
Sound News

Parent Council for Deaf Education
Winter 2010



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Children's Services Edition

President Report



President—Mark Burfield

Recently I was reading a Scout leader handbook as part of training for my position as Assistant State Commissioner for Scouts with Special Needs.

In the section on Scouting for the Disabled, I was intrigued to read:

“It is recommended that great care be taken in the admission of totally deaf persons to normal (Scout) Groups as this hardship is more severe than almost any other disability...”

Noting that the handbook is almost twenty years old I reflected, beyond the subjective tone of this assertion, on how much major advances in technology over recent years - especially the cochlear implant - have dramatically altered the prospects for a majority of deaf and hearing impaired children and their parents.

This week I listened to a radio interview of Professor Bill Gibson from the Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre. He mentioned in the interview that children implanted by age 2 would most likely attend a mainstream school. Ideally, children are now implanted between 6 and 9 months - and I note frequently with bilateral implants.

I share the situation of my profoundly deaf daughter, Anita, who at age 2 was implanted by Prof. Gibson (to whom I am deeply grateful and indebted). Anita has been attending a mainstream school, albeit in a hearing support class, full time from the age of 3 ½ (the first two years in a nursery class) and is now in Year 5. She has been in a mainstream Scout Group from the age of 6 - as a Joey Scout, Cub Scout, and soon as a Scout after she turns 11 in June.

Despite the amazing technology of the cochlear implant, I admit to a certain degree of frustration that my daughter is possibly missing or has missed out on

even better outcomes from the available technology due to circumstances predominantly beyond my control.

For instance, because Anita was born in 1999, she missed out on newborn screening (introduced in late 2002), so was not fully diagnosed as profoundly deaf until age 1. Protocols at the time (long since overhauled) did not allow her to commence candidacy evaluation for a cochlear implant until after wearing hearing aids for at least six months. By this stage Anita was not so ‘hearing aid compliant’ and her implanting was ultimately delayed until age 2. My anxiety during this period was palpable, as I knew intuitively that time was of the essence to maximise the best (language) outcomes for Anita.

After Anita’s Kindergarten year, one of the two hearing support classes at her school was closed. So since then, Anita has been in the resulting K-6 composite class. I raised a concern from the outset that educational outcomes might be compromised in a composite class. Anita’s NAPLAN test results at Year 3 indicated she was in the lowest band for all domains (and scored zero for reading, though Anita can and does read), tending to support this concern. I am naturally curious to see Anita’s results from the recent NAPLAN tests for Year 5.

A soundfield amplification system was not introduced into the classroom until last year, and is still not used in assemblies at the school hall (etc.).

Though the issue of bilateral implants (common now, but virtually unheard of just a decade ago) was initially raised with us about three years ago, Anita was not willing to consider a second implant until recent months, and I was reluctant to force the matter until she was amenable. Now Anita is prepar-

ing for a second implant. I was pleasantly surprised in recent testing that her *receptive* language was assessed at ‘age 19’ level. Her *expressive* language remains well below age-appropriateness.

The point in sharing this information is to highlight the unique situation of each deaf or hearing-impaired child (and indeed of every child!). A challenge for me, and I expect for many parents, is to keep expectations in balance, and also not to unduly ‘compare’ with others. At the same time, we need to keep advocating for the provision, maintaining and improving of services, facilities and devices that will best assist our child/ren. We also need to preserve the rights of parents to choose the appropriate communication method and educational setting for our child/ren, and to ensure that the resulting decision is appropriately supported, recognising in some instances that there may be little or no choice in this matter.

Since my last Report I have attended some great events, including the annual Veronica James Science Challenge for Hearing Impaired Children, the National Deafness Sector Summit (on the theme ‘Generations – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow’), and the jointly sponsored Educators of Deaf Students Association / Deafness Centre, Westmead Children’s Hospital Conference (on ‘Building Resilience in Students and Teachers’). All were very well organised and informative, and a great opportunity to meet and to share with others. I also draw attention to the recent release of the significant report, “Hear Us: Inquiry Into Hearing Health in Australia” by the Senate Community Affairs References Committee.

Mark Burfield

President ■

Staff Report

Welcome to Sound News Winter Edition. We have a focus on child care services for families of deaf children in this edition.

Many parents are currently struggling with the reality of having to decide to go back to work after the birth of their child. With a child with hearing loss, this decision is that much more difficult as parents navigate the best options for the care of their child. Prior to SWISH, this issue was not really on the radar since most children were approaching school age upon diagnosis. With the advent of newborn screening, parents are having to try to find childcare services with environments and staff that meet the needs of their child. This is of course in the landscape of waiting lists for good childcare services. It is not an easy road for families already dealing with so much. We hope we can offer some tips and information in this edition.

Internally, PCDE board and staff members have just taken part in a Vision Day on May 30th. The focus of the day was to build a picture of where we are, where we want to go and how we are going to get there. We were ably supported by the services of a wonderful facilitator, Mr John Mann. John brought many years of experience to bear on our small but committed organisation, and the result was a great day, with much discussion and production and a renewed focus for PCDE and our future.

The message that came through clearly was that PCDE has an organisation

with a very strong team of dedicated parents and staff, and a clear vision for what we do and why we do it. The challenge is to get the word out there to parents and professionals to enable more parents to benefit from being linked to other parents who understand.

A couple of examples of this in action, took place in May, when parents were able to take part in a couple of great sessions, a “Beating Bullying” Workshop at POD Central Sydney and a “Cool Kids Cool Parents” Workshop at Leumeah.

Both sessions provided parents with information and strategies for dealing with issues, such as bullying and developing communication options, that can come up when parenting a deaf child. What was just as important though, was the opportunity for parents to connect with each other and share information. This is of enormous reassurance to parents. One attendee had never spent time with other parents of a deaf or hearing impaired child. She had been struggling on her own (and doing a fantastic job) but really valued the opportunity to share her experience and benefit from others.

