

# Instructions for the Children's Video on Aphasia



## Dear SLP,

This video is meant to help young children who are grandchildren of people with aphasia to understand the language and communication difficulties faced by the family member with aphasia. This video also shows the way a child can generate communication with a grandparent suffering from aphasia.

Additionally, the video is intended to serve you, the speech language pathologist, as an aid in guiding family members of people with aphasia.

In 2001, the World Health Organization published its ICF framework. According to this framework, people with disabilities are influenced by their surroundings as well as influence their surroundings (WHO, 2001).

Beyond the insight that healthy family members influence the health status of the ailing person and are influenced by him/her, the WHO has emphasized the clinical importance of providing appropriate rehabilitation services to the family of the person with the disability.

Studies of elderly people with cognitive disabilities have shown that expressions of positive emotion regarding the relationship with the grandparent by adolescent grandchildren are directly related to the grandchildren's level of involvement in the everyday life of the family and the person with the disability (Montserrat et al., 2011).

A study conducted at the Adler Aphasia Center with the participation of grandchildren (ages 4-12) of people with aphasia looked at the children's views regarding communication between them and their aphasia-suffering relative. The study showed a need for a clear and age-appropriate explanation of what aphasia is.

We also identified a need for joint-activity ideas and for learning about adaptive communication methods that can help improve the interaction between grandchildren and their grandparents with aphasia.

We recommend that you view the video before watching it with the family members. It is also advisable that the video be viewed with the parents before it is viewed with the grandchildren.

If you work in a setting with additional staff, such as social workers or occupational therapists, they can also be included in the instructional effort with the families.

### The video:

The video depicts an encounter between a granddaughter and her grandfather, after the grandfather has suffered a stroke. In the wake of the stroke, the grandfather is suffering from aphasia and there are difficulties in communicating with him. The video calls attention to the grandfather's problems with language; the mother in the video explains the problem to the child. The video also presents adaptive means of generating enjoyable/effective communication.

It should be noted that the video may remind viewers of experiences and events in their lives and in the lives of their families. It is important to give the viewers space and time to process and express these memories. We also expect the video to raise questions in the minds of the viewers. Below are examples of questions that might be asked, and possible answers.

### How can I help Grandpa?

You can try to change the way you talk with him. You'll have to speak more slowly and clearly and use hand movements and facial expressions to explain what you mean. You can also use drawings to explain. It's also important to listen to Grandpa patiently. Listen to the different sounds he makes and look at his hand movements. If you want to understand something, you should try to ask Grandpa questions that have "yes" or "no" answers. These are easier than "why" or "how" questions. If you still have difficulty, you can always ask for help from a nearby grownup.

### Will Grandma go back to being the way she was?

Over time, Grandma will learn to communicate better, and you will learn to understand her better. It doesn't seem as though Grandma will go back to speaking like she used to. But you and she will be able to talk to each other and do lots of things together.

### Is it contagious?

Aphasia isn't contagious. You can hug and kiss Grandpa as much as you like.

### Could this happen to other grownups, or to me?

Most people don't have aphasia. I can't promise that it won't happen to anyone else you know, but now that you know what aphasia is, you'll also know how to speak with people who have it.

### Could a headache give me or one of my parents a stroke?

No. Headaches usually happen when we're tired or don't drink enough water. Aphasia can happen after a stroke. A stroke can have many symptoms, such as getting words mixed up, physical weakness, and headaches.

### Is it important that I keep trying to keep in touch with Grandma?

Of course, it's important. Grandma loves you very much and loves to spend time with you. Your time together makes her happy and helps her feel well. Grandma is a very important part of your family, and it's important to keep loving her and spending time with her, even with her aphasia.

### Ideas for joint activities between grandchildren and grandparents with aphasia:

- Card games: games should be chosen whose language component is minimal, such as War, Go Fish, etc.
- Creative/craft activities or making something together.
- Cooking/baking together.
- Going for walks together.
- Stories – choose a short story or make one up, if possible.
- Watching a movie or TV show together.
- Playing iPad or computer games together.



**It's important that the activity be tailored to the interests of the grandchild and the grandparent, as well as to their language abilities, functional abilities, and motor skills.**

The video was produced by the Adler Aphasia Center, Department of Communication Disorders, Hadassah Academic College in Jerusalem.

Please contact the Adler Aphasia Center with questions, comments, and ideas regarding the video, or to schedule an instructional session for children and grandchildren on communicating with a family member who has aphasia.