

Midweek Minisode- 5 Ways to Make Your Home Deaf- Friendly for your Child with Hearing Loss to Thrive

Alaine: [00:00:00] Welcome to the Midweek Minisode. This is an unscripted look at what I'm loving this week, what I'm thinking about this week, what we're trying in our home, and any other quick tips, encouragement, or useful information that I can pass on to you to get you through this week a little bit better. This may or may not have anything to do with hearing loss.

Alaine: You will hear things about health and wellness, personal growth, spiritual growth, parenting, and everything in between. It's kind of like a bag of Chex Mix. You never know what you're going to get with this midweek minisode. I hold to the principle that variety is the spice of life for these episodes. If this sounds fun to you, then let's chat, new friend.

Alaine: Hello, welcome to the Midweek Minisode. And today I want to talk to you about five tips for making your home more deaf and hard of hearing friendly for your child. [00:01:00] And you know, I think this is something that we don't talk about very much in these circles, but there are definitely things that you can do or should be doing at home to make hearing and listening better for your child and the reason why I think this is important and the reason why I try to do this with my kids is because I feel like home should be a safe space and our kids, especially like our kids who are deaf and hard of hearing when they go out into the world, the onus is kind of on them, unfortunately, to figure out how to communicate with other people and it should not be that way.

Alaine: You know, that's a story for another podcast, but the reality is for them. And, you know, for many deaf people is that they are the ones who are always having to problem solve. They're the ones who are always having to advocate for [00:02:00] themselves, you know, speak up, say that they can't hear, you know, educate people on how to help them hear better.

Alaine: And it can be tiring, right? It can be tiring every time you go out to have to know that you're going to have to problem solve, or you're going to have to educate, you're going to have to advocate for yourself. And so when my boys come home, I don't want them to have to do that. I want them to be comfortable in their home and I want the hearing and listening capacity to be at the max for them without them having to do like extra advocacy or education for me or myself.

Alaine: Obviously I'm open to it, you know, but I want to make it as comfortable for them as possible so that they can really come home and just relax. At home and, you know, get the access that they deserve. So I just wanted to go through five things that I [00:03:00] do in my own home. And I just kind of do it naturally at this point.

Alaine: And you're probably doing a lot of these things too, but I think it's worth a quick conversation about to talk about, you know, some things that you could do to help your kids be more comfortable at home. So, number one is I don't yell through the house or I don't yell up the stairs for my kids because they probably can't hear me.

Alaine: Right? So, and that's something that we all do as parents. I do that to my hearing little girls, you know, they're up in their room, you yell down like, come down for breakfast, come down for here. But I actually try not to do that for my deaf and hard of hearing boys because they may or may not hear me, and they may or may not have their cochlears on, in which case if they don't, they can't hear me at all.

Alaine: And they probably can't hear me as well if I'm yelling up to them from like all the way down the stairs and they're all the way [00:04:00] upstairs in their room. So what I try to do for them is I actually go up the stairs to them or wherever they're in the house. I try to go over to them and speak. Closer to like their space and where they are so that they're not having to like strain their hearing and work to hear me you know, through the stairs or up and down, you know, throughout the house.

Alaine: Number two thing I do, which is actually really, really simple is I tell my kids where I'm going to be in the house. That's one thing. Way back when I was I was chatting with Michelle Hugh from Mama Hugh Hears on this podcast. It was one of the first 16 podcast episodes that I did, so go back and listen to her.

Alaine: She did a really great episode with me. And that's one of the things we talked about was how to make your home more deaf friendly for your kids. And that was actually one thing that she suggested. And one thing that she [00:05:00] said, I was at deaf kids often feel scared or unsure at home because they just don't know where you are, you know.

Alaine: So if you have a home that has multiple rooms there's sometimes they can't always hear where you are and you know, they get nervous because they don't know where you are in the house. So something easy that I started doing

after having that conversation and it's gone well with my kids is I tell my kids where I am in the house or where I'm going to be.