I would also like to draw your attention to the recently released Senate Community Affairs Report on Hearing Health which PCDE submitted to and which has been eagerly anticipated. The recommendations in this report relate to all aspects of life for deaf and hearing impaired people in

Australia and some of these recommendations, if taken up, could impact greatly on the outcomes for your deaf or hearing impaired children and their future. Contact Anna or myself at PCDE for a full executive summary of this report. I have listed a couple of recommendations for your information:

Recommendation 5 (chapter five):

The committee recommends that former child clients of Australian Hearing remain eligible for Australian Hearing support until the age of 25. This eligibility is to be subject to a means test. Former child client of Australian Hearing who do not meet the means test are to have the option to access Australian Hearing support on a fee-for-service basis until the age of 25.

Recommendation 10 (chapter five)

The committee recommends that education providers develop professional standards for interpreters working in educational environments. These standards should be based on existing standards, such as the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters paraprofessional level accreditation, or the National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service / Australian Sign Language Interpreter's Association Deaf Relay Certification.

Happy reading and stay warm!

Cheers

Kate Kennedy

Co-ordinator, Information and Advocacy.■



Kate Kennedy



What's On



Employment Information Night

Is your son/daughter about to finish school? Are you at TAFE and need a job when you finish study? Are you confused about what career you should go into? Do you know where to go for help?

Come to the Deaf Society's Employment Information Night and find out more. There will also be many organisations for deaf or hard of hearing setting up stalls with information.

When: **Tuesday 10th August**

6pm –8pm

Where: Deaf Society of NSW
69 Phillip St, Parramatta (entry via Horwood Pl)

More info: Rebekah Rose-Mundy email: rosemundy@deafsociety.com or sms: 0425 025 257

The Deaf Amazing Race

Campbelltown Deaf Club is organising a race for the deaf community.

Where: Koshigaya Park, Camden Road Campbelltown (opp Campbelltown Catholic Club)

When: **Saturday 28th August 2010**
Entries close 18th June 2010

Time: Race kickoff at 9.30am
(contestants need to arrive at 8.30am sharp)

Contact: campbelltowndeafclub@hotmail.com for an entry form and registration

FIFA World Cup 2010

Video reports from all 64 matches of the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™ will be broadcast in International Sign on FIFA.com. Match report videos will be available soon after each game.

17th Sydney Biennale

Lord Mayor community Access Days for people with disabilities

Sunday 20th June 2010

Cockatoo Island

11am: Auslan Tour

2pm: Audio Description tour

Both tours commence at Pier 2/3 Hickson Road, The Rocks

(This year 56 Biennale artists take over Cockatoo Island with 120 artworks. A former prison, shipyard and industrial site, Cockatoo Island is a great venue)

Bookings : access@biennaleofsydney.com.au

Sunday 11th July 2010

Royal Botanic Gardens

11am: Auslan Tour

1pm : Audio Description Tour

Both tours commence at the Palace Garden Gate, Macquarie St (nr Bent), Sydney

Take the Vittoria Biennale artwalk and discover three iconic works on the theme of threatened and threatening nature in Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, located in the heart of the city.

Lord Mayor Community Access Days are presented by the Biennale of Sydney and the City of Sydney, with assistance from Accessible Arts.

Bookings: access@biennaleofsydney.com.au
For further information check out the 17th Biennale of Sydney website at www.bos17.com.

Go Karts for Under 12 yrs

When: **23rd June 2010** (Interpreter provided)

Where: 2 Brabham Drive, Eastern Creek

Time: 10am—1pm Cost: Free

RSVP: 16 June—tvdo@deafsociety.com



SMS Emergency Service and National Relay Service

In April, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy announced his intention to roll out an SMS Emergency Service and fore-shadowed expansions to the NRS to deliver more accessibility to communications services in the future.

THIS IS AN EXTRACT

National Relay Service

Making services accessible is essential for consumers to be able to receive the benefit of communications.

Each year, there are more and more new communications solutions, including mobile phones and computer software, that are improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

I believe a future National Relay Service may provide the right vehicle for Government to support these developing equipment and service needs.

The Service has become a vital communication tool for members of the deaf, hearing and speech impaired communities, providing equitable access to a standard telephone service.

Emerging technologies and applications, along with the potential of the NBN to deliver new applications, provide a timely opportunity to consider the evolution of the National Relay Service.

I am pleased to announce today that I have asked my Department to conduct, in conjunction with the ACMA, a comprehensive community consultation process, to explore the way the Service could be improved and developed for the future. (note from Deafness Forum: think Video Relay Service and captioned telephone!)

SMS Emergency Service

Also in 2009, the ACMA conducted a technical feasibility study, into the provision of an SMS emergency service for people who are deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired.

These communities currently have limited access to emergency services outside of the home when they cannot access a text telephone, or modem, to call the dedicated National Relay Service emergency number, '106'.



The study raises a range of technical and legislative issues that would need to be overcome before a service of this nature could be implemented.

However, today I am announcing my intention to establish an SMS emergency service for people with disabilities, and I have asked my Department to address these implementation issues as a matter of priority.

The Full speech is at <http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/speeches/2010/006>

Well done to everyone who has been involved in lobbying for these items for quite some time!

What's New

Portal growing

The ABC will introduce captions for the hearing impaired on its web-based TV portal, iView. The captions will be available for all prime-time shows on iView. The move is a powerful indicator the ABC places on the service– in February it carried 188 programs, which clocked up 2954 million views. The portals most popular programs are *The IT Crowd*, *Doctor Who*, *The Colbert Report*, *Kevin McCloud's Grand Tour* and *Silent Witness*.

Go to www.abc.net.au/iview



Once you start the program, you can activate captions by clicking on the cc button to the right of the player controls.

Parent Support– Jasmine’s Story

Jasmine’s hearing loss was first diagnosed when she was just three days old (thanks to the SWISH Program). As first time parents, we were still grappling with the enormity of what it means to suddenly have a child in our lives, let alone trying to comprehend any additional needs she may require. (We still hadn’t agreed on how to swaddle her - how on earth were we going to manage any other interventions she would require?)

