

To learn without sound

(Continued from pg. 9)

Mrs. McCulloch said the parents also are taught the sign language vocabularies their children use and bring in lists of words which are particularly important to each child.

"We teach such concepts as where, what, hot, cold and how to tell their parents if they are sick or hurt," she said. "The vocabulary depends on their environments, too. It is different if they live in the city or on a farm."

After the preschool program these children usually enter the program for the acoustically handicapped in the Lincoln Public Schools, she said.

Marcia Nash, a vocational rehabilitation counselor, works with the vocationally handicapped in the Lincoln area, placing people from age 16 to 60 in appropriate jobs.

Miss Nash said that although the acoustically handicapped feel the current job squeeze more than other, underemployment is the biggest problem for the deaf, not unemployment.

Dr. George Propp, assistant director of the Specialized Offices for the Deaf, agrees.

Employers sometimes employ deaf people because they will be loyal to the company, being unable to compete with hearing people for jobs in other companies. Executive jobs frequently require use of a telephone and the deaf rarely can seek promotion, Proff said.

One of six

Nebraska Hall on the UN-L campus houses one of the six media centers for the deaf in the United States where visual aids for the handicapped are made.

Propp, one of the many deaf employees at the center, estimated that there about 75 adults in Lincoln, deaf since childhood. Only about 40 of these are in the labor force.

Modern automation is a primary problem in the employment of the deaf, he said.

"Until the last 10 years, there were deaf

linotype operators on most newspapers," he said. "Now they use offset printing, and not many deaf people are trained for this yet. Computers are taking away jobs that deaf people can do, and replacing them with more specialized jobs which require special training."

Propp said the new jobs often require use of telephones and communication devices the deaf cannot use.

Propp said deaf women are most often employed in office jobs that don't require use of telephones or dictaphones. Men, who were once primarily assembly line workers, are finding limited opportunities in mailrooms, printshops, dental technology and tile and carpet installation. But only a few are employed in each field.

Opportunities better

According to Propp, deaf students in Lincoln may go to the Gallaudet College for the Deaf in Washington, D.C., or technical colleges on the east coast or in California. Some decide to remain there because employment opportunities are better.

"Other students often have three years of work experience behind them when they leave high school that the deaf student doesn't have," he said.

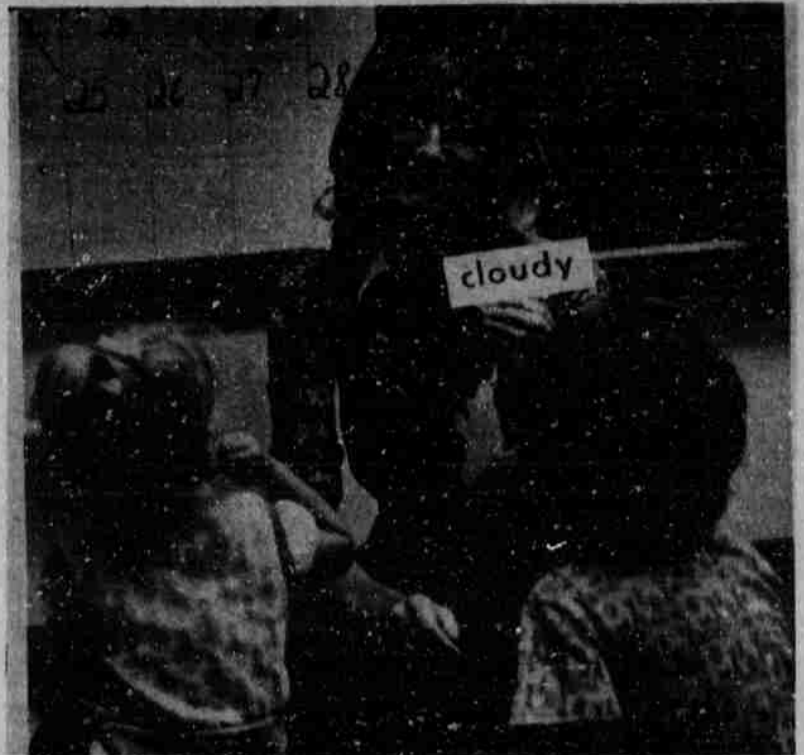
Within family

Communication problems within deaf families can intensify this problem.

"Kids who hear know what jobs are like from friends and relatives. A deaf child may not know what his father does beyond the title of his job because communication between them is so difficult," he said.

Although government aid is scarce, said Propp, early education and placement programs such as those at UN-L are helping an increasing number of the deaf.

Propp said public awareness is important in developing communication between the deaf and the rest of the community.



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