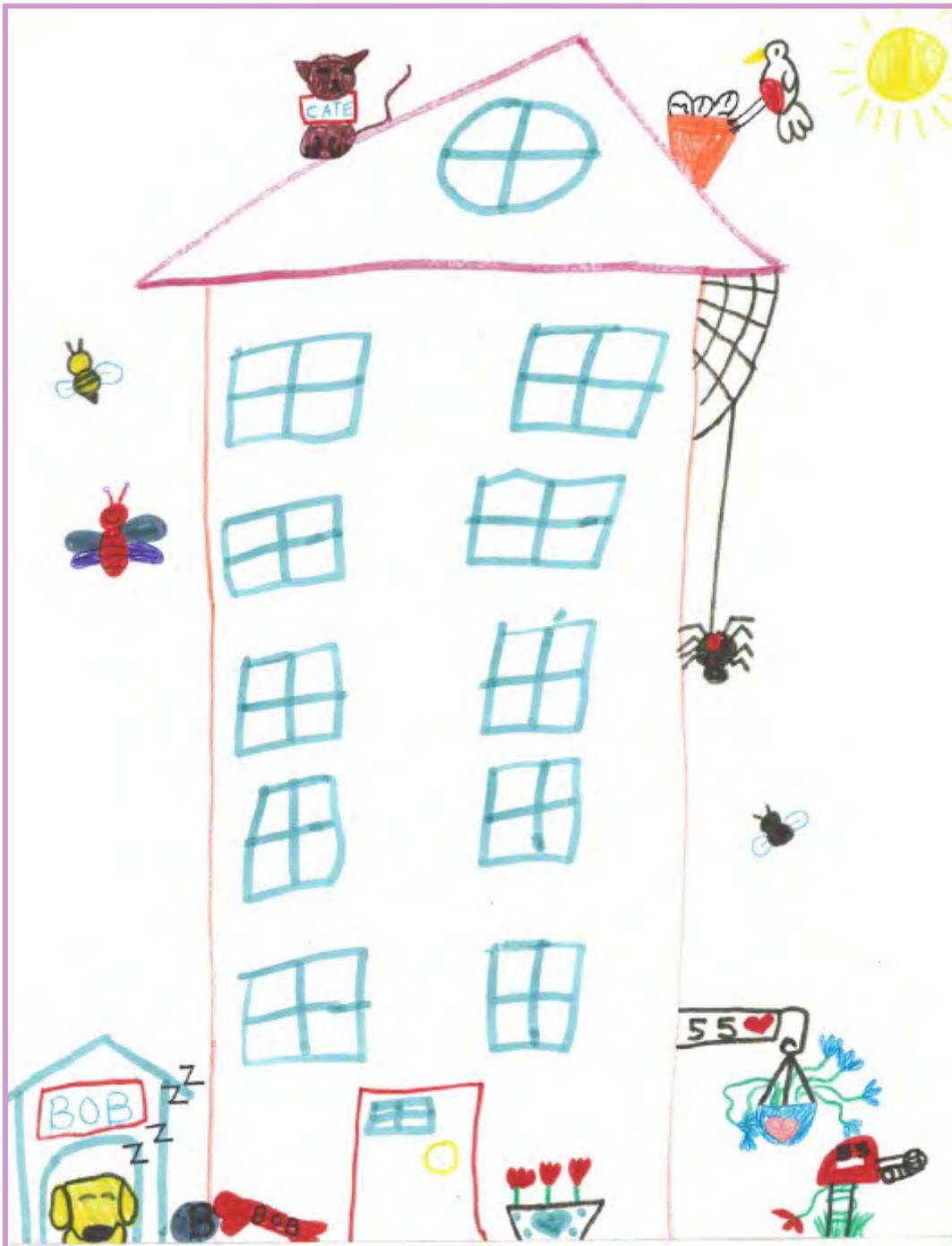


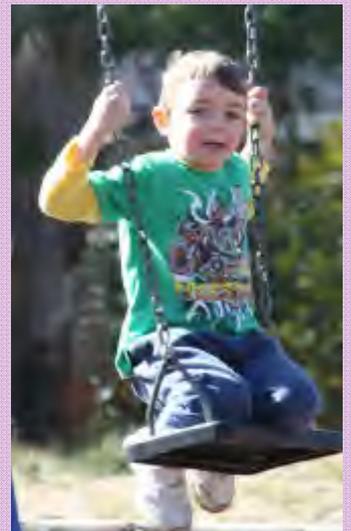
# Sound News

Parent Council for Deaf Education  
Spring 2010



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## President Report



President—Mark Burfield

Parent Council for Deaf Education (PCDE) is in the process of changing its name.

When my first child, Anita, was diagnosed as profoundly deaf around her first birthday in 2000, and over the next few years, I heard and read about PCDE, but thought this organisation was not so relevant to our family until Anita started school. No doubt others have had a similar understanding. Consequently I did not join PCDE until 2006 when education issues of concern were presenting. I subsequently became a Management Committee member later that year.

Historically, PCDE was founded under the name 'Federation of Junior Deaf Education' in 1961 specifically addressing the issue of improving opportunities for deaf students. However, in recent years at least, the scope of PCDE has expanded well beyond information, advocacy and support for families on education issues alone. The 'landscape of deafness' has changed markedly with the advent of new and continually improving technologies and the introduction of universal newborn screening for hearing loss (obviously increasing the number of children diagnosed at a younger age). So the issues of concern, and priority of these issues, have shifted noticeably for our (potential) membership base.

The Management Committee's Vision Day in October 2007 recognised the need to address the issue of a name change to reflect the expanded scope of PCDE. Yet

it wasn't until our recent Vision Day in May 2010 that we really focussed on bringing this matter to a conclusion. The process is highlighting the need for sensitivity on different points of view regarding words and word order. Specific words evoke emotional responses in different ways for different people. The word, "deaf" alone is loaded with connotation (given, for example, the historical referring to the "deaf and dumb", and to the use of the "capital D" Deaf word to indicate members of the signing Deaf community and culture). Another term in contention is "hearing impaired", which has been superseded with the term "hard of hearing" in the US and Canada (at least) as more politically if not descriptively correct. Yet another issue is with regard to word order, eg that the word "child" or "children" should precede their condition - "children who are deaf" rather than "deaf children".

The ultimate desire with the name change is that ALL families with children who are deaf or hearing impaired / hard of hearing will readily identify with the rebranded entity as the relevant organisation to belong to, irrespective of their chosen or required communication mode and other circumstances.