As a result of such early diagnosis, we were able to spend some time researching our next course of action. What would Jasmine need? How severe was her loss? Would she be able to attend regular school? What about childcare?

After many more hospital visits and testing it was confirmed that Jasmine had a moderate bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. She would need to wear hearing aids. The hospital gave us a huge folder called ‘Choices’. We read the stories, looked at all the pamphlets and spent time discussing all our options. The first few months of Jasmine’s life, we spent most of our time on the internet and calling organisations to find out about ‘Early Intervention’ (a term I had never even heard of, and now use just about every day!). Unfortunately our experiences were not very positive to start with. Most organisations didn’t cater for Jasmine. Some only dealt with adults, some only with profoundly deaf children, some were too far away geographically and some said her level of loss was borderline and she probably would not make it into their programs.

We were exhausted and unsure of where to go from here... when we finally got a phone call from the RIDBC



Jasmine

who said that they would come and visit us in our home to discuss Jasmine’s needs. Our experience then turned around completely and we were blessed with a wonderful Speech Therapist/Teacher who spent the next six weeks coming to our home and ‘teaching’ both ourselves and Jasmine games and activities that we could play to encourage her language development. It was such a relief to know that we were finally on the right path with the right organisation, and Jasmine’s language acquisition is improving daily!

The question of childcare was another story altogether! Apparently in NSW, this is something that should have been done whilst she was still in utero, as most childcares have waiting lists two years long!!! We eventually found one that was willing to give us a couple of days a week. RIDBC kindly went out and spoke to the Director and Carers to help them understand how Jasmine’s individual needs might be catered for. This covered areas such as the acoustic environment within the centre, down to practical issues such as protecting Jasmine’s hearing aids during water play.

“ Some of the questions we had to think about when choosing childcare were;

How do we explain the hearing aids to the other children?

How do we instruct the other children not to play with the hearing aids or alert a Carer if Jasmine had taken them out? ...”

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How do we explain the hearing aids to the other children?

How do we instruct the other children not to play with the hearing aids or alert a Carer if Jasmine had taken them out?

What additional training will be required by the Carers to look after the hearing aids?

What happens when there are relief staff who will have not been trained?

Where do we keep the hearing aids in safe place so they don't become a choking hazard for other children?

A parent without these concerns simply wants to know about sleeping, eating, playing

and what happens in emergencies.

Well, we wanted to know all of the above and more!

After just a few weeks of leaving Jasmine, we were advised that Jasmine should be moved to a different group as "it would be best for Jasmine", and that "she will get more attention in the other group", etc. Unfortunately, in the absence of any clear communication as to any concrete problems with Jasmine, we were forced to consider the possibility that there was an issue with the centre caring for Jasmine (and that this might be something to do with her hearing loss).

We were forced to make a number of calls to determine the appropriate course of ac-

tion. Within a few weeks we had eventually got to the bottom of the problem (non hearing loss related) but we still walked away feeling quite disappointed in the whole process.

We were also concerned that we might still face the same issues if any future concerns arose. Our lessons learned were that clear, concise and timely communication is required between the parents and the childcare staff to provide a positive outcome.

These experiences have taught us that it can be very overwhelming at first, but perseverance and being a strong advocate for your child will get the best results.

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Profile : Waterford Pre-School, Waverley

The staff of Waterford Pre-school at Waverley adopt a wide, varietal approach to applying methodology to the business of teaching and supporting early learners. Their guiding principle is that every child is different and therefore what is best for every child is different. They believe in play-based education for early learners, with specialist support for those with special needs.

As a centre, they are unusual in that they have a special education teacher on staff, Francine Darvill. Another apparent distinguishing feature of Waterford is the maturity of the staff, who have many years of experience between them. It would be fair to say that many pre-schools do not have the benefit of such experienced and highly-qualified staff.

Historically, Waterford Pre-school was originally the teacher training facility for the Institute of Early Childhood. The institute has since amalgamated with Macquarie University, but its legacy of best practice has remained, according to staff. It was set up to be a model pre-school and it has strived to remain that way since its building was bought by Waverley College and it was converted into a community based pre-school. It also receives additional subsidy from the college and support in terms of library facilities and the like.

We discussed with Waterford's director Sue Cassell, how Waterford came to have such a good reputation when it came to providing for children with a wide spectrum of hearing loss, from mild to profoundly deaf. Location has been a factor, because there is a complete absence of specialist services for children with hearing issues in the Eastern Suburbs. Many parents have been forced to put their children in taxis and sent them to North Rocks and Castle Hill to get the children appropriate

support and she believes that this is just not good enough. She also noted that even when parents have decided to go with such an option, it makes transition to school difficult, because it is hard to co-ordinate an effective transition program between say, Bondi and Castle Hill.

There is a consciousness of the space and how it works for a child with hearing loss, in that there are quiet areas and appropriate seating arrangements. Groups are divided into smaller groups for specific activities to minimise noise as an issue. At all times, children are made to feel that they are part of the group and not singled out because of their special need. Even so, the pre-school is not working with FM devices or sound field systems yet and could benefit from

funding for technological improvements.

On a daily basis they work with 30 children, who attend for either two or three days per week. Of their entire cohort, there are six children with special needs, one of whom has bilateral cochlear implants and the other with hearing aids. The fee is \$50 per day per child and there is no fee relief available. Inclusion support funding is available for children with special needs, if the funding for a specific child has not already been allocated elsewhere.

Children can be placed on the waiting list from the age of 2 and waiting list forms can be found on the Waverley College website.

Written by Anna Messariti



Waterford Pre-School, Waverley

Family Day Care and In Home Care

PCDE asked Family Day Care Services to provide an overview of what they do and what services can be accessed by parents of a child with hearing loss.

