

Using a Communication Strategy with My 3-Year Old Granddaughter...

by Judy Vinegar

My 3-year old granddaughter is in the learning stage when it comes to communicating with me. Our conversations are sometimes frustrating, sometimes funny, and sometimes baffling to her.

One day she asked for juice, and I calmly replied that her shoes were next to the computer! After another weird exchange, she gave me a quizzical look and said, "It's OK grandma, I'll just ask grandpa." 😊

Sometimes, if I'm in another room, she lustily yells "GaaaRANDMAAAA!" I smile when I think my granddaughter sounds just like a mother calling her child home from some far-away neighbor's yard.

Elise and I are working on communication strategies such as "get my attention before you talk" and "look at my face while you're talking." But these strategies are useless when I'm driving the car. Even hearing aids don't perform well in noisy places like the car. The best solution is to use an Assistive Listening Device (ALD) with hearing aids. But for now, I'm using an ALD without hearing aids until I find hearing aids that work well for me.

The difference an ALD makes in understanding speech is truly astounding. The ALD that I use in the car with Elise is a personal amplifier called a Pocketalker made by a company called Williams Sound.

Necessary Accessories

I use two accessories with this device: (1) **a directional microphone** and (2) an **extension cord**. The personal amplifier comes equipped with an omnidirectional microphone which gives the benefit of "surround sound" and can pick up sound (including road noise) from all directions. If, however, you don't want to hear road noise, then I would recommend the purchase of a directional microphone to be used instead of the standard omnidirectional microphone. A directional microphone picks up sound from just one direction – the speaker's mouth. Also note that if you want to hear someone seated on the backseat of your car, you will need an extension cord.

Here are some details about the personal amplifier that I refer to:

**Williams Sound Directional Mini Lapel Clip Mic Cardioid MIC 054
Extension Cord (12 feet) WCA 007WC**

I place the personal amplifier in the beverage holder between the two front seats. The extension cord with directional microphone runs along the floor behind the front passenger's seat, up the center beam between the two rear doors, and is fastened with a twist tie to the hanging hand grasp (or clothes hanger) above the top of the rear right door. The directional microphone is now situated exactly where I want it – right above (and slightly in front of) Elise's head.

It is a joy to hear my granddaughter's sweet, clear voice directly in my ear. Now, all she has to do is tone down the loud GaaaRANDMAAAA yell when she wants to get my attention!!