

Including deaf children and young people



How-to guide

1 Overcoming barriers in language and communication



More than 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents who may have little or no experience of deafness or knowledge of how to communicate with a deaf person¹.

It's critical that everyone has the opportunity to develop language and communication skills – but deaf children aren't making the same progress as hearing children. This can have a huge impact on all parts of a deaf child's life – from being able to share their thoughts and feelings and express their needs, to making friends and learning at school. Few deaf children in developing countries have the opportunity to learn sign language – and some aren't able to communicate with even their parents.

The critical time for learning language is in the first three years but most parents of deaf children in developing countries have limited access to services that can support them to acquire language from an early age. Parents may also have little understanding of deafness or how best to communicate with their deaf child.

What you can do

- › Ensure that deaf babies/children are identified as early as possible and that families get the right support on how to communicate with their deaf child.
- › Set up support groups for families of deaf children and community resource groups for educational support, sharing resources and supporting other families and their deaf young children.
- › Provide training in language and communication and deaf awareness for families.
- › Encourage families to develop a positive attitude towards deafness.
- › Ensure that community based rehabilitation workers (CBRW), support workers and deaf role models (DRMs) provide home based support to deaf children and offer individual support, best suited to the needs of the individual and their family.
- › Download our information resources from our [website](#).

¹ The National Deaf Children's Society
www.ndcs.org.uk/about_us/about_the_national_deaf_childrens_society/index.html

2 Overcoming barriers in education



Most deaf children in developing countries have little or no language when they start primary school².

Deafness should not be a barrier to learning and yet at every key point in education, deaf children are falling behind their hearing classmates – and too many aren't getting the support and encouragement they need to achieve. It's not unusual for a deaf child to completely miss out on school in developing countries.

It is essential to have a good command of a first language, either spoken or sign, in order to be able to develop higher level skills of reading, and writing and ultimately to play an active role in society. Sign language is equally effective as a spoken language as a platform for learning literacy skills.

What you can do

- › Increase the use of fluent sign language users in classes of deaf learners, through the use of deaf teachers or deaf teaching assistants supporting teachers who are not proficient in sign language. This is especially important in early years, to ensure deaf children have access to fluent deaf signers.
- › Equip teachers with the right skills and knowledge to teach sign language as a first language.
- › Incorporate mandatory units on language development and the teaching of sign language as a first language into all early childhood development education and lower grade primary teacher training courses (pre- and in-service) for those specialising in inclusive education and/or teaching deaf children.
- › Make sure that mainstream schools provide adapted curricula and teaching materials and that they have appropriate evaluation processes which include the provision of sign language interpreters and extra time to complete tests and exams.
- › Download and use our deaf-friendly resources and teaching materials for deaf children from our [website](#) or [contact us](#) for more information.

² These figures are based on evidence from projects that Deaf Child Worldwide has supported with 21 partners in South Asia (India and Bangladesh) and East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania)

3 Overcoming barriers to independence



In Tanzania, 68% of deaf young people felt that they could not get the same jobs as hearing people³.

Deaf young people aren't always made aware of their options when deciding what to do when they leave school. They may miss out on education or career opportunities because other people don't think they can achieve – and because of this too many deaf young people aren't in any form of education, employment or training. Deaf young people need more support to help them develop confidence, independence and resilience.

What you can do

- › Support deaf role models to advise, mentor, support and inspire younger deaf children through their transition from education to independence.
- › Provide high quality deaf awareness information and training for families and communities, so that they can learn to understand deaf young people's lives, their rights and needs and can support them adequately.
- › Support and train professionals/trainers on how to work with deaf young people.
- › Work with local businesses to raise awareness about deafness so they are better equipped to support the employment of deaf people.
- › Download our consultation reports from our [website](#).

³ Deaf Education Development Programme consultation, September 2017 www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=13759&_ga=2.250539910.1862176668.1536160666-945119546.1534237437

About us

Deaf Child Worldwide is the international arm of the National Deaf Children's Society. We are the UK's leading international charity for deaf children in developing countries where we work to remove the barriers faced by deaf children and young people. We have been working with partner organisations in South Asia, East Africa and Latin America for over 15 years, facilitating work that enables deaf children and young people to be fully included in their family, education and community life.

www.deafchildworldwide.org

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Deaf Child Worldwide is the international arm of the National Deaf Children's Society.
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