On another matter, in the July school holidays I attended with many other families an impressive demonstration of the technology and innovation being developed by AI Media that will assist literate deaf and hard of

hearing students. On face value, there seem to be amazing possibilities with this innovation, as acknowledged by the judges' vote and the peoples' vote when the technology was recently presented on "The New Inventors" TV program.

Whilst acknowledging the certain benefit and exciting possibilities of new technologies, they should not be viewed as a "fix it" or with inflated expectations. Their introduction can become a double-edged sword if they become an excuse to withdrawal other complementary support/services. Our challenge is to ensure this does not eventuate. As a clear example, the cochlear implant or "bionic ear" is perceived by some as a "miracle cure" ["Your child can now hear so the 'problem' is solved"]. In reality, whilst not diminishing its amazing benefit, the cochlear implant is at best a very powerful hearing aid. A child who is profoundly deaf with a cochlear implant (or two) is after all still profoundly deaf when the external coil is removed.

This Report is being written just prior to the Federal Election, so by the time you read this article we will know which Government is in power and to whom we need to hold accountable for the promises they made prior to the election including with regard to the disability sector... or should this sector also be renamed?

Mark Burfield  
President ■

## Staff Report

Welcome to the Spring 2010 Edition of Sound News. We trust that you will find something of interest to you and your family. Every quarter, whilst compiling Sound News, Anna Iacono and I try to ensure that we present information that is current, relevant and a little inspiring. We hope you agree!

One of the most stressful times for parents of children who are deaf or hearing impaired, is the decision time around whether or not your child is ready for school and if so, which school will best meet his or her needs. Included in this edition is a guide to preparing your child for school, how to choose a school and how to work with the staff at the school your child attends. We trust this will be a useful tool in navigating your way through this challenging time. Remember that we are here to help, so let us know if you have unanswered questions. Contact PCDE and speak to myself or Anna.

Internally, PCDE is currently undergoing a process of change, with a name change/repositioning on the agenda at the moment. Feedback from families indicates that our current name can be a barrier to families joining us early on, with some believing that we exist to provide information and support for families in terms of their child's education. Whilst this is a key focus for the organisation, PCDE is committed to families from diagnosis onwards and with parent to parent mentoring, POD Groups etc, our services reflect this. It is felt that a name change will better communicate this to our potential membership. We will keep you posted on this.

I visited Taree in late August, to provide information to families in the area, on PCDE and POD Groups. There is interest in getting a POD group started up there. Robyn Herps, the itinerant

teacher in the area and Quota International Taree organised the evening, which went very well. What a great community it is. Regional families are often so disadvantaged by a lack of services for their deaf children, and it is people like Robyn and the amazing women who make up the Quota International Taree group, who make a difference to the outcomes for these children and their families. Quota fundraises for services for children who are deaf or hearing impaired in the area, providing them, with funds to assist them for example, in their trips to Sydney for cochlear implantation and the subsequent visits post implant, or to get a Soundfield System for their school. They are making a real, practical difference to the lives of these kids, and PCDE is keen to work with Robyn and Quota to further support and inform families in this regional area.

Happy reading,

Cheers

Kate Kennedy

Co-ordinator, Information and Advocacy. ■



Kate Kennedy



**Readers, we would love to hear from you.**

**Send us your comments, experiences or any feedback to**

**PO BOX 4748, NORTH ROCKS NSW 2151**

**or email [pcde@bigpond.com](mailto:pcde@bigpond.com)**

## What's On



### Parent Workshop

RIDBC is running a workshop for parents that will focus on : Understanding where behaviours come from, Discipline without tears—coping with overwhelming behaviour, Supporting social development through circle of friends, Tools for handling the professionals who work with your child, Supporting your child without losing yourself, Appreciating your child's gifts and showing others how to also.

**When:** Saturday 16th October 2010

**Where:** Royal institute for the Deaf and Blind, Renwick Centre, 361 North Rocks Road, NORTH ROCKS

**Time:** 8.30am—4.00pm

**Cost:** Free

Course Code: RC10C104M. Enrol via web: [www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/courses/continuinged\\_register.asp](http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/courses/continuinged_register.asp) or ph: 02 9872 0207 or email [cpe@ridbc.org.au](mailto:cpe@ridbc.org.au)

### Summer Camp for Young Deaf People

Crossing borders 2011 is a camp for deaf and hard of hearing young people aged between 14 and 17 years from NSW, ACT and VIC.

**When:** 17-21st January 2011

**Where:** Anglesea Recreation Camp, VIC

Contact Katrina Lancaster at the Deaf Society for information on transport or to register your interest. Email: [klancaster@deafsociety.com](mailto:klancaster@deafsociety.com), TTY 8833 3691 or sms: 0415 204 926

**POD** has several exciting and informative events on this Spring, turn to the POD events section on page 15 to find out more.



Cartoon drawn by Hamish Fairlie:

Hamish is 10 years old and is in Year 4 at Cranbrook Junior School.

He likes going to the movies, playing violin and piano, reading books, playing soccer and t-ball and especially cartooning. Most of all he loves his cavoodle, *RUSTY*.

Hamish has a profound hearing loss and wears a hearing aid and a cochlear implant.



Hamish, Millie and their dog Rusty



## Cinema Captioning Announcement

An extract from Media Access Australia press release.

Australia's four major cinema groups and the Australian Government have agreed to jointly fast track new audio description and captioning technology, as part of a bold new plan to improve cinema access for people who are deaf, blind, visually or hearing impaired.

The plan will provide cutting edge technology to allow people with impaired hearing or vision to enjoy movies in more cinemas across Australia, with 242 accessible screens to be available by 2014.

The Australian Government has committed \$470,000 to the project, with the rest of the cost to be paid by the cinemas.

Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Bill Shorten, today announced the new *Cinema Access Implementation Plan*, an agreement between representatives of Village Roadshow, Greater Union, Hoyts and Reading Cinemas and disability sector representatives.

"Less than 0.3 per cent of all cinema sessions in Australia are accessible, meaning that an accessible cinema is showing as few as three sessions a week."

Under the agreement, captions and audio description will be available in 242 screens by 2014 – at least one in every cinema complex owned by the four cinema chains.

In addition all new cinemas constructed by the group will contain accessible technology.

Mr Shorten said that people with a hearing or vision impairment had a right to enjoy a trip to the movies.

Cinemas today unveiled the CaptiView technology, which will be rolled out in selected cinemas in Australia this year. This technology allows hearing-impaired patrons to use a screen that folds out from an armrest and delivers a captioned version of the film.



