

Do other parents feel like this?



Parents respond in different ways to finding out that their baby has a hearing loss. The way you respond to the diagnosis depends on many things that are unique to you, your family and your situation. Most parents will feel a range of emotions – denial, anger, sadness and fear are all common reactions. Over time these strong feelings are likely to fade. You will learn to accept the situation and get on with your life. You will develop perspectives about the role of the child's deafness in your life. However, of course there will still be times of sadness or grief – it's part of being a loving parent.¹



One parent described her feelings: *'When we saw the audiological specialist our world was shattered when he told us our baby was deaf'. She added: 'The audiologist's words as I left the clinic have remained with me ever since and have given me the strength to be positive.'* He said, *'Just remember the little boy you are taking home is the same one you came in with.'*

Another parent recalls being told *'Don't forget that the baby's a baby first'*. She says: *'I found it very hard at the time because all we could see was the deafness. Now I'm beginning to understand that it is true. He is a little boy first, and his deafness is just a small obstacle.'*²

Whatever your feelings, it is important to acknowledge and share them. Keep in mind that there is plenty of support available to help you.

Remember that feeling a variety of emotions at this time is normal. These emotions serve a purpose in that they prompt you to do something positive for your baby.

It is quite natural for emotions to run high when your child's diagnosis is confirmed by an audiologist, but the fact is: Your child is still the same; it is the information you have about the child that is different.³

1 Aussie Deaf Kids, [cited 5 July 2006], *Building blocks – A parent guide for families whose baby has been diagnosed with a hearing loss*, [website <http://www.aussiedeafkids.com>]

2 The National Deaf Children's Society, 2002, *Your baby has a hearing loss*, London, UK

3 Deaf Education Aotearoa New Zealand and National Audiology Centre, 2004, *Getting started – Kei te timata* [www.deafed.co.nz/family_book or www.tki.org.nz/specialed/pdf/familybook.pdf]