



Serving our community.  
Sharing our culture.



# FAMILY MENTOR PROGRAM FOR DEAF & HARD OF HEARING KIDS

Your child's language and development journey starts here.

# We're here to support you.

Approximately 95% of Deaf and hard of hearing children are born to hearing parents and, as a new parent, you want to ensure your child has the best possible start in life.

Our program connects families with Deaf mentors who are fluent in Auslan and have in-depth knowledge of the importance of early language development. Our mentors provide access to language and community, set the foundations for your child to reach their full potential and nurture parent-child relationships to support you through the critical early stages of development.



## Personalised program structure

- We match you with a Family Mentor.
- You collaborate to outline goals and a session time schedule
- We provide regular support and monitor progress.
- We check in every three months to evaluate and reset goals.
- Sessions can be 1, 1½ or 2 hours in length, tailored to each family.



## Who can join?

Families of deaf and hard of hearing children aged 0 – 8, in the critical period for language development. This program is NDIS funded and available to those with a NDIS plan.

Whole family participation is required.



## Where is it offered?

The Family Mentor Program is currently only available to be delivered to families within the Sydney-Metro Region.



## LIVED EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

With a unique insight and lived experience of the barriers Deaf children face early in life, our family mentors are fully equipped to nurture language skills, support participants in reaching communication milestones, offer community ties, and provide positive identity role modelling. Beyond language development, they will focus on family bonding, behaviour, social skills, and cultural awareness.



## BACKED BY RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY

Our mentor program has been developed by our Family Services team in NSW in collaboration with qualified Teachers of the Deaf and informed by Deaf community members to provide high quality care and education.

## WHAT SETS US APART



## Discover the benefits



### Early access to language

Family Mentors nurture responsive parent-child relationships, which are essential for brain development and strong first language acquisition. With home and real-life situations as the curriculum, our Family Mentors support learning organically through play and visual communication. This visual foundation sets your child up for success regardless of what communication therapies you choose.



### Parenting confidence

Mentors provide guidance in managing behaviour, emotions, and interests and support you within the home and out in the community. They include all family members in the communication journey, allowing for incidental learning through conversation, and deeper bonding.



### Wealth of communication choices

We know that giving your DHH child early access to Auslan, along with technology, listening and speech and all other tools, helps your child reach their full potential. We support access to all options so that, as your child grows, they can have full choice over how they communicate.



### Positive identity

Mentors demonstrating how to navigate the world as a Deaf person and supporting a positive Deaf identity significantly impacts your child's self-esteem and supports family well-being and social connections.



### Support with school preparation

Family Mentors support early literacy and can empower you and your child through the transitions to Pre-School and Primary School.



### The value of community

Family Mentors will assist in building a village of supports around your child, connecting them to your networks and acting as ambassadors to the Deaf Community for your family.

“It started with a conversation between Leonie (Jackson) and I in early 2018. Leonie approached me with concern about the levels of language deprivation and delay in deaf children, and the lack of access to Auslan. Following this was lots of research, focus groups, and an extensive survey. Two key issues were identified: 1) the need for genuine access to options and 2) hearing parents want access to Deaf adults early in their child’s journey.”

- **Genevieve Roberts, Family Mentor**  
**Program Founder**

#### HONOURING LEONIE JACKSON

A colleague, friend, Deaf educator and community champion, Leonie Jackson was a pioneer of bilingual Deaf education in Australia who, throughout her teaching, corporate and not-for-profit career, championed the rights of Deaf children. We honour her as an integral catalyst in the development of the Family Mentor Program, and ongoing through our **Leonie Jackson Memorial Fund** for bilingual deaf education.

#### Contact us

Our Family Mentor Program is here to support you and your child through the most critical years of their development. To express your interest and find out more, please reach out to our team.