bible school leader about the tactical strategies to help your child get that language access so that they can enjoy the activity too. So come on for the ride and let's get started.

Alaine: Hey mama, welcome to Raising Deaf Kids. Do you want more ease in your daily life? Do you want to help your child learn language faster but have no idea where to start? Do you find yourself searching for how to learn sign language and best ways to practice speech goals? Hey, I'm Elaine. I'm a mom of three littles, two of whom are deaf.

Alaine: I remember when I received the hearing loss diagnosis for our child, there were so many decisions and information overload. I lacked clarity and confidence and yearned for ease and balance in our lives. It was then that I discovered strategies to support our kids language development at home [00:02:00] and I even helped them learn language faster.

Alaine: I can't wait to share it all with you. So put down that to do list, close out that ASL app for now, and let's get started!

Alaine: Did you know that I have a free community of women just like you, busy moms who want to help their kids learn language faster while still getting all of the things done in the house each day. In the community, we share strategies to help our kids learn language faster and lean on each other for encouragement and support in this up and down journey of hearing loss with your kids.

Alaine: If you haven't found your community yet, then welcome home, mama. Come join us at [facebook.com/slaskgroup/raisingdeafkids](https://www.facebook.com/slaskgroup/raisingdeafkids).

Alaine: So this topic of extracurricular activities, coaching is coming up more for our family lately. So that's why I decided to share with you kind of like what's going on and what my thought process is. So as my boys who have [00:03:00] hearing loss, they're now eight and just turned six. So they're getting a little bit older you know, able to do maybe some activities, you know, that they weren't going to do before, a little bit more independent.

Alaine: So we're starting to think more about, okay, how can they have that language access in the extracurricular activities, because that is something that I worry about as a parent, especially as a parent to my six year old, who does use American Sign Language to communicate, which is sometimes difficult. To explain to people and integrate into extracurricular activities, you have to do a lot of education, and I know that I've heard from a lot of you guys, too, and a lot of people in the community who kind of have the same thoughts that school is one thing.

Alaine: Okay, you know, we're working on it, but at least in school, there's a team of people to help you. You have the teacher, you have, you know, the IEP team and everybody's kind of working together. And really the reality is for extracurricular activities, you [00:04:00] know, like I said, Bible school, we're actually doing a vacation Bible school at our church this week, so that's why I like this topic is fresh on my mind because it's happening this week you know, areas like that.

Alaine: There is not support for the instructor or the coach. That is one thing to remember, whereas your teacher has that support from the school. Instructors and coaches don't often have like a team of people behind them because it is an extracurricular activity. It's extra, it's like outside of the classroom.

Alaine: school and academic thing. And so there tends to not naturally be the support for the coach and the instructor, which means the coach and the instructor are you know, working with a bunch of kids. They are trying to meet

all of the kids needs at the same time. They're not specifically trained in meeting the needs of like varied populations of kids.

Alaine: And they also don't really have assistance or a support team behind them. So, you know, really, I want all of us to understand that those [00:05:00] coaches and instructors are doing the best that they can with what they have. And so we need to step in as leaders and as parents. To kind of help guide and educate about our kids and show them some tactical things that they can do that are really very simple and aren't going to take any more of their time and show them how to help our kids understand what's going on.

Alaine: But it's going to kind of take us, you know, seeing up and leadership. And, you know, I noticed a few things are going really well in our vacation Bible school that we're doing this week. I have all my kids there and my husband. I volunteer there because we go to a small church. So basically, at this point, the whole church volunteers were that stage.

Alaine: You know, so, and some of the things I think we're doing really well is during the. Kind of meeting time before kids break into the activities. I noticed that the screens a lot of the times during like the songs have the words up there, which is great for my eight year old, because he can read not so great for my six year old because he can't quite read yet.

Alaine: But also like the [00:06:00] dance moves are shown on the screen. So my son can like. Follow along with the dance moves, they're being shown and then I am sitting there beside my six year old and I'm doing as much signing as possible, as much signing as he will pay attention to. He's my busy one. So sometimes he doesn't pay attention, but but I am limited in my sign right now because I am still learning, right?