Family Day Care is a very flexible childcare service where registered Carers care for 5 children (including their own) under the age of 5 years or 7 children including school aged children in their own home.

A Coordination Unit managed by a sponsoring body, for example a local Government body eg: Council, supports, resources and ensures Carers follow current Children's Services Regulations, Quality Assurance System and Scheme Policies.

Family Day Care Services will offer any, or all, of the following types of care for children aged up to 12 years:

- ◇ Full time or part time Care for children with additional needs
- ◇ Overnight care
- ◇ Weekend care
- ◇ Before and After school care
- ◇ School Holiday care
- ◇ Occasional care
- ◇ Emergency care
- ◇ Respite care

Many Family Day Care services provide play sessions for children in care with their carers.

Carers, where possible are able to deliver and collect children from local kindergarten sessions, or school. This enables family groups to stay together in the care environment.

Family Day Care complies with State Standards, Regulations and the Family Day Care Quality Assur-



Dee Chapman, a carer from Camden scheme and children in her care.

ance System which is part of the National Childcare Accreditation System. Families are able to access the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate.

In Home Care is a flexible form of child care where an approved carer provides care in the child's home. In Home Care is targeted to families unable to access existing child care services, one of the criteria being that the child or any other child with whom the child lives, has an illness or disability

In Home Care providers are required to adhere to the interim standards for In Home Care that were introduced in 2008. The Australian Government continues to work with the state govern-

ment to develop National Standards for In Home Care

Inclusion Support Subsidy

The Inclusion Support Subsidy is available to Family Day Care carers and In Home Care carers in recognition of the additional care and attention required by a child or children with ongoing high support needs in their care and the impact this has on the carer. There is a 2 tier system in place for the Inclusion Support Subsidy. Under tier 1, carers caring for an eligible child may be approved for \$4.24 per hour where the impact of caring for the child has a mild impact on the carer. Under tier 2 carers may be eligible for a payment of \$8.48 per hour where it is determined that the child being cared for has a

Family Day Care and In Home Care (cont'd)

significant impact on the carers capacity to include that child in the care environment, resulting in the carer needing to carry less than the full complement of children or in the case of In Home Care the impact on the carer's capacity to include that child in the care environment. These payments are made directly to the carers. For more information visit: www.deewr.gov.au

Child Care Benefit

Families using Family Day Care and In Home Care are eligible to apply for Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate through Centrelink. For further information contact Centrelink on tel: 136150 or visit: www.centrelink.gov.au

The NSW Family Day Care Association is the peak body for Family Day Care in NSW. The NSWFDCA role is:

- ◇ To promote the well-being of children and to encourage discussion and exchange ideas relating to children and their needs
- ◇ To inform and support those involved in Family Day Care.
- ◇ To coordinate and act on problems, specific to Family Day Care in NSW
- ◇ To act as a body on research, education, publicity and submissions relating to Family Day Care
- ◇ To disseminate information relating to Family Day Care
- ◇ To act as an advisory body
- ◇ To liaise with Government and non-government organisation
- ◇ To provide training opportunities for the FDC sector through PEAK Training and the PSSP program

Information regarding your closest Coordination Unit can be found on the NSWFDCA website: www.nswfdc.org.au or telephone a Project Officer on 1800 157 818 press 2 for FDC .

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Childcare Access Hotline (for information on childcare vacancies, childcare services in your area, quality issues, types of childcare and government assistance with childcare cost). The line is open Monday to Friday, 8am to 9pm EST; freecall 1800 670 305

National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC): www.ncac.gov.au or call 1300 136 554 (local call cost) Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm EST.

Family Day Care Australia: www.familydaycare.com.au : freecall 1800 670 305

National Association of Community Based Children's Services (NACBCS): www.nacbcs.org.au ; phone 03 9486 3455

Childcare Association Australia: www.childcareaustralia.org.au

Centrelink: 136150 or visit www.centrelink.gov.au for information regarding childcare rebate and childcare benefit.

Inclusion Support Subsidy: This payment is made directly to the carers or centre, and will assist services with extra support for the child with special needs in childcare: www.deewr.gov.au

State/ Territory government contacts: If you think a childcare centre is in breach of regulatory requirements (eg. Short staffed, unsafe environment), you can complain to the state or territory body that licences the centre. go to www.ncac.gov.au/links/state_licensing_index.asp for a list of contacts.

Available funding for children with a hearing loss

What support services are available to children with a hearing loss ,who wish to attend their local childcare centre, preschool or family day care?

Inclusion Support Subsidy (federal funding)

On 1 July 2006 the Australian Government introduced the child care Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) designed to encourage child care providers to accept more children with special needs. The ISS replaces the old Special Needs Subsidy and the Disabled Supplementary Services Payment and will provide financial support to care providers who accept children with additional needs.

The ISS aims to build the capacity of child care services to successfully include children with additional needs by providing funding for additional staff, advice, resources, training or specialised equipment. The Government says the new model will enable greater flexibility and responsiveness in service provision by providing holistic support for children with high ongoing support needs, irrespective of the type of service the family chooses to use.

All centres and preschools have access to this subsidy. Parents can ask the centre what the subsidy arrangements are. I.e. kU centres absorb the gap payment for this subsidy.

The Government says this will enable carers to provide appropriate care for children with high ongoing support needs, and that the new system will provide those children with the opportunity to learn and develop alongside other children.