*This technology allows hearing-impaired patrons to use a screen that folds out from an armrest and delivers a captioned version of the film.*

The four major cinema chains also agreed:

- ◇ That where there is existing accessible cinema technology in place, local managers will be sensitive to their local audiences, and draw upon their patrons to help them to innovate and implement new accessible technology.
- ◇ To gain ongoing consumer input when implementing emerging platforms such as 'Captiview'.
- ◇ To adjust implementation of new technology options according to future innovation and consumer preferences.
- ◇ That operators will work with the Australian Human Rights Commission and the disability peaks to develop or update disability action plans to help with operation and delivery of cinema access services for people with disability.

[www.mediaaccess.org.au](http://www.mediaaccess.org.au) ■

**Since this announcement of the accessible cinema program, Media Access Australia (MAA) has been inundated with queries from movie fans regarding all aspects of the rollout. To assist in answering these questions, MAA has compiled a list of Q&As.**

**Q. Is there a schedule that will tell us when each location will be made accessible?**

At this stage there is no public schedule that will tell us when each location will be made accessible. Although there are rumours around the current 12 locations being upgraded first of all, this has not been confirmed.

**Q. Will it cost more to see accessible movies?**

No, the price for the movies will be the same as regular sessions. Discounts for students, pensioners, etc, or ticket prices on cinema discount days will apply as usual. Equipment for viewing the captions and hearing the audio description will be made available to patrons as part of the ticket price.

**Q. Will there be more movies available to us to watch?**

Yes. Most movies that are programmed onto an accessible screen will be available with access features. Remember, some cinemas will have two or three accessible screens, so patrons will have the opportunity to see more than one movie in the one week. It is also possible that one accessible screen may show different accessible movies on the same day. There will no longer be one separate, national, accessible movie schedule where the same movie plays in every accessible location.

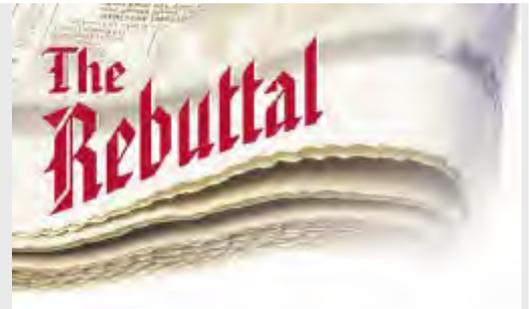
**Q. Will there still be a delay between the non-accessible and accessible movie release?**

No. Access features for movies should be available from the first day of a movie's national release.

## *From Whence we Came.*

PCDE takes you on a trip down memory lane with an extract from one of the latest Rebuttal newsletters.

Someone reminded me today that it was 41 years since man landed on the moon. I was 5 years old then. Like the little boy that sat in the garden wondering how man got all the way to the moon, I would marvel at the advances of humankind in providing access to the deaf. Who would have thought, back in 1969, that one day you would turn on your computer, press a button and be able to sign to your friends on a screen, I remember as a 13 year old, having been deaf for just a few years, needing to get my mother to call my friends on the phone. "Mum", I would ask, "...can you call Phil and get him to meet me over the oval for a game of cricket?" *Frustrating as it was, we didn't care - we had ACCESS.*



Then came the 1980s and the wonderful Telephone Typewriter (TTY). Can you believe that back then a TTY was about \$700? But through a TTY we could at least phone friends if they also had a TTY. It was access to the phone and by golly were we happy with that!

In the 90s came the Relay Service. Blow me down, I could even phone for a pizza. The first time I did it from Adelaide I ended up in Annerley in Queensland. Some of us will remember that when you called the 13 numbers in the early days of the Relay Service, you would end up at a pizza shop in Queensland because that is where the Relay Service was based. *Frustrating as it was - we had ACCESS.*

When I started work I had to grab John or Barbara to make calls for me. Occasionally Kirsty at reception, who I dated for 5 years, would help out. Back then, as deaf people, we all were limited in what we could do. Applying for jobs was a nightmare because we always had the issue of phone communication. We all dreaded the inevitable interview question, "How will you cope with the phone?" The standard answer back then was that we would "trade" phone work for other work with colleagues. It wasn't very convincing.

The Relay Service simply opened up the world to deaf people. And now most of us rarely use it. Emails come directly to our phone, instant messenger keeps us in contact with everyone and SMS still sends us all broke. But WWAHHHH!!! Compare that to the 80s and 70s and you will see that what we have now is simply awesome.

And then of course there were the movies. As a six year old I was not yet deaf. I remember going into town with my nine year old sister to watch Bambi. In the queue that day were two deaf boys. Their mother had managed to get a device or something from the counter that would help them hear the movie. She waved it in their faces saying "YOU WILL BE ABLE TO HEAR!!"

Back then we would not have even dreamt that we would have captioned TV. Blimey, now we have something like 75% of TV shows captioned. Soon we will have captions at nearly all cinemas. And of course we are still not happy. Captions through CaptiView suck because it makes us stand out in a crowd or is too finicky. Or live captioning obscures the ball when you're watching the World Cup. How sucky is that? Well go back to 1977 and you will find that it's actually not very sucky at all! In fact it's frigging awesome!

I mean look what digital TV has done for deaf people. I am not sure that many of us know but it means that virtually every TV will be able to show captions. No longer do we have to seek out a special TV that has Teletext. No longer do we have to pay an extra \$300 or so just so that we can access captioned TV. How good is that?



For sure it is a better world. Sometimes we need to celebrate what we have achieved. Sometimes we are so focused on getting MORE that we forget just how far that we have come. That does not mean that we stop fighting for more and better access. It just means that we need to look back and be content, celebrate and be thankful. Keep up the good fight, for sure, but remember to look back and feel pride in the victories we have all won.

## Starting School—Thomas' Story

### **Thomas' mum, Wendy shares her experiences in choosing a school for her son Thomas**

Was starting school different for Thomas because of his hearing loss? It shouldn't have been and I don't think Thomas cared, but it did concern my husband and me. We had always planned to send our three boys to the local Catholic Primary school and I didn't want Thomas's hearing loss to stop him attending the same school as his two brothers. It helped that we were familiar with the school as his brother Jarrod started there the year before Thomas.

Thomas was aided at 17 months old and received early intervention from both the ACT Department of Education and The Canberra Shepherd Centre. We are grateful for all the skills we gained through this experience and consequently Thomas was age appropriate when he began school and we had developed the ability to be fairly knowledgeable advocates for him. We want Thomas to reach his full potential so we have tried to ensure he is getting every opportunity to do this.

