

## The importance of

# A BILINGUAL APPROACH TO EARLY INTERVENTION

## for children who are Deaf and hard of hearing

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing face unique challenges when it comes to language development and communication. Research has shown that a bilingual approach to early intervention that includes exposure to both Australian Sign Language (Auslan) and English can have significant benefits for these children, improving their language development, literacy skills, and overall academic achievement.

In this resource, we will explore the importance of a bilingual approach to early intervention for

children who are deaf or hard of hearing and provide information about resources and services available to support families and healthcare professionals in promoting bilingualism.

### **Benefits of a bilingual approach**

A bilingual approach to early intervention for children who are deaf or hard of hearing has been shown to have many benefits. Exposure to Auslan can provide a strong foundation for cognitive and social-emotional development, as well as language development. Auslan is a visual language



that allows for early communication and promotes early bonding between children and caregivers. Exposure to English can also be important for literacy development and academic achievement, as well as social-emotional development.

### Resources and services

Deaf Connect provides a range of resources and expert allied health services to support families in promoting a bilingual approach to early intervention. Our therapy services are offered in Queensland and include;

- Speech Language Pathology
- Occupational Therapy
- Psychology
- Physiotherapy
- Teachers of the Deaf, and
- Bilingual family support services (NSW only)

Our services are designed to support children and families from birth to adolescence and are delivered by qualified professionals with expertise in deafness and bilingualism.

### Advocacy

In addition to providing resources and services, it is important to advocate for policies and programs that support the use of Auslan in early intervention programs. Healthcare professionals can play an important role in promoting early intervention services and advocating for bilingualism, both within their own practice and in the wider community.

A bilingual approach to early intervention is critical for promoting language development, literacy skills, and overall well-being in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. By providing resources and services, and advocating for bilingualism, we can ensure that these children have the best possible outcomes in terms of language development, academic achievement, and overall quality of life.

### Contact us



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