

be preferable.

Maisie MacRae
McGill University

Pat Vaughan, ed.
**LEARNING TO LISTEN:
A BOOK BY MOTHERS OF
HEARING-IMPAIRED CHILDREN.**
Don Mills, Ont:
New Press, 1976.
155 pp. \$3.95.

Educational methods developed for deaf and hearing-impaired children in the past hundred years have concentrated exclusively on the teaching of speech and oral language. Modern educators and researchers have now realized that these types of educational approaches have neglected to meet the real needs of the totally deaf child. Speech has been emphasized at the expense of communication, language, thinking, and the psycho-social development of the deaf child. Current approaches emphasize oral skills but only within the context of an effective communication environment. The auditory training method, as presented in this book, should be an important component of any educational program for the deaf child, although not an exclusive one.

This very readable book presents an interesting format for the communication of information. It consists of the personal experiences of several parents in carrying out the auditory approach, combined with chapters by professionals on auditory training. The central theme of the book is the importance of early intervention after discovery of hearing loss, and one method of action.

The chapter on auditory training is clearly written and provides many helpful and ingenious ideas on how to innovate these techniques at home. In addition, the chapter on

audiology and hearing aids will be of much help. The case histories of the deaf children which indicate some of the emotional reactions to having a handicapped child will be supportive to other parents who may be experiencing similar feelings. The exclusive use of auditory training as presented here is limited in its scope and, by and large, will not be useful by itself for a great majority of parents of deaf children. This would not be so bad if the authors had recognized this fact. Since they have not, the book may be misleading.

Many parents of deaf children try to deny the handicap or the realities of its consequences. This denial often takes the form of a quest from professional to professional to find a "cure" for the deafness, or to grasp at approaches which imply that they will eventually make the child function as if he were a normal "hearing" child. In most situations this fruitless endeavour eventually leads to despair and a feeling of failure. It is extremely important that the family learns to accept the deafness and to deal effectively with it to achieve the "reachable" goal of a normal, healthy deaf child.

It is the impression of the reviewers that the auditory approach presented in *Learning to Listen* fosters this denial of the realities of deafness. The auditory training approach presented in this book is simply a new twist to the traditional oral approach, and there is no evidence available to show that the auditory approach is better. Consequently, this book is not recommended as a general guide for all parents of deaf or hearing impaired children. It may be useful as a supplementary guide for those parents concerned with building up the auditory training component of the larger communication approach which is so necessary for the total development of the deaf child.

Garrett R. Long,
Stephen Springer,
Mackay Center for
Deaf and Crippled
Children. Montreal