Thomas's enrolment process included the usual interview with the Principal. This was then followed by another meeting which included the Principal, Learning Support

teachers and the Catholic Education Office Learning Support Officer. This confirmed Thomas's hearing loss met the criteria for Students with Special Needs (Disabilities) and subsequent funding and support.

A transition meeting was held at the end of Thomas's preschool year. This involved the School Principal, current Preschool Teacher, future Kindergarten Teacher, Learning Support Teachers and his current and head Itinerant Teacher from ACT Dept of Education. The itinerant teachers were terrific at highlighting some of the issues important to Thomas getting the most out of school, for example the use of the FM as well as social and safety issues. By this stage we were feeling confident in our choice of school for Thomas.

The level of funding was determined by a SCAN (Student Centred Appraisal Need) assessment done in Term One after starting school. The hardest thing about this process is the need to focus on the real and potential negative aspects of Thomas's hearing loss in order to gain maximum support. I have always struggled with this as I prefer to focus on Thomas's positive achievements however I also believe in using preventative strategies rather than waiting until Thomas is struggling before getting help.



Thomas

The move from early intervention to school changed my role however I do volunteer in Thomas's class once a week for an hour and maintain good communication with his teacher. Currently I help in Thomas's class with Literacy Block, helping with small group work. I have also helped at the athletics carnival, walkathon and the cross country race. There are many opportunities and I think all children love seeing their parents involved at school when possible. It gives me a chance to see Jarrod and Thomas in their school role too.

School is also Thomas's opportunity to develop his own self advocacy skills

*Thomas's teachers have been fantastic in using the FM both for class teaching and in groups, and his classmates use the FM when reading out their individual work or news.*

## Starting School—Thomas' story— continued

which are supported and encouraged by his teachers. We have emphasised this in his yearly IEP (Individualised Education Plan). It has included strategies to deal with questions about his hearing aids from other students.

Thomas would receive support in both the Catholic and local government schools but in different ways. In his school, Thomas has received a combination of in class support and 'one on one' sessions. These are given by learning support teachers using a program developed by an itinerant teacher specifically for Thomas.

Classrooms were another concern of ours as many schools are becoming open plan. Last year Thomas was in a classroom that had an adjoining room. The sound level could get quite loud from the

other class so they tried to remember to keep the doors closed. This year he is in a demountable room but it is carpeted with no doors to other rooms so has good acoustics.

Thomas's teachers have been fantastic in using the FM both for class teaching and in groups, and his classmates use the FM when reading out their individual work or news. Most of the regular relief teachers know how to use the FM but if they have a new teacher, the children in the class quickly tell the teacher how to use it. There are illustrated written instructions in the class as a back up.

Thomas was the only child with hearing aids when he started last year but the number of children in the school using aids and FM's

have increased along with the teachers' knowledge and skills in supporting children with hearing loss. The school has been involved with fundraising on Loud Shirt Day and Thomas is thriving in a very supportive environment. We will keep an open mind however at this stage we are extremely happy with our choice, and most importantly Thomas is happy and loves school. He is looking forward to having his younger brother Aaron start there in 2011.

Written by

Wendy McMullen

■

## Everything for the Hard of Hearing



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# A Guide to Preparing Your Child for School

PCDE recently ran a school readiness information night for families. This guide highlights some of the information from that evening.

## What Can You Do At Home To Prepare your child for Kindergarten?

There are many ways that you as a parent can help prepare your child for school.

Firstly, you can provide a variety of experiences and activities to stimulate your child's imagination and knowledge of the world. When talking to your child, try to expand the conversation, pointing out new objects and places and giving them names, giving them context. Remember that conversational language is a great language opportunity and lots of fun, as well as helping to build healthy family relationships.

## Be a reading role model

Try to read to your child every day. Read with expression and show your joy of reading.

Make reading a special time - with the simple act of reading, turning pages of books and inventing stories using pictures, the child will begin to match spoken words with print.

## Turn on the Captions when Watching TV.

Emerging readers benefit greatly from the reinforcement of the importance of reading, that captions provide. Set up this habit at home and your child will learn a skill for life. For information on how to access captions at home, visit:

[www.mediaaccess.org.au](http://www.mediaaccess.org.au)

## Gather Information about the Schools in and out of your Area.

Information is the key to preparing yourself to make the decisions about the best school for your deaf child. Visit the aussiedeafkids website links below for relevant information on what questions you need to ask of the schools that you visit.

<http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/preparing-your-child-for-school.html>

<http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/starting-school-checklist.html>



## What is an Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf (ITOD)?

An ITOD provides specialist assistance to schools and teachers relating to the inclusion of students who are deaf or have hearing impairment (HI)

An ITOD provides information to school staff about the impact of hearing loss on language acquisition and access to learning. They can provide school staff with support, advice and strategies to facilitate inclusion. They liaise regularly with school staff and can provide consistent support to students and advocate for their needs. They may provide some in class support for students, assisting them to access the curriculum; and also using the curriculum as a vehicle to improve their language skills. They may work directly with students on language and audition skills. They can troubleshoot equipment difficulties / liaise with Australian Hearing. They can encourage independence in students including their management of hearing aids, CIs and FMs and their approach to their work.

## Be involved in your Child's School.

The transition to school is often more challenging for the parent than the child. The parent's role changes as their child moves into this next exciting stage of their life. Parents often feel concerned that they have less control over how their child is progressing.

Parents can still play a part in the life of their child at school. Your involvement in the school directly is a great way of keeping an eye on how your child is integrating and learning at school. One suggestion is to volunteer to help in the classroom once a week, with reading for example. Building good relationships with the teachers and school will be beneficial when you are advocating for your child.

Liaise with your child's ITOD on how best to navigate your school. Each school has its own culture. One suggestion is to become involved in the school community such as P&F or P&C committees and extend your own social network as a parent. This can be beneficial to your child and their integration.

## A Guide for preparing your child for school. cont'd



### What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Different sectors may give it a different title but this is a planning tool that relates directly to adjustments needed with regards to your deaf or hearing impaired child at school. This plan is written by school staff, with contribution from the ITOD. Parents / student are invited to a meeting and they provide feedback to the planning process. Changes are typed up and all adult parties sign and receive a copy. This document will vary across the sectors but all will address similar principles:

- Focus Area /Priorities
- Goals
- Adjustments
- Additional Resources
- Assessment Process
- Monitoring/Evaluation

### Access in the Classroom.

Access to the teacher's voice for students who are deaf or have hearing impairment will be impacted by:

- the degree of their hearing loss
- type of and use of assistive listening devices
- the listening environment

Many students who use hearing aids effectively in quiet environments have a difficult time following information presented in large classrooms. In the classroom, the teacher's voice is competing with

background noise, room echo, and distance. Therefore, the intelligibility of the teacher's voice is degraded by the poor room acoustics as well as the hearing loss.

