

Deaf Awareness Month: Embracing Inclusive Language and Celebrating Equality by DT Bruno

Deaf Awareness Month is a time to celebrate the rich culture, history, and contributions of the Deaf and hard of hearing community. It's also an opportunity to reflect on the importance of language and how we can create a more inclusive society that refrains from ableism. In this spirit, let's explore the recent update from the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding the assessment of hearing in infants, children, and adolescents and its profound impact on language and perception.

The Power of Words: Language is a powerful tool that shapes our perceptions and attitudes. The words we use to describe conditions, abilities, and individuals have a profound impact on how society views and interacts with them. One significant step forward in promoting inclusivity is the recognition that deficit-framing terminology, such as "loss," "failed," and "impairment," should no longer be used when discussing children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Equality and Wholeness: The American Academy of Pediatrics' updated guidelines emphasize that children who are deaf or hard of hearing are equal, healthy, and whole individuals. This shift in language is not just a matter of political correctness; it reflects a deeper understanding of the Deaf community's strengths, capabilities, and the importance of celebrating diversity. It sends a clear message that being deaf or hard of hearing is not a deficit but a part of one's unique identity.

Inclusive Communication: Language is not only about the words we choose but also about the way we communicate. Deaf Awareness Month reminds us of the importance of inclusive communication methods, such as sign language and captioning, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to information and opportunities. Inclusive language is a step in the right direction, but it must be accompanied by concrete actions to provide equal access and opportunities for everyone, regardless of their hearing abilities.

Deaf Awareness Month is a time to celebrate diversity, promote inclusivity, and recognize the importance of language in shaping our perceptions and attitudes. The American Academy of Pediatrics' decision to move away from deficit-framing terminology is a significant milestone in the journey toward a more inclusive society. Let's use this occasion to reflect on the power of words, the value of inclusive communication, and our collective responsibility to break down barriers and create a world where everyone is celebrated for who they are.

Hot off the press: [American Academy of Pediatrics Updates Guidance on Assessing Hearing in Infants, Children and Adolescents](#)

(safe link to click)