SCAN - The Supporting Children with Additional Needs (state government funding)

Provides funding to eligible NSW services to help children with additional needs access a quality preschool, occasional care, vacation care experience. http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/scan_broch.pdf

Intervention Support Program (ISP)

Provides supplementary support towards the cost of delivery of educational services for children with disabilities. This program supports learning and educational development opportunities for children with disabilities who are below school age and are attending non-profit early childhood settings which prepare them for or support their inclusion into regular preschools and schools. This funding is available through the Department of Education and Training (02) 9266 8222. Guidelines and application forms can be found at www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/isp



Tips for parents deciding on Childcare Services

Here are some ideas to consider when choosing childcare:

- ◇ Check out the environment, how acoustically is it set up? Eg. Carpeting, curtaining, traffic noise etc.
- ◇ Check what qualifications and experience do staff members have. Is there anyone on staff specifically trained to care for hearing impaired children? Does the carer look after similar children or have they in the past?
- ◇ What is the carer to child ratio?
- ◇ Can I claim child care benefit and child care rebate if I choose this centre?
- ◇ Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS). All centres and pre-schools have access to this subsidy. Parents can ask the centre what is the subsidy arrangements are. Ie. KU centres absorb the gap payment for this subsidy.
- ◇ Your Early Intervention therapist can visit your childcare centre to inform and advise. Would the carer be willing to work with and accept advice from any other professionals you and your child are involved with?
- ◇ Do staff have an awareness of FM's or are they willing to learn?
- ◇ Are they well resourced with visual aids eg puppets, felt boards etc
- ◇ Do staff have a strong commitment to inclusion of all children at the Centre?
- ◇ Can your child be included in established routines with minimal disruption?
- ◇ Will the centre provide an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child in order to plan and chart your child's outcomes? Insist on your involvement in the development of this program.
- ◇ What is the carer's attitude to people with disabilities in general? What is the carer's attitude towards your child and their hearing loss?
- ◇ Does the carer seem welcoming and friendly or do you sense some hesitancy in their treatment of your child?
- ◇ Do you like the way the carer interacts with your child on your visit and does your child respond well to their attention?
- ◇ Visit the childcare service more than once, and spend time observing how the staff interact with the children. Do the children seem happy and engaged in activities, or do they look bored/. Does the centre look like a happy place to be? ■



It is not necessary to give each service all the details pertaining to your child's hearing loss, but make sure you provide enough information for the provider to discuss the program and child care options.

Withholding information about your child's needs is not advisable as it may mean your child is accepted in to a service which cannot adequately provide for them. By providing an honest and realistic picture of your child's needs you will help to ensure they receive the child care they require.

How do I Keep Hearing Aids on my Baby or Toddler?

For Parents of Children new to wearing hearing aids, just keeping them on is a challenge.

Here are a few guidelines to help you and your child adjust to this new world.

What if my baby/child cries or pulls the hearing aids out?

Working through the child's resistance to having the hearing aids put on takes courage! You must be convinced that the benefits the child will get from wearing hearing aids will outweigh the child's discomfort in adjusting to something new.

Your child does not yet know that the hearing aids will bring him sound. Talk and laugh with your child as you put the aids on - surely this can't be all bad if Mum is smiling and joking!

The caregiver must be the one who makes the decisions about when the child's hearing aids are removed. When the child takes an aid off, calmly replace it and distract him with a toy or game. If it is close to the time when you would be removing his aids, play with him for at least five minutes before doing



so, then tell him, "Time to take your hearing aids off."

Remove the hearing aids without a lot of fanfare. Do not associate removal of the aids with expressions of relief or happiness.

A normally hearing baby listens for about 10 hours a day, 365 days a year. That adds up to 3,650 listening hours per year!

A normally hearing toddler or preschooler listens about 12 hours per day 365 days per year. That adds up to 4,380 listening hours per year.

If a toddler or preschooler only wears amplification only at preschool (about 2.75 hours a day) it would take 9 years for the child to have as much listening experience as a hearing preschooler or a preschooler with hearing loss that wears amplification all waking hours (12 hours). ■

Excerpts of What Should I Expect have been reprinted with permission from *For Families Guidebook* (1997), Hearing & Speech Institute, Portland Or, and *Talk Around the Clock*, AG Bell Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (2003) (Reproducible materials for families.)

Nova Employment and Training

Nova has a specialised free Deaf service funded by the Federal Government to help people who are Deaf or hearing impaired find work

We help you:

- Choose your job
- Find your job
- Support you at your job until you are okay

If you are looking for work in Sydney or Wollongong, contact us for an appointment

TTY 4725 8395—Fax 4625 5955—Phone 4625 7888—SMS 0424 503 652

david@novaemployment.com.au—www.novaemployment.com.au—www.deafjobs.com.au

POD Winter Information Sessions

Put on your winter woollies and come along to our events planned below



Have your Say about SWISH:

SWISH focus group at POD Northern Sydney on Monday 28th June at 7pm. Supper Provided. RSVP to anna@pcde.org

This one-off session is being facilitated by Health Outcomes Australia, the consultancy that has been employed to evaluate the SWISH (State wide Infant Screening Hearing) program in NSW. We are asking parents who have been through SWISH to come along and provide feedback to these consultants on what it was like for them, what worked, what didn't, and what could be improved. Please pass this info onto parents you know who would be interested.

School holiday Activity for POD Families:

Morning Tea and Demonstration of AI –Live on Wednesday 7th July at 10.30am, 5 Thomas Holt Dr, Macquarie Park, (North Ryde).

RSVP to Karalyn at karalyn.church@ai-media.tv

Bring the kids and come and have morning tea and experience Ai-Live, new access technology that brings live captioning into the classroom. Come along and find out what it is and how it could benefit your child. All welcome.

Parents, Why Not Join a POD Group?

- POD Northern Sydney (North, North West)** meets on the last Monday of every month at Ku-ring-gai Library Meeting room, 799 Pacific Highway Gordon at 7pm
- POD Central Sydney (East, Inner West)** meets on the first Wednesday of every month at Centennial Park School, 75 Avoca St, Randwick at 7pm
- POD Macarthur (South, Southwest)** meets via email or at regular information sessions.

POD is your local parent support group which allows you to connect with other parents of deaf and hearing impaired children and gather information and ideas on all sorts of topics. Parents are a great source of support and reassurance too.

If you are not on our email distribution list, and would like to receive regular updates on POD groups and information sessions in your area, please contact anna@pcde.org or phone 02 9871 3049.