### FM Systems

An FM system is part of the solution. An FM system is a microphone and transmitter worn by the speaker and a receiver worn by the student. The receiver may be attached to the student's hearing aid or cochlear implant. By placing the microphone close to the teacher's mouth, an FM system can provide clear sound over distances, eliminate echoes, and reduce surrounding noises.

An FM is available as a fully subsidised device through Australian Hearing. Contact your audiologist at Australian Hearing to discuss your child's eligibility for an FM.

### Soundfield amplification system

Soundfield systems enables every child in the classroom to hear the teacher's voice, no matter where they are sitting or where the teacher is facing. They can be used in conjunction with students' FM for optimal listening conditions.. They have great benefits for all students in the classroom, not just hearing impaired students.

Soundfield systems increase the signal-to-noise ratio in the classroom and consist of a transmitter microphone, receiver/amplifier and speakers. This technology can be linked to Interactive Whiteboards, laptops, FM systems and iPods

For more information on Soundfield systems visit:

Printacall -

[www.soundfield.com.au/index.htm](http://www.soundfield.com.au/index.htm)

Multimedia Wheels-

[www.multimediaonwheels.com.au/Lightspeed.html](http://www.multimediaonwheels.com.au/Lightspeed.html)

*PCDE would like to acknowledge Ann McGrath, Manager, Media Access Australia; and Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf, Catholic Education Office, Sydney and Ann Porter, Founder of [www.aussiedeafkids.org.au](http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au), for contributing to this article.*

■

### For further information on schools and school support for your child you can contact:

- ◇ NSW Department of Education and Training:  
[www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/programs/disability.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/programs/disability.php).  
Telephone: 131536.
- ◇ RIDBC School Support Services (supporting students in mainstream independent schools) Phone: 9872 0309
- ◇ The Catholic Education Office in your local Diocese (supporting students in mainstream systemic or Parish Schools).

### Contact With other Parents:

If you would to make contact with another parent who has navigated this path before you, contact PCDE at 9871 3049 or join an online group where you can ask other parents about their experiences.

<http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/parent-forums.html>

## Early Intervention Services: RIDBC



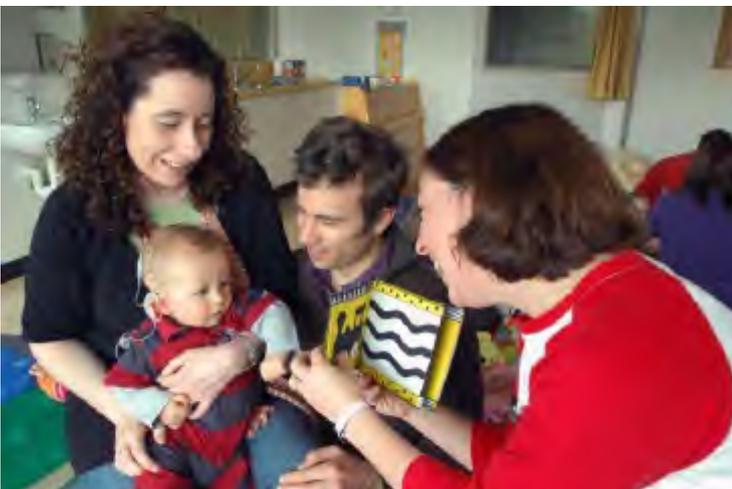
Sue Benzie from RIDBC Early Childhood Services tells us about what they do

RIDBC Early Childhood Services (Hearing Impairment) programs are available for young children and their families from the time the child's hearing loss is diagnosed until school entry. Available across the Sydney metropolitan, Nepean, Central Coast, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle areas, families can choose the most convenient location to receive their weekly individual sessions. The Parent Infant Group (PING) and Early Learning Groups are held regularly at the Welwyn Centre at North Rocks with periodic groups at the other locations.

RIDBC Preschool Programs located at North Rocks, Glenmore Park and Tingira Heights operate on a Reverse Integration Model and provide specialised preschool programs for children who have a significant hearing loss. The primary focus is on communication and early literacy. Many parents now research information about hearing loss and educational programs before approaching the different organisations. They have some understanding of communication options and methodology. RIDBC early learning and preschool program staff work with parents to develop an educational program individualised to reflect their aspirations for their child and the child's needs. Most children enrolled are developing spoken language based on auditory verbal practice. Using the auditory pathway to develop language is the most efficient means and most closely mirrors natural language development in young children who do not have a hearing loss. Individual education programs are planned and monitored based on Early Childhood research and pedagogy and engaging children through play based, child centred activities, book sharing and utilising the language of daily routines.



Katie



Alison

The RIDBC ECS(HI) Resource Team (psychologists, speech pathologists and occupation therapist) supports the educational programs and is involved in assessment and planning. Families can also access this group of specialists to discuss issues relevant to their child's individual needs. The audiologists from the RIDBC Jim Patrick Audiology Centre work closely with staff in the early learning programs and RIDBC preschools. An assessment protocol tracks the language development of each child also providing this information to each family.

SWISH (Statewide Infant Screening for Hearing) and the advances in hearing aid and cochlear implant technology have alleviated many of the challenges faced by families of young children who are deaf and hearing impaired. These also support bringing young children to language through face to face interactions with competent language models. These models are parents, family members, educators and others in the local community with whom the child interacts. These interactions are relevant to the child's play, interests and daily routines. Developing spoken language

in this way follows typical developmental milestones and encourages young children to extend and generalise their language learning across a wide range of applications.

Some children enrolled in the RIDBC Early Learning Programs may have additional disabilities and require a diversified approach to develop communication. RIDBC also has staff skilled in these areas.

RIDBC families can join parent education sessions and social activities throughout the year.

As each child approaches the stage of transition to their next educational setting, he/she will have a transition plan as part of their Individual Education Plan. This is to help ensure transition from the known to the unknown is as seamless as possible. Children from RIDBC ECS(HI) programs will attend RIDBC school age program, DET, mainstream, support classes or specialist schools, Catholic Education System and Independent schools.

Further enquiries are always welcome.

Sue Benzie, Head of RIDBC Early Childhood Services (Hearing Impairment)  
02/9872 0217, sue.benzie@ridbc.org.au

## Ephpheta: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth Project



The Ephpheta provides support for deaf and hard of hearing people and their families throughout Sydney. We have a staff of six members; four of the staff members, including the director of the Ephpheta Centre, are Deaf. Ephpheta centre is a deaf and hard of hearing catholic organisation and is funded by CWF (Charitable Works Fund).

