Lesson 5: Deaf Culture

The values, behaviors, and traditions of Deaf culture include:

- Promoting an environment that supports vision as the primary sense used for communication at school, in the home, and in the community, as vision offers deaf individuals access to information about the world and the independence to drive, travel, work, and participate in every aspect of society.
- Valuing deaf children as the future of deaf people and Deaf culture. Deaf culture therefore encourages the use of ASL, in addition to any other communication modalities the child may have.
- Support for bilingual ASL/English education of deaf children so they are competent in both languages.
- Inclusion of specific rules of behavior in communication in addition to the conventional rules of turn taking. For example, consistent eye contact and visual attention during a conversation is expected. In addition, a person using sign language has the floor during a conversation until he or she provides a visual indicator (pause, facial expression, etc.) that he or she is finished.

Gaining a (Deaf) Person’s Attention:
1) Gently tap a person on the shoulder if s/he is not within line of sight.
2) Wave if the person is within line of sight.
3) Flick a light switch a few times.

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