Gift moves Hills mums to tears

MOTHERS were reduced to tears when a Hills businessman wrote a cheque for \$7500 to help secure the work of their Kellyville-based centre which helps children with hearing difficulties.

The surprise donation bumped the group's fundraising total to \$105,000 - exactly half the money they need to keep the Hear the Children Early Intervention Centre running.

The centre provides vital therapy, free of charge, to hearing-impaired babies and children in the Hills district.

Ashley Pittard, chairman of funds management company Pittard and Partners visited the centre with the Mitchell Federal Liberal MP Alex Hawke.

Hear the Children vice-president Yvonne Keane said: "This donation

was completely unexpected and so incredibly generous, that we just burst into tears.

"Every cent we raise is so hard fought for that for Mr Pittard to simply walk in off the street and write out a \$7500 cheque, was extraordinarily moving."

Mr Pittard said: "With two children of my own I felt an immediate connection with these mothers and what they were trying to achieve for their children.

"The work the centre does in helping hearing-impaired babies and children to learn to speak is quite simply astonishing. The ongoing efforts of these amazing mums in keeping this centre running is truly inspirational."

Previously run by St Gabriels at Castle Hill, Hear the Children provides vital auditory verbal therapy, free-of-



charge, to babies and children from birth to six years who have a hearing impairment and are fitted with hearing aid/s and or Cochlear implant/s in the Hills area. ■

Source: Hills Shire Times 21April 2010 By: Bev Jordan



Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

Early Childhood Services (Hearing Impairment)

- RIDBC Early Learning Program (Hearing Impairment)
Located at North Rocks and a number of smaller outlets across Sydney and the Central Coast, this service provides largely centre based individual and group sessions to support children who have significant hearing impairment from birth to preschool or school entry, by working with their families.

- RIDBC Early Learning Program (Hunter)
Located at Lake Macquarie near Newcastle, this service provides centre based individual and small group sessions for families with young children who have a significant hearing or vision impairment from birth until preschool or school entry.

- RIDBC Rockie Woolfit Preschool
Located at North Rocks, this preschool provides a reverse integration program. The children attending Rockie Woolfit Preschool use hearing aids and/or cochlear implants to develop listening and spoken language for communication. Children are enrolled from 2 years of age.

- RIDBC (Napaan) Preschool
Located at Glenmore Park near Penrith, this service provides a reverse integration preschool. Children with significant hearing or vision impairment are enrolled from three years to school entry. Children who have a hearing impairment are taught to develop listening and spoken language for communication.

- RIDBC (Hunter) Preschool
Located at Lake Macquarie, this preschool provides a reverse integration program. Children who have significant hearing or vision impairment are enrolled from 3 years to school entry.

Contact: Sue Benzle on (02) 9872 0217

RIDBC Roberta Reid Preschool

Located at North Rocks, this preschool provides a regular curriculum for children who use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) as their first language. Deaf children are enrolled from 2 years of age.

Contact: Jodie Lenton on (02) 9672 0306

RIDBC Thomas Pattison School

Located at North Rocks, the Thomas Pattison School provides a regular curriculum for students from Kindergarten to Year 10 who use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) as their first language.

Contact: Julie Kirkness on (02) 9672 0367

RIDBC Garfield Barwick School

Located at North Parramatta, the Garfield Barwick School provides an auditory/verbal program for children from Kindergarten to Year 8 who have significant hearing impairment and a consequential delay in language development.

Contact: Alan Kelly on (02) 9683 5400

RIDBC School Support Services

Part of the Garfield Barwick Centre, this service provides regular specialist teaching support for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 who are enrolled in independent schools in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Area. RIDBC also provides a Consultancy Service to assist schools to provide appropriate and inclusive curriculum delivery to students with impaired hearing.

Contact: Alan Kelly on (02) 9683 5400

RIDBC Alice Betteridge School

Located at North Rocks, the Alice Betteridge School provides school education to children aged 4.5 to 18 years who have significant sensory impairment together with moderate intellectual impairment.

Contact: Jacqui Cashmore on (02) 9672 0292

RIDBC Teleschool

RIDBC provides high quality education services and support to families living in rural and regional areas of Australia who have a child diagnosed with hearing and/or vision impairment. This service is provided to families using a variety of technologies such as videoconferencing, telephone, email, Internet and fax.

Contact: Melissa McCarthy on 1300 131 523 (local call cost)

Jim Patrick Audiology Centre

Located at North Rocks, this centre offers a full range of audiological services to children by paediatric audiologists.

Contact: Genele Cook (02) 9872 0372

Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

361-365 North Rocks Road
North Rocks, NSW 2151

Phone: (02) 9872 0311
Fax: (02) 9871 2196

Ai-Live—New Access Technology

Ai-Media (Access Innovation Media) unveiled a World-First Education Innovation for Deaf School Students at the National Deafness Sector Summit on Friday 23 April 21 April 2010.

The new Ai-Media service enables deaf and hearing impaired students to participate fully in mainstream schools and classrooms.

The service will also create new employment and training opportunities at a local community level for people who will be recruited to provide the service.

Access Innovation Media (Ai-Media) is a social enterprise that develops and delivers access services for media, education, business and government clients to ensure their content is available to people with hearing and vision impairments.

In late 2006, Ai Media began to look at ways to deliver live captioning into schools. Audio from the classroom, from the teacher was taken out and streamed to their captioners in a remote loca-

tion. The captioners in turn, re-spoke that into streaming text software, which appeared on the laptop of the students in the classroom in less than 7 seconds. This enables children using this device to engage with the teacher not just the interpreter.

Ai Media are currently preparing for the National Pilot to deliver real-time captioning directly to the deaf/hearing impaired students in mainstream schools. The pilot will commence in 2011. The aim of the pilot is to roll out this solution to 62 students or 35 schools. The Ai Media team is seeking representations of deaf/hearing impaired students in both metropolitan and regional schools in each State or Territory. Ai-Media is currently receiving applications from schools who have met the selection criteria.