Some people in the Deaf community experience extreme isolation from social, business and educational interactions in the Australian society. In our daily work, we aim to address this isolation issue. We support and assist as many different Deaf people including Deaf youth in Sydney for example we make visits to Deaf people (schools, their homes, nursing homes, hospitals and jails for example) and provide opportunities for community education, development and help empower Deaf people. Ephpheta also provides

Masses for the Deaf and hard of hearing community throughout the three dioceses of Broken Bay, Parramatta and Sydney. We assist Deaf and hard of hearing people with sacramental preparations including weddings, baptism and funerals.

We work with catholic and public schools to raise awareness of Deafness, Deaf people and Deaf culture and to help break down barriers. We offer support and advocacy for Deaf people who are in need. We organise community events for the Deaf and hard of hearing people. We have an in-house professionally trained counsellor for Deaf and hard of hearing people if they need to talk about their own problems confidentially.

We are also running new Deaf Youth projects. Our focus is on the age group of 12 to 16 years old children first.

We are planning to have four (4) activities for deaf youth every year and one of the activities will involve bush walking, helping the needy in soup kitchens and basically making new friends and having fun. We are open to Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth whether they have a religious background or not.

Contacts: David and Donovan  
Ephpheta Centre, [www.ephpheta.org.au](http://www.ephpheta.org.au)  
Email [office@ephpheta.org.au](mailto:office@ephpheta.org.au)  
Ph: 02 9798 1396 - TTY 02 9708 1396



Left: David and Right: Donovan

## Changes to Australian Hearing recall appointment management for children



An extract from Australian Hearing's media release.

For the past 5 years Australian Hearing has been using a Pre-booked Appointment (PBA) system to arrange annual review appointments for children who wear hearing aids. In this system families who attend for routine review are able to arrange their child's next review appointment up to 12 months ahead, before leaving the hearing centre.

This system was introduced after parent feedback indicated that families were finding it difficult to obtain appointment times that met their needs. Australian Hearing agreed to trial the new appointment system and to review whether or not it improved access for families.

### How will the new system work?

1. Your audiologist will discuss with you the timing of your (child's) next scheduled review and will decide in which month the appointment will occur.

2. This information will be entered onto our data base.

3. We will telephone you approximately 8 to 10 weeks before the month in which your (child's) next appointment is due so that we can arrange an appointment.

4. We will make two attempts to contact you. A reminder letter will be posted if we are unable to contact you.

5. You will receive a reminder call one or two days before the appointment time.

### Some important information:

Australian Hearing aims to offer you an appointment time that suits your preferences, but certain times are popular with many families so we cannot guarantee that you will always get your first preference.

Australian Hearing aims for you to see the same audiologist at each appointment. However this is not always possible if, for example, your audiologist is on leave or working at another hearing centre. You may then choose to see another audiologist, or to arrange your review at a later time when your audiologist is available. ■

# Balancing Life With a Child who Has a Hearing Loss

By Dr Dale Atkins

It would be unrealistic to think of having a life without adversity.

But it is quite realistic to think about life as having graduated challenges that enhance us, and teaches us, at any stage of life.

What we know about balance is that we will likely feel calmer and have a more pleasant demeanor, enjoy deeper, more intense sleep, resist illness, have and demonstrate more patience, energy and resiliency.

We will surely have happier hearts, less back pain, improved outlook and attitude, stronger relationships, and we are generally more fun to be around.

If we are to focus on the basics of balance we would likely look at the following:

- Restful, restorative sleep
- Love, friendships
- Fulfilling, meaningful work
- Play / Humor
- A healthy diet
- Exercise & body awareness
- Communing with nature
- Intellectual stimulation
- A need for unity & a sense of community
- Spirituality/prayer/meditation

If you have a child who has a hearing loss you will add the following to the basics of balance:

- Confidence in Yourself & Child
- Dependable & Working Equipment
- Strong Partnership with Professionals
- Keeping Current with “Research and Educational Approaches”
- Child’s Social Competency & Friendships
- Fostering Independence in your Child
- Appropriate School, Tutorial, & Support Services



- Focusing on the Positives and the Small “Milestones” of Your Child
- Keeping “Comparing to Other Children” to a Minimum
- Attending to Family Needs Particularly Those of Other Siblings
- Encouraging Interactions with Family & Friends
- Inspiring Connections with Other Parents, Older Children & Adults who have Hearing Losses
- Accepting Responsibilities, Facing Challenges, & Achieving Goals
- Creating Time to Have Fun with Partner, Kids, Friends
- Finding a New Normalcy that Works for your Family

We know that all families function well when there is, within the family, an attitude of acceptance, an acknowledgement of other points of view, and with that, an ability to adapt, over time, to loss and to create and see hope. We do this best when we are in an encouraging, supportive environment where there is mutual respect and an ability to listen to oneself & others, carefully weighing what they say and why they say it. A sense of humor and adaptability to change (and heaven knows there are many changes) helps as you try to be open to discovering your own strengths (some of which you never knew you

had) as well as those of your family members. Life with a child who has a hearing loss gives you a chance to challenge old beliefs that you held about your family, yourself, your faith, your friends, difference and disabilities, health, roles, expectations, problem solving strategies, you name it.

Begin each day with awareness & gratitude.

Your attitude about your child impacts their feelings about themselves.

Allow yourself to see this change in all of your dreams and hopes as an opportunity for learning & growth... yours as well as your child’s. Things become more manageable if you prioritize one thing at a time and allow that many things on the “list” will not get done so it is helpful to learn to be satisfied with “less than perfect” which you can do if you shed the “super mom” or “super dad” image. In the process you will learn to let go of what you cannot and embrace and be grateful for those things you can.

Essential to balance is dealing with the feelings you have as they come up and allowing mourning for the grief over that which is no longer in your life or possible, is an essential

## Balancing Life with a child who has a Hearing Loss, cont'd

*Making sure you have time with other parents of kids of all ages who have hearing losses so they can share their experiences and advice and wisdom and whose informal counsel you can seek.*

part of the process. Stress plays an important part in balancing lives (with or without a child who has a hearing issue.)

Know the cause of stress and be aware of how important an attitude of positive thinking and actions is to moving forward. Having said that, be where you are... be present and allow the feelings you have to be processed. That is the only way to move through them.