Alaine: So there are words that I don't know yet, or I'm having to look up. I am learning them. I'm learning. As well, but it's, you know, not quite as good as if, you know, there's an interpreter or someone there but, you know, I feel like what we do great is we use captions. We use a lot of visuals for the kids as much as possible to kind of get the points across.

Alaine: And then, of course, I am there. To help communicate with my son if we need anything, you know, what could we be doing better? I, I could have probably arranged for an interpreter to come help him out, which I may like, think about in the future as he gets older and a little bit more fluent in sign [00:07:00] language as well.

Alaine: I think that would be a benefit for him and a benefit for someone to help him really understand what's going on, really understand the gospel in someone who's actually like fluent in sign language, as I'm not quite fluent yet. So those are the things I think we're doing really well. And some of the things that I think I could do a better job in helping my church implement.

Alaine: And so I want to sit down with you and go through three things that I think will help you. Be able to talk to and help your child's coaches and instructors and those extracurricular activities really understand what hearing loss means, what that means for your child specifically, and how those coaches and instructors can help your child gain the language access through whatever means, you know, would be the best for your child specifically.

Alaine: So we're going to go to the first point that I [00:08:00] have point number one, which may be honestly the most like important point is kind of like the crux of this whole thing is to have a sit down meeting with your child's coach instructor, Bible church leader, whoever, teacher, and talk to them about what your child needs.

Alaine: outside of the activity. So do not try to do this five minutes, ten minutes before the lessons begin or for the activities begin, because this is going to be like, I would set aside an hour this, and this may be like an ongoing meeting, but you need to do this on a different day that is outside of the activity when the kids are not running around, multiple kids and parents are not trying to talk to the, you know, instructor and coach at the same time.

Alaine: And you and the instructor or coach can sit down and really have a time to talk and focus on talking to each other. And what I want you to do before this meeting, I want you to either prepare a handout to give to The coach or instructor, or at least scribble down some [00:09:00] notes of what you want to talk about with the coach and write down some practical and tactical steps that the coach or instructor can take to help your child get better access to language.

Alaine: So don't just say they need language access. Okay. What does that actually mean? Because a coach or instructor is not going to know what that means. And if you don't tell them, they're probably not going to do it. Okay, I'm just being honest with you because they have other kids and other parents that they're working on and also there is that aspect of like not, probably not having a support team with them as well.

Alaine: So you have to give them examples and give them actually the tactical ways to help. Is that wearing a mini mic? Is that using sign language, some

signs? Is that, you know, would they be feel comfortable if you got an interpreter? For your child, if that's helpful would it be writing things down? Would it be using captions for your [00:10:00] child?

Alaine: Would it be using visuals for your child, kind of like a visual system or like visual blur? What helps your child actually get the language access is what you need to tell them. And then offer to help them implement that because once again, even if you tell them these steps, they don't know what that means.

Alaine: And you're actually going to have to step in as a parent and help them implement these strategies. And I actually got this idea from Valley Gideons of my battle call. So she was on our podcast a long time ago. She was actually episode number six, and I will link that in the show notes. But if you know you've ever been on her social media or interacted with her, all you know that they are a big sports family.

Alaine: She has two kids with cochlear implants. They're very involved in sports. So she, she knows a lot about talking to coaches and instructors and extracurricular activities and how to get that language access. And she's been [00:11:00] able to do that for her kids for their whole life. Now they're older and like in college and high school.

Alaine: But her biggest suggestion to me when I was struggling with this was to have that sit down meeting with the coach or the instructor first and really give them that handout or go over what they needed. So that's why I said this is the first step, but it's probably the most important step to getting that language access to your child.

Alaine: And Valley Gideons, I believe on her website, she has some handouts that you can give to your coach about like explaining hearing loss. I think it's like a fill in the blank so you can fill in like information about your own child. I will link that in the show notes, but it would be on Valley Gideons, my battle call.