See diagram below and visit Ai media's website to watch the video on how this works: www.ai-media.tv

Ai-Media introduced large-scale cost-effective captioning to subscription television in 2004 – a service that has now grown to deliver over 120,000 hours across 45 channels annually.

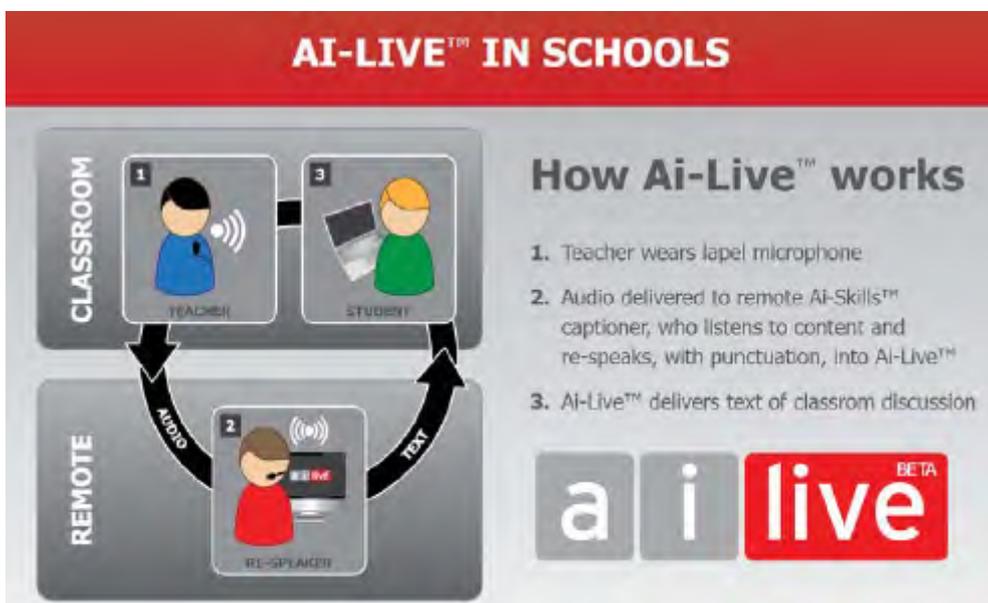


One of Ai Media's re-speaking captioners

Media's new schools captioning solution will be showcased on ABC1's The New Inventors airing at 8pm **Wednesday June 23**. It includes a fantastic live demonstration of Ai-Live as well as the panel Q/A and probed by James O'Loughlin.

If you would like an information pack by mail, send a request to info@ai-media.tv leaving your name and postal details.

Parents are advised to go to www.ai-live.com to register their interest as a parent in this solution to become part of the contacts database for Ai-Live. Ai Media will be releasing an electronic newsletter later this month so if you are interested, subscribe on their corporate site www.ai-media.tv



Ai Media will also be giving PCDE parents and children a live demonstration during the school holidays in their office at 5 Thomas Holt Dr, Macquarie Park NSW 2113.

The demonstration is on **Wednesday 7th July 2010** at 10.30—11.30am with morning tea provided.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Karalyn Church on 9813 6772 or email: karalyn.church@ai-media.tv

The Sounds of Silence

Karli Detman provides a window into her family's world, in which she and her husband, who are deaf, parent their three children, who can hear.

My husband, Simon, and I often joke that our children – Bernhard, eight, Magnus, six, and Opal, two – were born with special needs. They can hear. As children of deaf parents, they are growing up in a culture that has many strengths but does not automatically cater for the stimulation their 'extra' sense requires. While the world views deaf people as having special needs, the perception is reversed in our community, and the fact that our children can hear means they have specific requirements that we, as proud parents, have to extend ourselves to meet. Our commitment to this started early when, despite a strong genetic possibility of deafness, Bernhard was born hearing.

Simon and I were mindful of providing sensory experiences in all their forms, and Bernhard's baby days were a mosaic of kisses and raspberries on the fairy-floss softness of his skin, and adventures in the garden. In the afternoons, we'd come inside and I'd smile and clap as Bernhard made experimental baby signs with soft, dimpled hands. Often, before a nap, we'd play around with fairytales and classic stories in Auslan.

Simon and I were confident we were doing a great job as our children climbed from the cuddly cocoon of babyhood into the broader realm of childhood. Still, occasionally a pensive mood overcame me and I wondered: did my children hear?

They heard in the literal sense, of course, but just as one person can watch a sinking sun and see exactly that, while another sees a symphony of reverence and hope lighting up the heavens, there were differences, I presumed, in the experience of hearing.

Dancing with my children, I enjoyed the feeling of the musical beats vibrating in my heart, but was aware of the paradox the different sensory input we were receiving created as we lived the same moment, but experienced the layers and nuances of it in different ways. "What does music sound like to you?" I'd sign to my children, following the advice of an older, wiser deaf lady who urged me to "ask into life" what I couldn't imagine. "Like fairies tip-toeing outside my bedroom window on a frosty morning," Magnus said once, taking my breath away.

Still, the fact that I am extremely deaf has limited my ability to imagine the auditory world they live in. Simon speaks well, and is adept, in particular, at making jokes, creating a bridge into their world that I can't share, but celebrate the existence of.

At times, particularly when my hearing aids are transmitting such a cacophony that I turn them off and revel in the velvety peace, I see silence as a blessing, and the quieter



world we live in as a gift to our children. This idea was reinforced recently when Magnus lay cuddling and scratching his teddy bear – a sure sign that a hefty dose of comfort is required. "School is too noisy," he burst out when I lay beside him and asked in Auslan if he was okay.

"Assembly is noisy. Class time is noisy. Play time is noisy. No matter where a kid goes, he can't get any silence!" Laughter is a universal language, and there was plenty of it in our house that afternoon!