Stress busters such as exercise, good nutrition, adequate sleep and relaxation are helpful in keeping a balance in your life as you deal with all of the information, opinions, advice, and feelings that at times can be overwhelming.

Regularly writing thoughts and feelings in a journal, drawing or painting, playing music, are often excellent strategies for helping to process the feelings that will come in waves or trickles but surely come.

Writing is also a wonderful way to record (just for you) your own private passage which when you are in the throes of it may seem totally confusing and scary. Reading literature about hearing loss, other people's experiences, biographies can be so useful as you become conscious of your own journey.

Spending time with supportive family and friends (and being open to new friendships with those who are in similar circumstance because they have a familiarity that can be comforting.

Making sure you have time with

other parents of kids of all ages who have hearing losses so they can share their experiences and advice and wisdom and whose informal counsel you can seek.

Professionals such as audiologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, teachers, medical professionals, mental health workers, adults who have hearing losses, and participating in both on and off line support groups as well as calling on clergy whom you are comfortable with really makes a difference in navigating the seas of this unknown territory.■



Dr Dale V. Atkins Ph.D is a licensed psychologist who has more than thirty years of experience as a relationships expert focusing on hearing loss, social skills, marriage, parenting, communication, ageing well, transitions and living a balanced life.

She received her masters degree in Education for the deaf and taught at the Lexington School for the Deaf in New York. [www.drdaletkins.com](http://www.drdaletkins.com)

### Do you know about the Carer Allowance ( Child) ?

If you are the parent of a deaf or hearing impaired child you may be eligible for Carer Allowance ( child). Carer Allowance ( Child) is a income supplement for parents and carers who provide daily care and attention for children with a disability at home.

To be eligible, your deaf or hearing impaired child be under the age of 16 with a "45 decibels or more hearing loss in the better ear, based on a 4 frequency pure tone average (using 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000Hz);

If you are eligible, you are also entitled to receive a Health Care Card, which gives your child cheaper medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

[http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/carers\\_allow\\_child.htm](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/carers_allow_child.htm)

#### Annual Lump Sum Payments For Carers

##### Carer Supplement

If you receive the following either a carer allowance or carer payment for 1 July 2010, you will be paid an annual lump sum carer supplement payment after 1 July 2010.

The amount of carer supplement you receive will depend on how many people you care for and whether you share the care with another person

##### Child Disability Assistance Payment

If you are caring for a child with a disability and receive an eligible payment of carer allowance for 1 July 2010, you will also receive the child disability assistance payment of up to \$1000 for each child for whom you receive carer allowance.

*For more information about these payments , go to the Centrelink website at [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) or call 13 2717 or visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre.*

## POD Spring Information Sessions

PCDE has some exciting events planned this spring, come along to find out more.



### Australian Hearing Morning Tea– Liverpool:

Parents from the Macarthur area are invited to a morning tea at Australian Hearing at their new office in Liverpool on Tuesday 28th September.

This morning tea is on Tuesday 28th September which is during the school holidays and your children are welcome to attend. Several audiologists will be available to speak to about any questions or concerns you may have or just come along to meet other parents in your area to share information.

RSVP to [anna@pcde.org](mailto:anna@pcde.org)

Please pass this info onto parents you know who would be interested.

### Deaf Awareness at NSW Parliament House( 19th and 21st October):

PCDE, Deaf Australia NSW and the Deaf Society of NSW have organised 2 events for National Week of Deaf People:

Tuesday 19th October from 5.00pm -Launch of Deaf Awareness Week at NSW Parliament House. Speakers, entertainment, supper followed by panel discussion.

Thursday 21st October from 10.30am—Schools Tour of NSW Parliament House, including role playing politicians in the parliament etc. Followed by BBQ lunch on rooftop of Parliament House.

For further information, contact Anna on 9871 3049 or email [anna@pcde.org](mailto:anna@pcde.org)

### Cyber-Safety Information Session:

Join us at POD Central Sydney for a free information session on Monday 25th October.

Do you know what your children are exposed to on the internet? Want to know of ways to keep them safe on line and learn about what you and your child should know about internet safety? This date is normally a POD Northern Sydney meeting date but we have moved the meeting to Central Sydney.

RSVP to [anna@pcde.org](mailto:anna@pcde.org)

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](mailto:anna@pcde.org) or ph: 02 9871 3049.

### Parents, Why Not Join a POD Group?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>POD Northern Sydney (North, North West)</b> | meets on the last Monday of every month at Ku-ring- gai Library Meeting room, 799 Pacific Highway Gordon at 7pm |
| <b>POD Central Sydney (East, Inner West)</b>   | meets on the first Wednesday of every month at Centennial Park School, 75 Avoca St, Randwick at 7pm             |
| <b>POD Macarthur (South, Southwest)</b>        | 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.



## Captel—New Access Technology

### Australia's first captioned telephone trial for the hearing impaired

The first captioned telephones arrived in Australia earlier this year. The phones are here for a new technology trial funded by Australian Communication Exchange (ACE). ACE provides communication solutions for the Deaf, hearing impaired and speech impaired Australians.

The captioned phone looks like a normal phone but it also contains a display screen, which works over the internet, to spell out every word the other party says, in a similar manner to caption television. This technology allows the deaf or hearing impaired to make fast and natural phone calls, at the same speed that a hearing person would. The technology has the sophistication to call any

other phone including mobiles so only the person relying on captions needs the technology.

The trial was unveiled last month for Australia's deaf and hearing impaired communities, and a small number of phones are already in use. ACE will now commence the search for more participants and will offer the captioned phones to up to 500 current National Relay Service (NRS) users. Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE), Senator Stephen Conroy, has offered his support for the ACE trial and announced that the Government will look at ways to improve the NRS.

This phone really opens up the possibilities to all ages and gives them the ability to have quick and natural phone conversations. One of the trial participants is a teenage girl who was desperate to call her boyfriend without needing her mum helping with the



conversation! The phone is a common barrier and the captions can give a feeling of comfort. In the future, this could be an important device in workplaces and homes. Furthermore, the technology can be used for captioning in schools and universities.

More information on the trial is on the ACE website - [www.aceinfo.net.au](http://www.aceinfo.net.au) and under *Our Services*.