Alaine: Her websites, that could be a really good resource or at least starting point. If you don't know what to tell the coach or instructor. So, I would definitely go do that. So, my 2nd point. Which would be really helpful is if you have any sort [00:12:00] of mini Mike, that's what we use with our kids. A mini Mike FM system Roger.

Alaine: I think that's all of them any type of, like, amplification device. Go ahead and start using that and give that to the instructor. Okay, I will go ahead

and turn it on, connect it to your child's devices, and have it in hand ready to just hand to the instructor or coach so they can just put it around their neck or clip it to them and be ready to go.

Alaine: This is what we do at school, even for my kids teachers. In the morning, I get everything connected and ready to go. And then I mute their microphones so that when the kids get to school, all they, their teachers have to do is pull them out, unmute the microphone. I've showed them how to do that and they're ready to go and they don't have to mess with it because I understand that my kids are just one of like 19 other kids that are walking into their classroom and.

Alaine: They may not have time to like connect the microphone, go through the [00:13:00] technology, do all that, and the same thing with like an extracurricular coach or instructor make it easy for them, okay? Go ahead and have that thing ready to go, hand it off to them, and they'll be good, and they're more likely to use it if you get it ready for them first.

Alaine: And this may solve a lot of problems, actually, because if your child is aided, Then a lot of the problem for language access might just come from the fact that your child just can't hear your coach or instructor because there are a lot of kids, you know, in these lessons They are often in bigger rooms or outside on a field, and they're often far away from the instructor or coach.

Alaine: I mean, I'm thinking about playing sports, football, soccer, where they're running down the field and they're far away from the instructor and even other students, or even like horseback riding. You're on a horse, but the instructor is usually in the middle of the ring. And so you're still pretty far away, plus you have the noise of, like, the horse you know, going [00:14:00] along and stuff, so.

Alaine: Using this amplification might solve a lot of the problems, and that may be the only thing you need is just to amplify the sound a little bit so that they're understanding the instructions and the information. If your child signs, Then you might also want to consider, this is point number 3, consider implementing things like captions and signed language into your child's extracurricular by talking to the coach or the instructor.

Alaine: So if your child signs or needs some more visual. help visual representations of the language you will need to probably go in and volunteer to help the instructor implement these things. So you can help them implement captions if that's helpful. If your child can borrow your phone and, you know,

have the captions and read them on the screen, if they're reading age, that can be helpful.

Alaine: You can also volunteer [00:15:00] to give like a mini lesson on some individual signs that you know that your child uses a lot and that would be really helpful to the extracurricular that you can show to the coach or instructor. I wouldn't expect the coach or instructor to learn full ASL. That may be a bit out of their wheelhouse at the time.

Alaine: I don't know. They might. You could try. But at least giving them the signs that your child uses most often to communicate really important and necessary information could be helpful. So I would show them things like EndoCaption. And I will link that in the show notes that like captions on your phone, what people are saying people like Michelle, who for mama, who hears has talked a lot about, you know, caption on her social media.

Alaine: So, she uses that a lot and lots of other people, lots of other deaf adults, talk about, you know, caption, how it really helps them gain access to information. And like I said, you can volunteer, go in and to help them set up the captions on screens of their screens, [00:16:00] show them how to set up the captions so they can do it in the future, volunteer to teach them a few signs that you know, or point them towards an online class or an app like ASL Bloom, Lingvano, where they can look up some signs and learn them as well.

Alaine: You know, educate the coach instructor on things like your child needs to be looking at them in the face. So not to try to remember, not to like turn their back on your child or be able to place your child in a place where they can visually see the instructor's face. And above all, educate, educate, educate, and volunteer.

Alaine: That's how we're gonna get this done, is by teaching people, other people how to do it. Because there's a good chance that your child is the first deaf and hard of hearing person that these people have ever met. Right? And so naturally, [00:17:00] they wouldn't know what to do if it's not something that they live with every day.