In addition to obsessing over the needs of our 'Three Wise Monkeys', I have learned to be insightful about the impact of my own childhood experiences. My husband was an only child born to deaf parents, but was raised bilingually, learning both Auslan and English from an early age. I, on the other hand, had a hearing mother, father, brother and sister, and only one deaf sibling. My sister and I were raised monolingually, struggling to learn English and lip-read words we had never

(Continued on page 18)

heard spoken. It wasn't until we were teenagers that we learned to sign effectively, and today, I am still affected by the family interaction I missed out on. My children understand that while it's okay for them to use English at other times, it's important that they use Auslan, and Auslan only, at the table.

Research has shown that bilingual children tend to have an intellectual edge over their peers, and we see our children's dual use of language positively, but encouraging others to see it that way has, at times, been a challenge. Once, the manager of the creche my son attended told me she had had to ask Bernhard not to sign to her because she couldn't understand him, and to "use his words" instead. I explained that it was important not to stop Bernhard from using Auslan, or to make him feel bad about it, and suggested she try saying something like, 'You know, you're very clever to be able to use two languages – I can't. Do you think you could help me by teaching me some of your signs?'

The practical aspects of parenting deaf have been relatively easy to manage. When our children were babies, for example, we had a monitor that alerted us to their crying by vibrating. Sometimes we do miss when they get hurt, and they understand that they have to come to us and tell us what has happened. As a deaf mother, I check on them more often than a hearing mother might feel the need to, but overall, the emotional aspects have been far trickier to deal with.

Last week, Bernhard emerged from school looking miserable. He complained, in an agitated burst of signing, about the heat, his homework, and wanting to have someone over to play, and remained sullen as we

rode our bikes home. When we arrived home, he flopped into the sandpit. I helped Magnus from his bike and unstrapped Opal from her toddler seat, then joined Bernhard, slowly running the sun-warmed sand through my fingers and waiting for him to calm down. Finally, he was able to find a focus for his distress and confusion: "I wish you weren't deaf, Mum". I swallowed hard, staving off the rush of defensiveness and anger that made me want to insist that I'm happy, whole and perfectly okay as a deaf person. Instead, I said that while his worries weren't mine, I would listen to him carefully, and try to help him figure out why it was important to him that I be able to hear. "What bothers you most about having deaf parents?" I asked. "I don't like it that you can't hear the announcements at school," he said emphatically. I probed for the deeper meaning, the subtext, of his complaint. There had been times when Simon and I thought deeply about the fact that Magnus and Opal seemed to speak to Bernhard more often than they did to us, simply because we had to be in their line of sight in order for them to communicate with us, whereas Bernhard could hear them from almost anywhere.

Now, I wondered if despite our determination not to, we'd somehow allowed a heightened sense of responsibility, a feeling of being burdened, to develop in our precious boy. Bernhard focused on his sandcastle, signalling that he didn't want to talk any more.

Over our evening meal, Simon and I avoided pressuring Bernhard – he had already said he wished I could hear his school announcements, and my instinct told me to show empathy and respect rather than to push for a better or more worthy reason



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for his angst. Instead, we chose to share some instances when being deaf had been an inconvenience to us, too. Simon launched into a spirited and funny story in Auslan, complete with slapstick facial expressions and dramatic body language.

As I watched Bernhard enjoying and assimilating the story, I hoped he would learn resilience, optimism and the life skills to not only reframe adversity as challenge, but to triumph over the challenges he, like all children, was destined to face.

Simon's eyes met mine over the heads of Bernhard, Magnus and Opal in one of those rare family moments when all that's important aligns, and I wondered if he was basking in the same feelings in which I was: love, pride, happiness and a bubbling sense of gratitude that the five of us get to live our lives together and be a family. ■

Source: Sydney's Child March 2010



The Shepherd Centre

Giving deaf children a voice



Programs

The Shepherd Centre focuses on developing listening and spoken language in children with hearing loss. We have a number of programs for children with hearing loss and their families

- Early Intervention
- First Sounds Cochlear Implant Program (a joint initiative with The Sydney Children's Hospital)
- Reverse Integration Preschools at Wollongong and Liverpool
- Correspondence Programs
- Professional Training Workshops

Telephone for more details:

(02) 9351 7888

The Shepherd Centre has various sites located at

- Sydney (Darlington)
- Liverpool (Casula)
- Roseville
- Wollongong
- Canberra

Regular Workshops are held for families along with professionals throughout the year with one major Residential Workshop held in January 2010 during the week of 17 – 22 January in Sydney.

Further short intensive workshops are planned throughout the year for North and South New South Wales.

To register your interest, please contact Sharon Hill via email at enquiries@shepherdcentre.com.au or telephonically on 9351 7888.

Executive Committee

President *Mark Burfield*
Vice President *Leonie Jackson*
Treasurer *Amanda Li*
Secretary *Vicki Cox*

Ordinary Committee Members

Aileen Ryan
Katrina Marshall
Anna Messariti

Advertising

Full page \$220 incl. GST
Half page \$110 incl. GST
Quarter page \$55 incl. GST
For more information contact anna@pcde.org.

Deadlines

Sound News Spring 2010: 21 August, 2010. Articles should be sent to anna@pcde.org.

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Disclaimer: Views expressed in Sound News are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Parent Council for Deaf Education.

Sound News is produced by Parent Council for Deaf Education to inform and educate families with a child who is deaf or hearing impaired.

Enquiries, comments and suggestions are welcome.

Note: We use the term 'deaf' to mean all types of deafness.

Cover artwork by:
Gillian Parsonage.

Our mission:

‘To empower parents in NSW to support their children who are deaf or hearing impaired in reaching their full potential through information, support networks and representation.’



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Cover artwork is by Gillian Parsonage. Gillian is 10 years old and communicates using Auslan. She attends the bilingual school, Thomas Pattison at RIDBC. She loves drawing, doing jigsaw puzzles and Pokemon. Her favourite foods are chocolate and sushi.

(If you would like your child's artwork to feature on our cover of Sound News, please send it to PCDE, PO Box 4748, North Rocks, NSW 2151)