## Parent Tips from Hearing Awareness Week

POD Northern Sydney hosted a celebration during Hearing Awareness week on the 23rd August. Parents celebrated with a glass of wine, strawberries, cheese and crackers and shared some tips about parenting a child who is deaf or hearing impaired. We thought we would share some of their tips with you:

- "In Primary school give the teacher a simple 1 page laminated sheet (useful for casuals) briefly explaining your child's hearing loss needs."
- "I gave a one page letter to the class parents explaining my child -I believe some correct information stops a lot of rumors or misinformation."
- "Choose a swim school where they actually do have small groups and will look at your child as an individual."
- "Encourage team sport and discuss exemptions with the organization before they arise e.g. umpires knowing the child is deaf."
- "In teenage years talk to the teachers, rather than discuss with the child. Work with the teacher especially in language, music and listening tasks which are a challenge even for limited hearing impairment."
- "To encourage your preschool age daughter to wear her hearing aids at preschool, and also to raise awareness with the other children, pull out all your glamorous 1980's clip-on earrings and have a little 'earring' party at preschool."
- "Let other children examine their hearing devices most children are very interested how all the technology works."
- "McDonalds pre cut apple slices are a great lunch box item!"

If you have any other tips that you might like to share with parents, please send them to [pcde@bigpond.com](mailto:pcde@bigpond.com) or post to PO Box 4748 North Rocks NSW 2151.



## Bully– Proofing Your Child

Studies show that ‘not fitting in’ is the most common reason for students give for being bullied by their peers.

Hearing aids or cochlear implants already set a deaf student apart from their hearing mates. Then there’s the sign language that they may use and/or their speech which makes them sound different.

**Inadequate Support:** A deaf or hard of hearing student has enough to contend with trying to keep up with what is going on at school, let alone having to worry about being intimidated by bullies. Some do not receive adequate specialist support in regular classrooms and may get left behind their hearing peers, which could make them a target for bullies.

**Isolation:** Feeling isolated because of communication difficulties is a common experience for deaf and hard of hearing kids. Even with cochlear implants or hearing aids, deaf students find it difficult to hear in a large, noisy classroom or schoolyard where the background noise is high. As a result, they often get left out of conversations and activities. And of course, being alone makes them more vulnerable to being bullied.

In an ideal world, there would be many layers of action required to deal effectively with bullies. For example, policies and laws need to be developed and implemented, effective reporting systems established, and counselling approaches enhanced. There is a need for programs targeted at building the resilience of communities of children and their parents.



Encourage your school to involve staff in anti-bullying procedures, to take bullying very seriously and to take immediate and consistent action against it. Most schools now have some form of anti-bullying policy in place.

Encourage your child’s teacher to look for any telling behaviour, as your child may be reluctant to reveal what has happened to them.

You may notice signs of bullying by:

- Unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- Damaged or ripped clothing
- Damaged or missing belongings
- Vague headaches or stomach aches
- Refusal to go to school
- Tearfulness or depression
- Lack/Loss of confidence and anxiety
- Negative personality changes
- An unwillingness to leave the house

- Aggressive or bullying behaviour towards other family members

If you feel you need more advice or support call *The Line’s* confidential 24 hour helpline 1800 200 526 to talk with experienced counsellors.

Other numbers and information

**Kids Help Line**

Ph: 1800 55 1800

[www.theline.gov.au/factsheets/bullying](http://www.theline.gov.au/factsheets/bullying)

[www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)

(Continued on page 18)

## Tips you can Teach your Child to Deal with their Bully.

**Never take the bait:** the bully is desperate for a reaction and will be delighted if you become upset or angry. By remaining cool and walking away, the bully has effectively lost.

**Walk away with your head held high:** It's tough to ignore a bully, but your body language shows the bully not to mess with you.

**Tell your parent or teacher.** By sharing the burden, you will feel braver and your parent or teacher will be able to do something to resolve the situation.

**Use humour to defuse the situation:** A clever retort – not to make fun of the bully, but to defuse the tension will be something the bully isn't expecting might well make the audience side with you.

**Support your peers against bullies:** You may not want to get involved, but if all kids stick together, then bullying can be eradicated. Bullies want to feel powerful, but if you say: "That's not fair. Leave him alone!", then he loses his audience.

**Create a buddy system:** Bullies are less likely to target kids who are in groups so encourage your child to take a friend with them in areas where bullying is likely to occur – in the playground, in the toilets, and on the way home from school. Avoid isolated places wherever possible.

**Keep a record of any bullying:** By keeping a record of exactly when and how it occurred, you will have all the facts to hand when it comes time to report it.

**Work on becoming more confident:** You can try and avoid bullies, but this is only a short term measure; they will always find a way of getting you if they want. The long term goal is to learn to become more confident, stand up for yourself and make supportive friends.

Adapted from *Flying Kites newsletter, DCA.*



## Basic Do's and Don'ts for Teaching Staff:

### Do:

- Use age-appropriate language with correct terminology
- Use multiple forms of presentation to reinforce messages (ie visual, auditory)
- Include students with disabilities in anti-bullying lessons with other students
- Talk openly with all students about disability and bullying

### Don't:

- Withdraw students with disabilities for separate lessons on bullying - teach in the whole class
- Assume students with disabilities know what bullying is or how to respond positively
- Tell students with disabilities to "toughen up" and learn to deal with bullying
- Minimise complaints of bullying towards or by students with disabilities

Taken from Bullying No Way website, [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)



# Deaf Australia Inc. The Auslan Shop

If you buy it from The Auslan Shop you can be sure it is *Auslan!*

Our focus is selling materials that in Auslan or about Auslan and the Deaf Community.



P: 02 9873 3420 TTY: 02 9871 8400 Fax: 02 9871 8218  
E-mail: [info@auslanshop.com.au](mailto:info@auslanshop.com.au)  
361-365 North Rocks Road, North Rocks NSW 2151

## [www.auslanshop.com.au](http://www.auslanshop.com.au)

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President *Mark Burfield*  
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**Deadlines**

Sound News Summer 2010: 19 November, 2010. Articles should be sent to [anna@pcde.org](mailto: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.

## 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.’**



Parent Council for Deaf Education

Block D  
361-365 North Rocks Road  
North Rocks NSW 2151  
PO Box 4748  
North Rocks NSW 2151

Phone: 02 9871 3049  
TTY: 02 9871 3025  
Fax: 02 9871 3193  
E-mail: [pcde@bigpond.com](mailto:pcde@bigpond.com)  
ABN 47 618 685 904

[www.pcde.org](http://www.pcde.org)

Parent Council for  
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Cover artwork is by Amy Wright, age 7. Amy attends Penshurst Public School and is in year 2.

Amy has a hearing loss in one ear. Amy is passionate about drawing and loves reading books. She is currently reading the 4th Harry Potter Book, and is a top student in her reading class.

Amy loves watching movies and her favourite food is chocolate and ice cream. She loves going to different café's and exploring different types of chocolates.



*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*