Alaine: And using these tips are going to help your child have a better experience at the extracurricular activities, or the sports, and are also going to calm your nerves because you know that your child is getting the full access to language, and I know as a parent you can't relax, you can't, like, help your child enjoy the activity, you can't enjoy watching your child in the activity if you feel like they're not understanding or not hearing what is going on.

Alaine: So it's going to calm you down and let you actually like enjoy the activity along with your child. And like I said, we also have to remember to have these conversations and people don't inherently know how to help our kids. And it is up to us as the parents to educate and volunteer to help integrate the access.

Alaine: Or it might be up to us to even, like, provide the interpreter, make the call to provide the interpreter, [00:18:00] the, you know, instructor or coach, probably, if you need an interpreter, has no idea where to get one, you can ask, but they probably not, so it may be up to us to get our own interpreters for our own children.

Alaine: And it, it does honestly come down to us as parents. We are the leaders in our community, whether we ask for it or not, we are in the position to educate and help others understand hearing loss which will ultimately make the world better for our own kids and for the kids to come. And I know from just being on this podcast, having the opportunity to talk to You know, so many wonderful parents who are raising deaf and hard of hearing kids and whose kids are now older and looking back and, you know, asking them what they did to help their child get to this stage, get to college, get beyond.

Alaine: I can say the most successful parents I've talked to who have raised amazing deaf [00:19:00] and hard of hearing kids were very involved in leadership in their communities and their schools and their extracurriculars. They were present, they were always educating openly and with grace, and that seems to be, from what I've talked to with everyone, the secret ingredient, which is not so secret, is that we're the leaders, and it's time for us to step up as the leaders in the community where we're in.

Alaine: And you know, you are already called and equipped to do this. You're called and equipped to be the leader to others. To be an advocate for hearing loss because of your children and to spread that hearing loss awareness. And if, you know, you have questions, you're like, How do I approach this coach or instructor?

Alaine: How do I approach this teacher? How do I, you know, help, you know, parents or other children in my child's classroom understand hearing [00:20:00] loss? How do I start, you know, leaning into some of those leadership roles in my community and where we are? Please come to our Facebook group. We have parents in there who are You know, at different stages, a lot of them at the earlier stages, but different stages of kids with hearing loss.

Alaine: We have grandparents. We have some teachers in there. It's really a whole community of anyone who is raising or helping to raise the deaf and hard of hearing children come to the group and we'll help you out, ask your questions, and I would love to support you in coming into that leadership role that I think We've all ultimately been called to, but a lot of us don't step into that.

Alaine: So I'm ready to help you step into being a parent leader in your community and helping spread hearing loss awareness to the rest of your community. So I hope this episode today really helps you to [00:21:00] understand how to start approaching getting better language access for your child in their extracurricular activities or in their sports.

Alaine: And I know as a parent myself, we want. The absolute best for our kids and unfortunately kids, especially kids with hearing loss, do not come with a handbook. But I want you to know that simply by being here, by listening to this podcast or watching this video on YouTube, you are doing a great job as a parent, a teacher, You know, whoever you are right now watching this because you are learning and trying to find better ways to help and support your child or the other kids around you.

Alaine: And I am so proud of your efforts and I am so glad that you're here. I will see you on. Thursday, yep, Thursday for a very special episode with Sincerely by God and Erin Follows Jesus, which is on Instagram, her name is Erin, and we are going to talk [00:22:00] about giving better access to the deaf community in our churches.

Alaine: This is such a great episode, Erin, it comes at this topic with so much education, so much grace, and I cannot wait for you to hear our conversation. So. Until Thursday, see you later!

Alaine: Hey mama, I hope you enjoyed today's episode. If so, would you take 30 seconds and subscribe to this podcast? I never want you to miss an episode and to be without valuable information to help you and your family. Also, please leave a quick written review for the show on Apple Podcasts. It lights me up to know this podcast is helping you.

Alaine: Now go check off the rest of your to do so you can love on your family today. And I'll meet you here every Tuesday and Thursday for podcast episodes to support your whole family in language learning. Ciao mama.