

Talking to New Families About Hearing Loss

The following questions serve to stimulate conversation between educators and parents/guardians when a child who is deaf or hard of hearing enrolls at your centre. The intention is to promote clarity of understanding regarding a child's needs, reduce assumptions, and promote a sense of collaboration in providing an inclusive experience for the child. The more we understand about a child's hearing loss, the way in which it is managed, and the child's communication skills and environment, the better equipped we are to provide the care that the child and family need.

Questions to Discuss

- 1. What is the type and severity of your child's hearing loss?**
- 2. At what age was your child's hearing loss diagnosed?**
- 3. Does your child use hearing devices? If so, at what age were these fitted?**
Note: In Australia, hearing loss is often diagnosed in infancy. The older the child when hearing devices are fitted, the more time the developing brain has spent without clear access to speech and the more "catching up" may be required.
- 4. What information can you share about your child's hearing devices, how to troubleshoot problems with them and help your child use and manage them?**
- 5. Would you be happy to share your child's audiogram?**
An audiogram provides helpful information about the nature and severity of a child's hearing loss and the importance of their assistive devices.
- 6. Is there a family history of hearing loss?**
The family may have experience with hearing loss and may or may not have concerns about the impact of hearing loss for their child.
- 7. What does your child understand about their own hearing loss and devices?**
Together you can help promote self-advocacy skills that will serve the child well throughout school and beyond.
- 8. If speech/language delays are suspected: Tell me about the language/s spoken in your home and your child's language use in the home.** Ask for examples to get a clearer sense of the child's abilities:
 - a. What is an example of something spoken that your child reliably demonstrates an understanding of at home?
 - b. What is an example of something you would expect to hear your child to say at home?
- 9. Are other professionals working with your child (e.g., speech pathologist) and are there any reports you are happy to share with us?**
- 10. What do you think is the best thing we can do to support your child in our setting?** Consider starting a communication diary with the family so updates on how the child is communicating can be shared, along with concepts and class content that can be modelled during interactions in the home.



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