Alaine: So if my kids are downstairs watching TV, I tell them, Hey, I'm going to be in my room recording a podcast if you need me, or I'm going to be doing an exercise video in my room upstairs if you need me, or I'm going to be out in the yard with so and so if you need me. Just letting them know where I am. And it's such a simple, easy to do thing but it really goes a long way in making your kids feel comfortable at home and making them feel like they haven't lost you and that you are actually in the house with them.[00:06:00]

Alaine: So number three, when we're at the dinner table, I try to set my deaf kids at the table where they can see everyone's faces and they can see everyone's hands when we are signing. So one of my kids talks, one of my kids signs. If you have a round table or can acquire a round table, that is ideal. If you can't, I'm not asking you to go out and buy a completely new kitchen table, especially if a round table doesn't fit in your space.

Alaine: We have a rectangle table. But I try to position myself, especially because, like, I'm doing most of the talking to the kids where they can, like, you know, have a clear visual of me or, you know, see everyone more easily so that they can rely on those visual signals as well as the hearing. Thanks.

Alaine: And that just helps the conversation flow better, helps them have, you know, better access to the conversation that you're having at the dinner table, you know, which is [00:07:00] really a time that you are all like connecting together anyway. And number four, I, we use visual schedules and kind of visual aids around the house to help our kids understand and remember routines, even if we're not there.

Alaine: So we have a visual schedule. Of like our daily routine downstairs on our refrigerator where all of our kids know where are and they can go check and see like where they are in the routine and what's coming up next. I also have, like, a visual board for my son who signs ASL so that he can come, you know, show me, like, what he wants.

Alaine: It's like a little communication board, also on our refrigerator. And those visual aids just kind of help. Show your kids like language and help your kids throughout the daily routine and also help them ask for things, especially if they don't quite have the language for it yet. It just integrates them into the house and the routines better.

Alaine: And number five, [00:08:00] something that we're starting to dive into since my oldest son is now eight years old. If you have a little bit older kids, maybe look into getting some assistive technology for your kids, you know, one of the like gateways to assistive technology is bed shakers for your older kids.

Alaine: So, my second grader has started using that and the show notes I'll link to the one I have. I just got off Amazon. It was not that expensive, very easy to hook up and it works. So, it shakes the bed and flashes lights in the morning. For him to wake up and that has gone a long way for him and helping him to become more independent in his daily routine, which is so important for all of our kids to you know, start getting that independence as early as possible and start taking ownership of parts of their routine.

Alaine: And this just helps him do that for that part of his routine in the morning. And there's so many other assistive [00:09:00] devices you can get. I'll link, put a link in the show notes that has. Other links to, you know, lots of different things. But, you know, as your kids get older, like teenagers, you know, you can look into was it like doorbells that flash.

Alaine: We don't have those yet because our kids aren't really old enough to be answering the door by themselves. Like, they always need an adult and we can hear. So it's not a big deal. But right now, but like doorbells that flash, you can get like fire alarms that flash. You know, there's all types of assistive technology, usually with phones, to be honest with apps and stuff that you can use for your kids.

Alaine: And so that's something that you can integrate into your home as your kids start getting older that just helps them navigate through the house better. And, you know, I, I think this is really important and this is really important for my family because. You know, at the home, we really are the foundation for our kids like we really are creating a foundation for our kids to then [00:10:00] be able to go out and interact with others in the world.

Alaine: And one of the things that, What we are doing when we are setting up our homes to be more deaf friendly is we're also giving our kids an example of the access to language that they should expect outside of the home. So if we go ahead and model that for them inside the home, then they know what to ask for and what to expect and what they deserve to have when they're outside of the home.

Alaine: And it just helps with their advocacy skills as well. That is what I've got for you today on this midweek mini sode. I hope that helped you and let me

know if you integrated any of these things into um, your home this week. I can't wait to hear about it and I will see you on Thursday for our next episode. your home this week. I can't wait to hear about it and I will see you on Thursday for our next episode.[00:11:00]